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THE BIBLE

HOLY
BIBLE

**IS THERE ANY EVIDENCE
THAT IT IS TRUE?**

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The Bible: Is There Any Evidence That It Is True?

In order for us to walk with God, we must have complete confidence in His Word. Many have sought to discredit the Bible. Maybe you have accepted their assertions as true. Some people ask, "How can we say that the Bible is the Word of God? How do we know that we should follow what the Bible teaches until we are sure that it is God's Word to us?"

Those are great questions! The good news is that after we examine the evidence it is amazing that it takes more faith not to believe the Bible than it does to believe it.

We're going to look at some of the overwhelming evidence and give you some resources to study further if you would like.

Question #1 – Is the New Testament reliable?

"I think a bunch of people got together and simply made up the whole Bible."

"The Gospels were written by people who wanted to believe that Jesus is God, so they just made up stories about Him."

These are statements that some have made about the Bible. Are they true?

1. The New Testament presents itself as a historical source.

-Many times, in religious writings, there is a mythological, "fairy tale" aspect to them. This is not found in the Bible.

For example, the Gospel of Luke makes a direct claim to being an orderly account of what had happened, from the beginning, so that there could be certainty in the hearts of its readers about its message. (Luke 1:1-4)

-The rest of the New Testament includes many detailed facts and information which can be verified. These details (cities, cultural events, governmental rulers, etc.) would not have been included had it not been intended to be taken historically.

2. The New Testament passes the tests of historical writings.

There are several key factors in testing historical facts...

1. How close is the original writing to the events it was written about?

-The New Testament was written within the same generation the events took place. The authors were either eyewitnesses to Christ or were close associates of an eyewitness.

2. How close are the copies we now have to the originals?

-Considering other ancient writings the N.T. is beyond comparison.²

The amount of time between the original writing & the oldest existing copy we now have for:

Caesar's Gallic Wars	1000 yrs.
Plato	1200 yrs.
Herodotus	1300 yrs.
Aristotle	1400 yrs.
New Testament	100 yrs.

"When it comes to the time sequence, there is more reliability in the New Testament than the next ten pieces of classical literature combined!"³

*Most of the other New Testament copies are dated within just a few hundred years of the originals.⁴

3. How many copies do we have?

-Again, considering other ancient writings the N.T. is beyond comparison.

The number of copies we now have for:

Homer's <i>Illiad</i>	643 copies	(most famous book of ancient Greece) ⁵
Caesar's <i>Gallic Wars</i>	10 copies	
Plato	7 copies	
Herodotus	8 copies	
Aristotle	5 copies	
New Testament	5300 Greek copies	
	8000 Latin copies	
	9300 other early versions ⁶	

4. Does it contain impossible facts?

The Bible presents many situations that some would call impossibilities. A question that needs to be considered at this point is: Is there a God?

If there is a God who created everything and is over everything, the next question is: Should He not be able to supersede or go beyond the laws of nature?

Here are a couple of key points to remember:

1. Miracles may seem improbable to the human mind, but that does not make them impossible.
2. Just because something has not been a part of a one's own personal experience does not mean it cannot happen.

5. Is it biased?

First of all, one must admit that *all* historical writing is biased in some way. However, the question should be: Is the Bible so biased that it can not be trusted? The answer is no!

In many other historical writings, the focus of the writing is to stretch reality and to glorify some person or group that the writer supports. This is not the case with the Bible.

Consider these facts about the Bible:

1. The Bible is very honest on many occasions about a person whom God was seeking to use who had serious flaws or who made bad mistakes – Abraham, David, Peter, Paul, etc.
2. The Bible records many instances when Jesus said or did things that made many people unhappy. If the writers were only concerned with making up facts about Jesus, they would have presented Him in conditions that made Him look more favorable.

6. How does it compare with other outside sources?

Does record of Jesus appear anywhere outside the Gospels?

Answering this question is helpful in trusting the information we have about Him in the Gospels and in trusting the rest of the New Testament.

Outside sources attesting to Jesus as a real historical figure:

1. Tacitus (the Roman historian) in his *Annals* - While recording the story of the great fire in Rome, for which the Roman emperor, Nero, blamed Christians, Nero stated that “Christus” was the one for whom Christians were named. This “Christus” he recorded as having suffered the extreme penalty under the reign of Tiberius at the hands of the procurator Pontius Pilate. These were real rulers who reigned in a real, Roman Empire. Was Jesus the only unreal part of this record?

2. Josephus, an ancient Jewish historian, in *The Antiquities of the Jews* - He spoke about Jesus as being a good man who drew many people. He said that Jesus was condemned to the cross by Pilate and provided other details that match the Gospels. Although parts of the account seem more friendly towards Christianity than a

Jewish historian during this period would have written, it at least shows that the historian did know and write about Jesus.

3. The Talmud – Another collection of Jewish writings dating around the 2nd century, it contains at least one mention of Jesus (making it very close to the events). It spoke of Him being executed around the time of Passover and of Him having no apparent supporters to keep Him from being killed.⁷

It is important to mention something at this point...

While it is helpful to have outside sources that attest to the reality that Jesus really existed, one must be careful to not put too much emphasis on this. After seeing the greater evidence for the reliability of the Bible above all other ancient writings, why would it be absolutely necessary to have non-Christian writers, who would have no reason to record information about Him, prove Him as real instead of trusting the Bible – the most examined but reliable book ever written?

"I know of no one fact in the history of mankind which is proved by better and fuller evidence of every sort, to the understanding of a fair inquirer, than the great sign which God has given us that Christ died and rose again from the dead." -- Oxford professor Thomas Arnold, author of the three-volume "History of Rome"
(The New Evidence That Demands a Verdict, Josh McDowell, p. 216)

Question #2 - Is the Old Testament Reliable?

Professor M. Montiero-Williams who spent 42 years studying Eastern books said in comparing them with the Bible, "Pile them, if you will, on the left side of your study table; but place your own Holy Bible on the right side – by itself, all alone – and with a wide gap between them. For,there is a gulf between it and the so-called sacred books of the East which severs it from the others utterly, hopelessly, and forever..."⁸

“Few realize,” said George Adam Smith, “that the Church of Christ possesses a higher warrant for her Canon of the Old Testament than she does for her Canon on the New.”⁹ As we saw above, that does not mean the New Testament is not reliable, but it further emphasizes how reliable the Old Testament is.

1. The great care taken to preserve the Old Testament.

-We do not have near the close manuscripts for the Old Testament as we do for the New Testament because of several reasons. First of all, it was written on animal skins which makes preservation for thousands of years very difficult. Secondly, out of respect for the Bible, the Jewish people had a tradition of burning copies that had become worn.¹⁰ Until the recent discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, the oldest manuscript we had was written around 900 A.D.

-With the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, though, we now have Old Testament texts going back to the time before Jesus. As these older texts were explored and compared with the previous ones, it was amazing how accurate the copies were over a period of 100s of years. For example, the whole book of Isaiah was found. The Dead Sea Scroll version was from around 125 B.C. The earliest one previous to that was 916 A.D., approximately 1,000 years difference. However, there were only minute variations and those were of no great significance. The reason for this is because of the great respect they had for God’s Word and the great detail they took to preserve it. In fact, some see the reason that we have so few texts as a result of the fact that the scribes were so convinced they had copied an exact duplicate that they considered it as good as the original. William Green said, “it may be safely said that no other work of antiquity has been so accurately transmitted”¹¹ as the Old Testament has.

2. The large number of fulfilled prophecies

-“There is in holy Scripture a form of evidence which is discoverable in no other religious document known to man.”¹² To be sure there are other religious groups that claim to be prophetic only to present false and unfulfilled prophecies.

In other words, in specific instances where the Old Testament has been questioned, whenever archaeological evidence has been found relating to that situation, it has always shown that the Old Testament record was true.

-The Bible has been scrutinized more than any book man has ever known, yet it continues to prove itself true. The most well know expert on Palestinian archaeology, Dr. Nelson Glueck, has said that, "no archaeological discovery has ever controverted a Bible reference. Scores of archaeological findings have been made which confirm in clear outline or exact detail historical statements in the Bible."¹⁶

-Sir William Ramsey, a wealthy atheist with a doctorate in philosophy from Oxford University, gave his entire life in efforts to disprove the Bible from archaeology. After 25 years of study, he gave his life to Christ.

Other Information about the Bible...

1. Its unity

- The Bible involves more than 40 authors over more than 1500 years.
- The authors range from: a king, a tax collector, a fisherman, a doctor, etc.
- The Bible contains nearly every kind of literary form know to man, yet it still has a united, harmonious message.

2. It's impact

- No other book can compare in terms of sales and influence.
- No other book can compare in terms of lives changed and affected.
- More books have been written about the Bible than any other book in history.¹⁷
- It has always been the world's best-seller and is translated into almost 2,000 different languages and dialects (with more and more each year).¹⁸

Question #3 - What does the Bible say about itself?

After looking at the overwhelming external evidence for us to believe the Bible, one can now turn to the Bible itself. Does the Bible really claim to be the Word of God?

1. The Bible claims to be the Word of God

- 2 Timothy 3:16 - It claims to be “breathed by God” and useful for accomplishing all of God’s purposes in our lives.
- 2 Peter 1:21 – It claims that no part of itself ever had its origin in the will of man but was given as men were led by God’s Spirit.
- Hosea 1:1, Amos 1:3, 2 Samuel 23:2, Jeremiah 1:9, etc. – It claims to be the very word of God to us.

2. The Bible claims to be infallible, inerrant

- Matthew 5:18 – It claims that not one part of it will disappear or be found false.
- John 10:35 – Again, it claims to be unbreakable and unable to be proven false.

3. The Bible claims to be supernaturally powerful

- Hebrew 4:12-13 – It claims to be alive and active and able to reach down to the depths of our hearts.
- Roman 1:16 – It claims that its message has the power to change our lives forever.

4. The Biblical authors and personalities accepted other Biblical authors as having written the Word of God

-There are many places in Scripture where one author or character quotes another biblical author and refers to the other author's writing as being true and the Word of God.

Examples:

Matt 19:4 - Jesus affirmed the creation account in Genesis.

Luke 17:28-32 – Jesus cited the destruction of Sodom as a real event.

Matt. 24:37-39 – Jesus accepted the flood story as true.

Matt. 24:15 – Jesus affirmed the prophecies of Daniel as true.

Luke 24:27 – Jesus affirmed the testimony of Moses and the prophets about Himself.

Acts – Peter and the other disciples quoted the Old Testament as God's Word in their preaching. (Acts 2:16ff)

Hebrews 1:1-2 – The writer of Hebrews affirmed that God has spoken in many different ways in the past through the prophets.

>The list could go on and on!!

5. There were many eyewitnesses to the Biblical events

-The Bible states that there were many witnesses to the events recorded in it.

2 Peter 1:16 – “These are not cleverly invented stories; we were eyewitnesses.”

1 John 1:1 – “We have heard, seen, and touched these things ourselves.”

1 Corinthians 15:3-8 – “I’m giving you the message of the Gospel that I received and so did Cephas (Peter), the twelve disciples, and more than 500 others. Most of them are still alive. You can ask them!”¹⁹

(*The three above passage quotes were all paraphrases.)

Consider....

Would the number of people who lived so close to the time of Christ and gave their lives to suffer and die for Jesus have done so for something they knew to be a fairy tale?

Someone has said...

“People MAY die for something they THINK to be true (like the Jim Jones cult) - but, they won't die for something they KNOW to be false.”

Question #4 - What about alleged errors in the Bible?

-We must admit that there are certain portions of Scripture which sometimes offer difficulty explaining. It should be noted that no completely satisfactory evidence has ever been given against such portions of Scripture that would stand up in a court of law to disprove the Bible, even though many attempts have been made to discredit it throughout history. Most of the difficulties have been cleared up as we have obtained more evidence about the questions raised (see the section on archaeology).

We can take two approaches to these questions:

- OR... 1. Wait until all the alleged problems are proven wrong
2. Take the overwhelming evidence that the Bible is true and continues to prove itself true and accept it as true ourselves

*It should be noted that there are ways to deal with such alleged errors in Scripture. Most of the problems come from our ignorance – not the Bible being in error.²⁰

The point of this all...

A person would have to close his/her eyes and refuse to see the evidence to dismiss the Bible as just “some other book”. It truly is a miraculous book with an amazing message – God’s love for us. He sent His Son to be our Savior, if we will only receive His free gift.

Appendix

Messianic prophecies fulfilled in Jesus Christ²¹

Scriptures Stating Prophecy	Subject of Prophecy	Scripture Stating Fulfillment
Genesis 3:15	Born of the seed of a woman	Galatians 4:4
Genesis 12:2-3	Born of the seed of Abraham	Matthew 1:1
Genesis 17:19	Born of the seed of Isaac	Matthew 1:2
Numbers 24:17	Born of the seed of Jacob	Matthew 1:2
Genesis 49:10	Descended from the tribe of Judah	Luke 3:33
Isaiah 9:7	Heir to the throne of David	Luke 1:32-33
Daniel 9:25	Time for Jesus' birth	Luke 2:1-2
Isaiah 7:14	Born of a virgin	Luke 1:26-27,30-31
Micah 5:2	Born in Bethlehem	Luke 2:4-7
Jeremiah 31:15	Slaughter of the innocents	Matthew 2:16-18
Hosea 11:1	Flight to Egypt	Matthew 2:14-15
Isaiah 40:3-5; Malachi 3:1	Preceded by a forerunner	Luke 7:24, 27
Psalms 2:7	Declared the Son Of God	Matthew 3:16-17
Isaiah 9:1-2	Galilean ministry	Matthew 4:13-17
Deuteronomy 18:15	The prophet to come	Acts 3:20, 22
Isaiah 61:1-2	Came to heal the brokenhearted	Luke 4:18-19
Isaiah 53:3	Rejected by his own (the Jews)	John 1:11

Appendix (cont.)

Messianic prophecies fulfilled in Jesus Christ

Psalm 110:4	A priest after the order of Melchizedek	Hebrews 5:5-6
Zechariah 9:9	Triumphal entry	Mark 11:7, 9,11
Psalm 41:9	Betrayed by a friend	Luke 22:47, 48
Zechariah 11:12-13	Sold for thirty pieces of silver	Matthew 26:15; 27:5-7
Psalm 35:11	Accused by false witness	Mark 14:57-58
Isaiah 53:7	Silent to accusations	Mark 15:4, 5
Isaiah 50:6	Spat upon and smitten	Matthew 26:67
Psalm 35:19	Hated without reason	John 15:24, 25
Isaiah 53:5	Vicarious sacrifice	Romans 5:6, 8
Isaiah 53:12	Crucified with transgressors	Mark 15:27, 28
Zechariah 12:10	Hands pierced	John 20:27
Psalm 22:7-8	Scorned and mocked	Luke 23:35
Psalm 69:21	Given vinegar and gall	Matthew 27:34
Psalm 109:4	Prayer for his enemies	Luke 23:34
Psalm 22:18	Soldiers gambled for his coat	Matthew 27:35
Psalm 34:20	No bones broken	John 19:32-33, 36
Zechariah 12:10	Side pierced	John 19:34
Isaiah 53:9	Buried with the rich	Matthew 27:57-60

Appendix (cont.)

Messianic prophecies fulfilled in Jesus Christ

Psalm 16:10; 49:15	Would rise from the dead	Mark 16:6-7
Psalm 68:18	Would ascend to God's right hand	Mark 16:19

NOTES

1. Winfried Corduan, Reasonable Faith (Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1993,), 183-184.
2. Ibid, 184-192 (See also Gleason Archer, A Survey of Old Testament Introduction (Moody Press: Chicago, 1994), 27).
3. Dr. Joe White, Faith Training: Raising Kids Who Love the Lord (Colorado Springs: Focus on the Family Publishers, 1994) 258-259.
4. Corduan, 192.
5. Norman L. Geisler and Ronald M. Brooks, When Skeptics Ask (Victor Books: A Division of Scripture Press Publications Inc.), 159.
6. White, 258.
7. Corduan, 193-200.
8. Geisler and Brooks, 17-18.
9. Frank E. Gaebelin, The Expositor's Bible Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1979), 385.
10. Geisler and Brooks, 157-158.
11. Josh McDowell, Evidence That Demands a Verdict (Campus Crusade for Christ International, 1972), 56-63.
12. Gleason L. Archer, A Survey of Old Testament Introduction (Moody Press: Chicago, 1994), 31.
13. Ibid, 385, 563-568 (See also Encyclopedia of Biblical Prophecy, J. Barton Payne).
14. McDowell, 175; White 255-256 (See also White, 147-184).
15. Archer, 173 (see also 174-189).
16. White, 259 ; others books to consider – Ken Hemphill, LifeAnswers (Nashville: LifeWay Press, 1993) 47, footnote 13.
17. Ken Hemphill, LifeAnswers (Nashville: LifeWay Press, 1993), 39-42.

18. White, 258.
19. White, 254-259 (see also Archer, 29-31; LifeAnswers, 28-34; The Expositor's Bible Commentary, 20-22).
20. Archer, 36-38.
21. House, H. Wayne, Charts of Christian Theology and Doctrine, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), 60-61.

*see also Lee Strobel's book, *The Case for Christ* and Josh McDowell's, *The New Evidence That Demands a Verdict*.

*“The grass withers, the flower
fades, but the word of our God
stands forever.”*

- Isaiah 40:8

