

The Credibility of the Bible

Believing the Bible doesn't make it true nor does disbelieving it make it false

Truth:

- Truth is absolute (That which is ultimately true)
- Truth is discovered not invented
- Truth claims are tested by reality



1. The Uniqueness of Scripture

A. The Writing of Scripture:

- 1- Written over a period of 15 to 16 hundred years
- 2- Written by more than 40 authors from various walks of life
- 3- Written in different places

Moses- wilderness Jeremiah- dungeon David- hillside, palace Paul- prison

4- Written in different languages

OT – Hebrew (with a few segments of OT in Aramaic) NT - Greek

In view of this, the Scriptures are presented in absolute harmony from beginning to end

B. The Claims of Scripture

The Bible claims to be no ordinary book, but claims to have been inspired by God. Phrases such as - “*Thus saith the Lord*” or “*God spake these words*” appears over 2,000 times in the OT

If the Bible is not God's Word, it is no longer a good book, but a lying book.

2 Timothy 3:16 - “*All scripture is given by inspiration of God*”

See 2 Peter 1:20, 21; 1 Thessalonians 2:13; Galatians 1:11, 12

C. The Preservation of Scripture

First written on perishable materials, and had to be copied and recopied for hundreds of years before the invention of the printing press

Persecution, ridicule, higher criticism, liberalism, and atheism have for centuries pounded at vicious blows against the scriptures to no avail.

Matthew 5:18 - “*For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.*”

Matthew 24:35 - “*Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.*”

See Psalm 12:6, 7 ; Isaiah 40:8

2. The Manuscript Support of Scripture

Manuscript: a handwritten copy of scripture



The original writings of the Biblical authors have been lost, so that what we have are copies of the originals.

This is not unusual for we have no original manuscripts for any significant literature from the ancient world.

New Testament

The New Testament books have been reconstructed into their original form by comparing the surviving copies of manuscripts.

The more manuscripts you have to compare the better.

A. Quantity of manuscripts:

There are more manuscripts of the New Testament than of any other ancient documents

Greek Copies –

There are over 5,000 handwritten Greek manuscripts of the NT still in existence (partial and complete portions)

Quotations –

There are in addition to New Testament manuscripts thousands of quotations of the New Testament from early church fathers

So extensive are these quotations that if all other sources for our knowledge of the text of the New Testament were destroyed, these citations would be sufficient for the reconstruction of practically the entire New Testament.

The number of manuscript copies make it possible to reconstruct the original with virtually complete accuracy

B. Date of manuscripts:

There are earlier manuscript copies of the New Testament than of any other ancient documents

Portions of manuscript copies exist as early as between 50 and 100 years of the originals

The time between the writing of the New Testament and the first complete manuscript copies is about 150 to 225 years

Other Ancient Documents:

Iliad by Homer has only 643 manuscript copies (second most manuscripts) with a time span from the originals of about 400 years

Caesar's Gallic Wars has 10 manuscript copies with a time span of 1,000 years

Plato has 7 manuscript copies with a time span from the originals of about 1,300 years

Old Testament

C. The Meticulousness in Copying Old Testament Scripture

No book in history has been copied as many times with as much care as has been the Word of God.

The Dead Sea Scrolls

In 1947 the Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered in a cave near the Dead Sea

These scrolls date from the third century B.C. to the first century A.D.

The Dead Sea Scrolls are highly significant in that they confirm the accuracy of other manuscripts dated much later

The Book of Daniel, which in our Bibles is a translation of a copy dating from about A.D. 900.

With the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, a manuscript was found dating from 100 B.C. almost one thousand years earlier than the previous existing manuscript, yet the two manuscripts are practically identical with no important differences.

The earliest copy of the Book of Isaiah was the twelfth century A.D. Now scholars could go back over a thousand years closer to the time the prophet actually wrote (around 700 B.C.). When a comparison was made between the two copies, they were almost identical.

The Bottom Line:

For all practical purposes the Bible we have can be accepted as if it were original. We can unhesitatingly say that we have the inspired Word of God, which is infallible in its teaching.

3. The Confirmation of Scripture from Archaeology

Archaeology does not prove the Bible, but archaeology confirms the Bible. Archaeology confirms and corroborates the Biblical record historically and chronologically.

Examples:

- The ruins of many cities of Genesis have been found such as Ur, Shechem, Ai, Bethel, and Hebron
- The existence of the “Hittites” (once believed not to have existed)
- The Pool of Bethesda (John 5:2) discovered 1888
- The accuracy of Luke as a historian
- The book of Acts contains about 84 facts that have been confirmed by historical and archaeological research

Archaeology has debunked the charges of skeptics one after another and has confirmed to a large extent the historical reliability of scripture.

4. The Scientific Accuracy of Scripture

Scripture made accurate statements about our universe thousands of years before modern science discovered these truths.

Examples:

A. The fact that the earth is spherical (round)- Isaiah 40:22

While it is true that some Greek philosophers did postulate this as early as 540 B.C. The common man held the earth to be flat until the introduction of the compass and the fifteenth-century voyages of Columbus

B. The earth is suspended in space- Job 26:7

All this was not known by scientists of the world until the writings of Sir Isaac Newton in 1687

C. Innumerable stars – Jeremiah 33:22

D. Mountains and canyons in the sea- Jonah 2:6

As recently as a century or so ago, the ocean’s volume and size was viewed as a watery bowl, which sloped from the coastline gently toward the middle, where it was the deepest. It was thought to proceed upward to the other side.

E. Each star is different – 1 Corinthians 15:41

F. All living things reproduce after their kind- Genesis 1:21

G. Blood is the source of life - Leviticus 17:11 (bloodletting)

H. When dealing with disease, hands should be washed under running water – Leviticus 15:13

5. Fulfilled Prophecies of Scripture- Isaiah 48:3-5

The ability to predict future events is called prophecy.

A Biblical prophet was not only to instruct the people but also to predict future events in God’s plan.

Many Bible prophecies are specific in their details and the authentication of the prophet rest on them.

Prophecies regarding the Jesus the Christ

They deal with His birth, life, betrayal, death, resurrection and future kingdom

Written between 400 and 700 years before His birth

