

# Can We Trust the Bible?

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The Bible is unarguably an incredible book. It is the best-selling, most quoted, most published, most circulated, most translated, most influential book in the history of mankind. There is no close second.

- But why should anyone believe that the Bible is actually *true*?
- How can we know that the Bible isn't just an ancient book of mythology, filled with the fanciful, yet deceitful writings of men?
- Haven't books of the Bible been lost or tampered with down through the centuries?
- What about other books like the Quran or the Book of Mormon? What makes the Bible any different than those books?

Those are questions that intelligent, critical thinking people are asking today and those are questions they have a *right* to ask. I think they *should* be asking those questions. Those are questions I used to ask (you can read my story [here](#)). And God's heart for His people is that we be able to provide answers to people (e.g., 1 Peter 3:15, Jude 3). So, in this article I'm going to lay out a broad, but somewhat concise overview of ten different lines of evidence that I think demonstrate (when considered in their totality) that the Bible is indeed what it claims to be: the trustworthy Word of God—written by men yes—but men who were guided by God as they penned the words they penned (2 Peter 1:21, 2 Timothy 3:16).

The first line of evidence for the Bible is...

## 1. FULFILLED PROPHECY

Fulfilled prophecy is something that sets the Bible apart from every other religious book. And the Bible does have some competition today. There are 26 other religious books that people of faith believe are divinely inspired (the Hindu Vedas, the Quran, the Book of Mormon, etc.). Of these twenty-six books, none of them contain any specific, fulfilled prophecies. None.

In stark contrast to these other writings, the Bible is literally filled with hundreds of specific, detailed prophecies that were written hundreds of years before their fulfillment. In fact 27% of the Bible contains what was predictive prophecy at the time that it was written. And the authors of the Bible did not just predict some vague things like Nostradamus or Jeanne Dixon (who have proven to have been false prophets over and over again), they were very specific. Consider a few of the Old

Testament prophecies made regarding the Messiah (the Savior that God promised He would send into the world) hundreds of years before they were fulfilled.

For example, the Old Testament prophesied that He would be born of the seed of Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3, 22:18), of the tribe of Judah (Gen 49:10), and in the lineage of David (2 Samuel 7:12f). Micah 5:2 said that He would be born in Bethlehem, that He'd come while the temple was still standing (Malachi 3:1), that He would be born of a virgin (Isaiah 7:14), that He would open the eyes of the blind, unstop the ears of the deaf, and cause the lame to walk (Isaiah 35:5-6), that He'd be rejected by His own people (Psalm 118:22; 1 Peter 2:7). The Scriptures foretold the precise time in history when He would die (Daniel 9:24-26), how He would die (Psalm 22:16-18, Isaiah 53; Zechariah 12:10), and that He would rise from the dead (Psalm 16:10; Acts 2:27-32).

These are just a few of the prophecies related to the coming of the Messiah. And there are lots of other prophecies about the rise and fall of nations, the regathering of the Jewish people back into their homeland (something that's being fulfilled right now). The fact that these prophecies and hundreds of others have been fulfilled, even though they were spoken hundreds and even thousands of years before their fulfillment is strong evidence that a God who is all-knowing and all-powerful orchestrated the Bible's completion. No other religious writing is able to substantiate its claims with this kind of supernatural evidence.

**SKEPTIC:** "Hold on a second Charlie. Maybe the disciples just made up all of these things that Jesus supposedly did. Perhaps they read all of those prophecies in the Old Testament and decided to make up an elaborate story about Jesus fulfilling them!"

Ahh, that is a legitimate concern (that the disciples were just lying, just fabricating the whole story about Jesus). Well, I'm going to address that concern and show you why I don't think they were lying later on in the study when we get to evidence number eight.

For further study on fulfilled prophecies, please see: *Every Prophecy of the Bible* by Dr. John Walvoord.

## 2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE

Archaeological discoveries could never prove that the Bible is divinely inspired, but they do help build a compelling case for the historical reliability of the Bible. Of course many people today think that the Bible is a book of mythology, that the persons, places and events mentioned in the Bible were inventions by the authors. Well, the advance of archaeology has proven them wrong.

For the past 150 years archaeologists have been verifying the exact truthfulness of the Bible's detailed records of various events, customs, persons, cities, nations, and geographical locations. The Bible has proven so accurate that archaeologists often refer to it as a reliable guide when they go to dig in new areas.

Nelson Glueck, who appeared on the cover of *Time* magazine and who is considered one of the greatest archaeologists ever, wrote:

"No archeological discovery has ever controverted [overturned] a Biblical reference. Scores of archeological findings have been made which confirm in clear outline or in exact detail historical statements in the Bible. And, by the same token, proper evaluation of Biblical descriptions has often led to amazing discoveries." [Nelson Glueck, *Rivers in the Desert*, p. 31.]

These are the words of a man who has who has been credited with uncovering more than fifteen hundred ancient sites in the Middle East. ["Archaeology: The Shards of History," *Time*, December 13, 1963.]

By 1958, Donald Wiseman, an archaeologist and Professor of Assyriology at the University of London estimated that there were more than 25,000 discoveries that had confirmed the truthfulness of the Bible. [D. J. Wiseman, "Archaeological Confirmations of the Old Testament," in Carl F. Henry (editor), *Revelation and the Bible*, 301–302.]

What's staggering about this enormous number of discoveries is that this was the estimate back in 1958! There have been a lot of discoveries since then! I have written an entire book on this topic detailing dozens of discoveries called ***Archaeological Evidence for the Bible***. Here is a small sampling of some of the discoveries:

### **A. Pontius Pilate**

The New Testament authors tell us that Pontius Pilate was the Roman governor of Judea at the time of Christ who oversaw Jesus' trial and then sentenced Him to death by crucifixion (Matthew 27:2; Luke 3:1). Was he a legendary figure that the authors of the New Testament invented? No. In June of 1961, a team of Italian archaeologists was digging in Caesarea, on the shore of the beautiful Mediterranean Sea in Israel, about fifty-five miles northwest of Jerusalem. While digging in the jumbled ruins of a Roman theater these archaeologists made an amazing discovery. They found a limestone block about three feet tall and two feet wide that had been turned upside down and reused as part of a flight of steps during one of the renovations of the theater. It bore an inscription in Latin mentioning "Pontius Pilate, Prefect of Judea."

This is an amazing evidence outside of the Bible that Pontius Pilate was an actual historical person, that he reigned in the very position ascribed to him by the Gospels, and that as prefect he would have had the authority to condemn or pardon Jesus, just as the Gospel accounts report. Since the time of this discovery in 1961, Pilate's official residence at Caesarea has also been identified.

### **B. Caiaphas**

The New Testament tells us that the name of the Jewish high priest at the time of Jesus was Caiaphas (Matthew 26:3). Caiaphas was the one who presided over the late night Jewish trial of Jesus wherein Jesus confessed Himself to be the Messiah resulting in His condemnation (Matthew 26:57–68). It was also in the courtyard of Caiaphas's house that Peter denied knowing Jesus (John 18:24–27). Was Caiaphas a New Testament fabrication? No.

In 1990 a team of construction workers building a water park approximately two miles south of Jerusalem accidentally unearthed a first-century burial cave. A bulldozer unintentionally broke through the roof of the cave. The yield of this discovery was an uncharacteristically ornate ossuary (a bone box used in burial) with an inscription on it in Aramaic that read "Joseph, son of Caiaphas." Inside the ossuary were the bones of a man who was approximately sixty years old at the time of his death. Although the Gospel writers and the Jewish historian Josephus referred to the high priest as "Caiaphas," Josephus tells us that his full name was "Joseph Caiaphas," the very name etched into the side of the ossuary. His ossuary is on display today in the Israel Museum in Jerusalem.

### **C. David**

Up until 1993 not a shred of evidence could be found anywhere outside of the Bible that David the king of Israel ever existed and so “it had become fashionable in some academic circles to dismiss the David stories as an invention of priestly propagandists who were trying to dignify Israel’s past after the Babylonian exile.” The critics’ verdict was that David was “nothing more than a figure of religious and political mythology.”

Well, their skepticism regarding David “collapsed overnight” in 1993 when a nearly 3000-year-old inscription on black basalt was discovered in the town of Dan, a little north of the Sea of Galilee in Israel. The inscription, written in Aramaic by Israel’s enemies, describing the defeat of the kings of Judah and Israel, mentioned “the king of Israel” and the king of the “House of David.” This was an amazing discovery and helped to verify for the first time that David was an actual historical figure. Michael Lemonick, writing for *Time* magazine, acknowledged, “The skeptics’ claim that King David never existed is now hard to defend.” *U. S. News & World Report* religion writer, Jeffery Sheler, said:

“The fragmentary reference to David was a historical bombshell. Never before had the familiar name of Judah’s ancient warrior king, a central figure of the Hebrew Bible and, according to Christian Scripture, an ancestor of Jesus, been found in the records of antiquity outside the pages of the Bible. Skeptical scholars had long seized upon that fact to argue that David was a mere legend... Now, at last, there was material evidence, an inscription written not by Hebrew scribes but by an enemy of the Israelites a little more than a century after David’s presumptive lifetime. It seemed to be a clear corroboration of the existence of King David’s dynasty and, by implication, of David himself.” [Sheler, *Is the Bible True?* 60–61.]

Archaeology has not proven so helpful for other religious writings. Consider the Book of Mormon.

“Not one piece of evidence has ever been found to support the Book of Mormon -- not a trace of the large cities it names, no ruins, no coins, no letters or documents or monuments, nothing in writing. Not even one of the rivers or mountains or any of the topography it mentions has ever been identified.” [Dave Hunt, p.156, *In Defense of the Faith*; also see p. 107 in *The Case for Christ*, by Lee Strobel].

Nothing which demonstrates that the Book of Mormon is anything other than an early nineteenth century piece of American fiction, invented by Joseph Smith has ever been found. We address numerous other **problems with the Book of Mormon** here.

### 3. THE BIBLE’S INTERNAL CONSISTENCY

What do I mean when I speak of the Bible’s internal consistency? I am talking about the Bible’s internal harmony. From the first book of the Bible, Genesis, to the last book, Revelation, the Bible is absolutely consistent in what it teaches.

**SKEPTIC:** “Why is *that* an evidence of divine origin? There are plenty of books that are internally consistent!”

I agree. Back in the nineties I worked at a surfing magazine. And we put out an internally consistent magazine every month. Does that mean then that the authors of our different articles were writing down words inspired by God? No. I can assure you of that!

**SKEPTIC:** “Well then, what makes the Bible any different than some other book or magazine that is internally consistent?”

Glad you asked. I'll share with you seven factors that make the internal consistency of the Bible an amazing evidence of its divine origin.

**A. The Bible addresses life's most controversial questions.**

At the surfing magazine, we wrote about who won the latest surfing contest, surf wax, sunscreen. Pretty trivial matters looking back on it all now. But these are not the type of questions that the authors of the Bible wrote about. No. They tackled the big questions of life:

- How did the universe come into existence?
- Does God exist? And if so, what is He like?
- Why does man exist?
- What is our purpose for being here?
- Why is there evil and suffering in the world?
- What happens to us after we die?

These are the big controversial questions of life. These are the kinds of questions that people tend to disagree about (ask your neighbors!) and yet they are the very questions that the authors of the Bible tackle head on, chapter after chapter, book after book, and they do so absolutely consistently.

**B. The Bible is a collection of 66 different documents.**

It might be easy to have harmony in a book like the Qur'an. Why? It's a single book. Entirely different than the Bible! The Bible is made up of 39 Old Testament documents and 27 in the New.

**C. The Bible was written by approximately 40 different authors.**

Again, it might be easy to have internal harmony in the Quran. Why? It contains the teachings of *one* man: Muhammad, born about 570 years after Jesus. The Bible is absolutely different. It contains the teachings of approximately 40 different men!

**D. Many of the Bible's authors came from different educational and cultural backgrounds.**

Peter was a fisherman. Paul was a scholar. Daniel was a prime minister. Asaph was a musician. Matthew was a tax collector. David was a shepherd, then a king. Luke was a historian and medical doctor.

**E. The Bible was written over a period of approximately 1500+ years, covering some 60+ generations.**

Many of the authors did not even know one another.

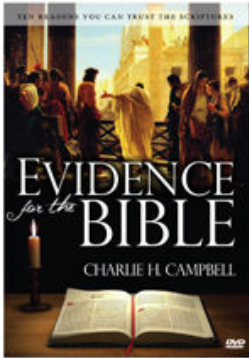
**F. Many of the authors were separated by hundreds of miles geographically.**

The Bible was written in a variety of places on three different continents: Africa, Asia and Europe. For example, Paul wrote four letters imprisoned in Rome. The apostle John, wrote while a prisoner banished to the Isle of Patmos in the Mediterranean Sea. The prophet Ezekiel wrote his work while held captive in Babylon.

### G. The Bible was written in three different languages: Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek.

Now, I don't know about you, but when I think of pulling together 40 different people, from 60 different generations, who live on three different continents, who speak three different languages, and ask them to write 66 different documents regarding life's most controversial questions...I'm thinking we are going to have some *serious* problems. That book is a going to be a confusing and difficult read!

Yet, in spite of all of these factors, the Bible is a perfectly harmonious, consistent account of how God is seeking to reconcile sinners (like you and me) back to Himself through the person and work of His Son, Jesus Christ. This internal consistency is an amazing evidence that the authors of the Bible were being guided by the Holy Spirit when they wrote the different books of the Bible.



## Evidence for the Bible. DVD by Charlie Campbell (\$11.95)

Compelling evidence from history, archaeology, science and extrabiblical sources that the Bible is trustworthy (83 minutes)

## 4. EXTRABIBLICAL WRITINGS

What am I talking about? I'm talking about the fact that there are dozens of writings that survive *outside* of the Bible (in the records of the Assyrians, Babylonians and Romans) that verify the historical accuracy of the Bible's records of different persons, places, and events. External sources verify that 50 persons mentioned in the Old Testament and 30 persons written about in the New Testament were actual historical figures (see list of names and sources on p. 270 in ***I Don't Have Enough Faith To Be An Atheist*** by Norman Geisler and Frank Turek). Because of engravings and statues, we even know what 18 (12 from the OT and 6 from the NT) of them looked like!

These extrabiblical writings have helped corroborate numerous details in the Bible, including details surrounding Jesus' life. Now, some critics of Christianity today are telling people that Jesus Himself never existed, that He was the invention of some clever deceivers in the first century. This is absurd and only demonstrates their ignorance of the facts or willingness to overlook the facts. There actually is very good historical evidence *outside* of the Bible that Jesus lived.

There are 39 or more sources outside of the Bible, written within 150 years of Jesus' life that attest to more than 100 facts regarding Jesus' life, teachings, crucifixion, and resurrection. (See: ***The Historical Jesus: Ancient Evidence for the Life of Christ*** by Gary R. Habermas).

One of these external sources was the first century historian Flavius Josephus. In his writings Josephus mentions more than a dozen individuals talked about in the Bible, including: Herod the Great, Herod Antipas, Caiaphas, Pontius Pilate, John the Baptist, James "the brother of Jesus," Felix, Festus, and even Jesus. Listen to one of Josephus' statements about Jesus. I have purposely

taken this from the Arabic text of Josephus' writings called *Antiquities*, chapter 18:63-64, a text that is unchallenged by most critics of the Bible.

Josephus wrote: "At this time there was a wise man who was called Jesus. And his conduct was good, and (He) was known to be virtuous. And many people from among the Jews and the other nations became his disciples. Pilate condemned Him to be crucified to die. And those who had become his disciples did not abandon his discipleship. They reported that He had appeared to them three days after his crucifixion and that He was alive."

These are not the words of the Bible or a Christian, but a Jewish Roman historian writing outside of the pages of Scripture. He verifies for us that Jesus actually lived and was even crucified under the reign of Pontius Pilate. Some of the other 39 sources that mention Jesus include:

- A. Cornelius Tacitus (ca. A.D. 55 –120) a Roman Historian
- B. Gaius Suetonius (the chief secretary of Emperor Hadrian (A.D. 117 –138)
- C. The Jewish *Talmud* (Sanhedrin 43A)

Other writings outside of the Bible corroborate details surrounding:

- the Flood (Genesis 7)
- long life spans prior to the Flood
- details surrounding the Exodus
- the Assyrian invasion during the days of Hezekiah (2 Kings 18-19)
- Nebuchadnezzar's invasion of Judah (Daniel 1)
- the prolonged darkness on the day Jesus died (Matthew 27:43)
- the expulsion of the Jews from Rome in A.D. 49 (Acts 18:2)

...just to name a few. This is a fascinating subject. If you'd like to read more about these matters, I address some of these in my book (mentioned above): *Archaeological Evidence for the Bible*.

## 5. THE BIBLE'S AMAZING SCIENTIFIC ACCURACY AND FORESIGHT

Of course many critics of the Bible would disagree that the Bible is scientifically accurate. They point to verses that say things like "the sun stood still" in Joshua 10:13 or John's reference to "the four corners of the Earth" (Rev. 7:1). And they conclude that the Bible teaches that the Sun revolves around a flat, four-cornered Earth.

Well, they are overlooking the fact that the writers of the Bible were not writing a textbook on astronomy. They were describing things as they appeared to the eye (as was the case in Joshua 10) or employing normal figures of speech, as was the case with John's reference to the "four corners of the Earth."

And we, living in this scientifically advanced age, still do the same thing! We don't wake up early in the morning, throw open the Eastern window and say, "What a beautiful Earth revolve!" No. We say, "What a beautiful sunrise!" Technically speaking, that is unscientific terminology. Meteorologists tell us on the nightly news what time the "sunset" will be. We don't accuse them of being unscientific. They're using simple, straightforward language to describe the way things appear.

When the apostle John referred to the "four corners of the Earth" in Revelation 7:1 he was using a

figure of speech to describe the extremities of the land in the four cardinal directions: North, South, East and West. And we still use this figure of speech today. News agencies boast about how they have sent out their reporters to the four corners of the Earth to track down their stories.

So keeping this in mind (that the writers of the Bible described things in simple terms as they appeared to the eye, and that they employed figures of speech—metaphors, personification and such) does away with many of the alleged scientific inaccuracies in the Bible.

Now, granted there are some other passages of Scripture that appear to be out of sync with modern day scientific theories. The most obvious is the atheistic theory of naturalism and its sidekick spinoff theory of evolution. These theories suggest that everything that exists came into being from nothing and by nothing and then evolved via a mindless series of natural causes. *Yes!* The Bible, that says God created the universe, the Earth, and all its myriad of life forms, *is* out of sync with that. But when it comes to known, testable, verifiable *facts*, the Bible has been found to be in perfect harmony with the way things really are, which is amazing when you think about it because as you know:

The Bible was completed 2,000 years ago, long before the invention of microscopes, telescopes, satellites, and all the other technological marvels that have allowed us to investigate our Earth and the universe. The fact that the Bible was written so long ago and yet does not contain any scientific errors, might be considered a miracle in itself. Why? Without exception, every ancient religious writing has certain unscientific views of astronomy, medicine, hygiene, and so on.

For example, the Hindu Vedas teach that the Earth is flat and triangular. They also teach that earthquakes are the result of elephants shaking their bodies underneath the ground. They also claim that civilizations live on the back side of the moon and that there are cities on the Sun. I get hot just thinking about that.

The Qur'an 18:86 says that the Sun sets in a muddy spring. The Qur'an says, "when he reached the setting-place of the Sun, he found it setting in a muddy spring." You could get away with an unscientific statement like that in certain parts of the world in the seventh century.

The Bible steers free of these kinds of errors. But not only that, it makes known amazing facts about our world and the universe thousands of years before scientists discovered that they were actually true. Allow me to share with you a few examples:

### **A. The Sun**

In contrast to the Qur'an, the Bible teaches that the Sun is actually on a circuit through space. Writing of the Sun in Psalm 19:6, David said, "Its rising is from one end of heaven, and its circuit to the other end." For many years critics scoffed at this verse, claiming that it taught that the Sun revolves around the Earth. Scientists at that time thought the Sun was stationary. However, it has been discovered in recent years that the Sun is in fact on a circuit through space, just like the Bible says.

### **B. The Shape of the Earth**

The ancient Egyptians believed the world was flat. What did the Bible say? Job 26:10 says God "has inscribed a circle on the surface of the waters at the boundary of light and darkness." That's interesting. Stay with me on this. Job says God has drawn "a circle on the surface of the waters at



the boundary of light and darkness.” This boundary between light and darkness is where evening and morning occur. Notice that the boundary is not a square or a triangle. It’s a circle. Why? Because the Earth is round. Job tells us this in a book thought to be written about 2000 BC! Another verse that speaks of the circular shape of the Earth is found in Isaiah 40:22: “It is He [God] who sits above the *circle* of the Earth.” Isaiah wrote that about 700 B.C. That was at least 300 years before Aristotle suggested in his book *On the Heavens*, that the Earth might be a sphere.

### C. The Suspension of the Earth

Before Isaac Newton discovered gravity, Hindus believed that the Earth rested on the back of an elephant who stood on the back of a turtle that was swimming in a great endless sea. The Greeks believed that the mythical god Atlas carried the Earth on his shoulders. What did the Bible say? In one of the oldest books in the Bible, Job said in Job 26:7, “He [God] hangs the Earth on *nothing*.” Scientists did not discover that the Earth hangs on nothing until 1650.

### D. The Stars

Before the invention of the telescope, people believed the stars could all be numbered. People were so confident of this that they drew up star charts with all the stars named and numbered. The Greek astronomer and mathematician Hipparchus (190-120 B.C.) said there were exactly 1,026 stars. The astronomer and mathematician Ptolemy (c. 85-A.D. 165) said there were 1,056 stars. The German astronomer Johannes Kepler (1571-1630) counted 1,006. When Galileo (a devout Christian) pointed his telescope to the heavens in 1608, he discovered that these previous counts were way off and that the Bible was actually right. What had the Bible said?

God said in Jeremiah 33:22, “The host of heaven [a reference to the stars] cannot be numbered, nor the sand of the sea measured.” God says, the stars *cannot* be numbered. In fact, trying to do so would be about as futile as trying to count the grains of sand floating around in the sea, obviously an impossible task. Jeremiah wrote that more than 2,000 years *before* Galileo made his discovery.

Today, with the help of powerful telescopes, scientists tell us that the universe contains approximately 100 billion galaxies containing approximately 200 billion stars each. NASA says some galaxies contain more than a trillion stars each.

This all adds up to a lot of stars. Astronomers have to keep revising their estimates of how many stars have been discovered. They are now telling us that there are approximately seventy sextillion stars in the known universe. [Source] Seventy sextillion? That’s a 7 with 22 zeros after it. They tell us that that is about “10 times as many stars as grains of sand on all the world’s beaches and deserts.” [Source]

Wow! Think of all the grains of sand on all the thousands of beaches and deserts that exist on all of the world’s seven continents. Now take all those grains of sand and multiply them by ten. That’s a rough idea of the number of stars that have been found!

The world’s population is 6.9 billion (2013). If there are 70 sextillion stars, that means there are enough stars for every person alive on planet Earth to own 10 trillion stars each! Surely the host of heaven cannot be numbered! (Jeremiah 33:22).

Now all of these statements in the Bible about the stars, the universe, and the Earth raise a question: How did the authors of the Bible know these kinds of things? Were they taking wild guesses?

I don't think so. I think their perfect accuracy rules that out, especially when you consider the fact that there are **dozens** of statements like these in the Bible.

Well, the Bible tells us how they knew these things in 2 Peter 1:21. It says there that "Holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit." That is to say, God, who knows all there is to know about the universe He created, superintended (came along side) the writing of the Bible to make sure that what He *wanted* written, *was* written.

You can remember these first five evidences with the acronym **F.A.C.E.S.**

## 6. THE MANUSCRIPT EVIDENCE

Mormons and Muslims like to say that the Bible cannot be thoroughly trusted today because they say the text of the Bible has not been accurately transmitted down through the centuries. Mormons say entire books of the Bible have gone missing and that is why God had to re-reveal Himself to Joseph Smith in the early 1800s. Well, the manuscript evidence proves otherwise.

What is a manuscript? A manuscript is any surviving hand-written copy of an ancient document that predates the invention of the printing press in 1455. Before the printing press, Bibles were meticulously copied by Jewish scribes and Christian monks.

Today there survives more some 25,000 partial and complete, ancient handwritten manuscript copies of the New Testament, as well as thousands of copies of the Old Testament...many of them predating the time of Christ. Did you realize that? We have copies of the Old Testament that are older than the time of Jesus. Let me tell you how they were found (a fascinating story).

In 1947 a shepherd boy tending his father's sheep in Qumran, north and to the west of the Dead Sea in Israel, made an amazing discovery while looking for a lost goat. There in Qumran, in a hillside cave that had laid untouched for nearly two thousand years, this twelve-year-old Muslim boy discovered a collection of large clay jars containing carefully wrapped leather manuscripts. What this boy stumbled upon was an ancient collection of handwritten copies of the Old Testament that dated as far back as the third century before Christ. This was truly an amazing discovery!

Archaeologists spent years searching the surrounding caves. By the time they were done, copies of every book of the Old Testament had been discovered (with the exception of Esther). In some cases there were multiple copies of the same book. For example, there were nineteen copies of the Book of Isaiah, twenty-five copies of Deuteronomy and thirty copies of the Psalms. Now why do I mention the Dead Sea Scrolls? Because manuscripts like the Dead Sea Scrolls have allowed Biblical scholars and textual critics to go back and verify that the Bible we have today is the same Bible that the early church possessed 2,000 years ago. You can view these manuscripts in the British Museum, Cambridge University Library, Smithsonian Institute, Oxford University, the National Library at Paris, and Israel Museum.

Now, even if we did not have any manuscripts copies of the Bible, there is another way of verifying that we have accurate copies of the Bible, and that is by examining the writings of the church fathers. By church fathers I am referring to those leaders in the church, of the first three centuries A.D., following the original disciples. I'm talking about men like Justin Martyr, Eusebius, Tertullian, Polycarp. These men, in their writings and correspondence with one another, and in their letters to different churches, quote the Old and New Testament over and over again. In fact, the early church

fathers quote the New Testament alone more than 86,000 times. And here is something most people don't realize. Their writings survive to this day! You can go to Amazon.com right now and buy an encyclopedic size set of **the writings of the church fathers** and see with your own eyes their numerous quotations of both the Old and New Testaments.

There are enough quotations from the early church fathers that even if we did not have a single manuscript copy of the Bible, scholars could still reconstruct most of the New Testament today just from their writings [Norman Geisler and William Nix, *General Introduction to the Bible*, 430]. This shouldn't come as a surprise to us. Isaiah 40:8 says, "The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God stands forever." Jesus said in Matthew 24:35, "Heaven and Earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away."

For more on the manuscript evidence, I recommend:

- Norman Geisler: ***From God to Us: How We Got the Bible***
- F. F. Bruce: ***The New Testament Documents: Are They Reliable?***
- Walter C. Kaiser: ***The Old Testament Documents: Are They Reliable and Relevant?***

## 7. THE BIBLE'S FORTHRIGHTNESS ABOUT ITS AUTHOR'S AND HERO'S FAILURES

What am I talking about? I'm speaking the author's openness about their failures and sins. Unlike the authors of other religious writings, the authors of the Bible did not seek to cast themselves in good light or to elevate themselves at all.

Of course, this doesn't prove that the Bible is true, but it does help strengthen our case that the Bible appears to be an honest work. Listen to some of the things we read about in the Bible. We read of...

- Noah getting drunk shortly after getting off of the ark (Genesis 9:21)
- Abraham lying (on more than one occasion) about Sarah being his wife (Genesis 12:13; 20:2)
- Moses' outburst of anger, how he misrepresented God, and wasn't even allowed to enter into the Promised Land (Numbers 20:10-11)
- Israel rejecting God on numerous occasions to worship other gods (e.g., see the book of Judges)
- David's adultery with Bathsheba and subsequent murder of her husband Uriah (2 Samuel 11)
- Jesus called Peter "Satan" (Mark 8:33)
- Peter denying that he knew Jesus, after promising he would never do such a thing (Matthew 26:72)
- Peter's fear of being seen eating with Gentiles (Galatians 2:11-12)
- The disciple's prideful argument over which one of them was the greatest (Luke 22:24)
- The disciples falling asleep when Jesus asked them to pray (Mark 14:32-41)
- The disciples running away to save their own necks when Jesus was arrested (Mark 14:50)
- Paul's confession that he was "a wretched man" (Romans 7:24) and the "chief" of sinners (1 Timothy 1:15)
- Paul and Barnabas's argument over Mark being allowed to travel with them (Acts 15:38-39)

I could go on. Question for you. Do these sound like the words of men who were lying?

Not at all. And if you add to this evidence the fact that these men imparted to the world the highest

standards of conduct the world has ever seen, the case is only strengthened.

## 8. THE PERSECUTION THE DISCIPLES ENDURED

Now, earlier tonight the skeptic raised a legitimate concern when it came to the prophecies that Jesus fulfilled. He said, "Maybe the disciples just made up all of these things that Jesus supposedly did. Perhaps they read all of those prophecies in the Old Testament and decided to make up an elaborate story about Jesus fulfilling them!"

Well, in addition to their forthrightness about their sins and failures, there's another reason why I don't think the disciples were lying. Historians, such as Flavius Josephus and Eusebius and others, record for us that Jesus' disciples went to their graves, one by one, suffering and dying martyr's deaths for their on-going belief and preaching that Jesus was Lord and was risen from the dead.

We are told in these extrabiblical sources that:

- Matthew was slain with a sword in a city of Ethiopia
- Mark died in Alexandria, in Northern Egypt after having been cruelly dragged through the streets of that city.
- Luke was hung upon an olive tree in the land of Greece
- John was tortured and then banished to the island of Patmos
- James, John's brother, was beheaded in Jerusalem (see Acts 12:2)
- James the Less (as he's called in Mark 15:40) was thrown from a pinnacle of the temple
- Philip was hung up against a pillar at Heiropolis in the province of Phrygia
- Bartholomew was flayed alive
- Andrew was bound to a cross, and left to die
- Jude was shot to death with arrows
- Matthias (the apostle chosen to replace Judas) was first stoned, and then beheaded
- Barnabas was stoned to death by the Jews at Salonica
- Paul, after a variety of tortures and imprisonments, was finally beheaded in Rome
- Thomas was run through the body with a spear in east India
- Peter was crucified upside down in Rome

Question for you. Were these men lying?

I find it hard to believe that men who were willing to die these kinds of painful deaths were just "making up a story" about Jesus. Of course, there are people who are willing to die today for something that they *think* is true. Muslim terrorists come to mind. But nobody willingly dies for something they *know* is a *lie*. And Jesus' disciples were at a unique place in history. They lived in and around Jerusalem in the first century where Jesus was publicly crucified and buried in a tomb. So they were at a place historically to know for certain whether or not they had seen Jesus alive after His crucifixion or not. Muslim terrorists today are not in such a place. They die for something they *think* is true, something they *hope* is true. But if Muslims lived back in the seventh century at the time of Muhammad and knew for certain that he was not a prophet of God and that he never performed any miracles, etc. they would not be strapping explosives around their waists and blowing themselves up. Nobody willing dies for something they know is a lie.

Jesus' disciples sealed their testimonies with their own blood, in and around Jerusalem, all the way back in the first century...claiming all the way to the end that the long-awaited Messiah and Savior of the world lived among them, became a sacrifice for our sins, and that He rose from the dead.

That, to me, is compelling evidence that these men were telling the truth about Jesus.

## 9. THE BIBLE'S TRANSFORMING POWER FOR GOOD

The Bible claims to be living and powerful (Hebrews 4:12, Psalm 19:7-10). And that has indeed proven to be the case. No other book in the world has had the transforming effect upon lives and societies for good, than that of the Bible. Now, of course, this alone doesn't prove that the Bible is the Word of God, but I do think that this fits into the case I've been building.

God didn't have the Bible written down to entertain us. The Bible was given to us so that we might know God, be reconciled to Him, and live our lives for Him in a way that is pleasing to Him. Do we see that happening in the lives of those who read it? Absolutely!

Wherever the gospel has gone and been received—from prisons to remote villages deep inside third world countries—it has had a transforming effect on people's lives for good. Down through the centuries, its words have converted millions of unbelievers to faith in Jesus Christ as Lord. Millions of people (including myself!), who would testify that they were immoral, godless sinners, drowning in drug addictions, alcoholism, pornography, gambling and the like, have been transformed into godly men and women as they have studied and followed the teachings of the Bible. I have seen it over and over!

In addition to changing lives, the Bible has inspired people:

- to build countless hospitals and orphanages
- start many of the world's greatest universities (Harvard, Yale, Princeton, were started by Christians for Christian purposes)
- launch innumerable humanitarian efforts to the poor
- work for the equality of men and women and those of different skin colors
- investigate the world and universe scientifically
- further the development of great art and music
- abolish slavery (William Wilberforce, an evangelical Christian and member of the British Parliament in the early 19th century, was the one largely responsible for the abolition of the slave trade).

Now, obviously a lot more could be said about all this. If you'd like to read about how the Bible has changed the world for good, I highly recommend the book ***What if the Bible Had Never Been Written?*** by D. James Kennedy and Jerry Newcombe. It is excellent!

The historian Philip Schaff summarized the enormous impact the Bible has had on people when he wrote this about Jesus:

"Jesus of Nazareth, without money and arms, conquered more millions than Alexander, Caesar, Mohammed, and Napoleon; without science and learning, He shed more light on things human and divine than all philosophers and scholars combined; without the eloquence of schools, He spoke

such words of life as were never spoken before or since, and produced effects which lie beyond the reach of orator or poet; without writing a single line, He set more pens in motion, and furnished themes for more sermons, orations, discussions, learned volumes, works of art, and songs of praise than the whole army of great men of ancient and modern times.” (Schaff, *The Person of Christ*, p. 29)

Jesus' words truly have made an enormous impact on the world.

## 10. THE TESTIMONY OF JESUS, THE SON OF GOD

Another reason that you can be sure that the Bible is trustworthy is because Jesus said it was! If there's anyone we can trust regarding the Word of God, it's the One who proved Himself to be the Son of God by fulfilling hundreds of Old Testament prophecies, living a sinless life, performing numerous miracles and His resurrection from the dead. And Jesus assured us that the Jewish Scriptures could be trusted: Jesus taught that the Scriptures were:

### A. Without Error

In John 17:17, Jesus said in His prayer to His Father, “Thy word is [Full of contradictions? Errors? No.] truth.”

### B. Historically Reliable

Jesus affirmed as historically true some of the most disputed passages of the Old Testament, including the story of Jonah in the whale (Matt. 12:40), the destruction of the world by a flood in the days of Noah (Matt.24:37-39), and others (see Dan Story, *Defending Your Faith*, p. 55-60 and Geisler, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 1, p. 559).

### C. Divinely Authoritative

Over and over, Jesus said to Satan, “It is written...it is written...it is written” (Matt. 4:4-10).

### D. Scientifically Accurate.

For example, when He taught on marriage He referred to the literal creation of Adam and Eve (Matt. 19:4).

### E. Infallible (Dependable, or Unbreakable)

In John 10:35 Jesus said, “The Scripture cannot be broken.”

You can build your life on the Word of God. You can stand upon God's promises. The Word of God is not going to collapse underneath you.

### F. Indestructible

In Matthew 5:18 Jesus said, “For truly I say to you, until heaven and Earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass away from the Law, until all is accomplished.” If Jesus was a prophet of God, as even the Qur'an teaches, or even if He was a good teacher (as so many are willing to believe today), it would be wise for us to take His Word on the matter, and He taught that

the Bible is a historically reliable, divinely authoritative, scientifically accurate, dependable, error free, indestructible book.

**SKEPTIC:** “Come on, Charlie, you’re referring to the words of Jesus *in* the Bible to prove the Bible. You’re guilty of circular reasoning. You’re quoting the Bible to prove the Bible!”

Ah, as I pointed out earlier, the Bible is not one book. It is a collection of 66 books written by different authors. So when I quote Jesus' words to substantiate what Moses or other authors wrote I am not involved in circular reasoning at all. Instead, I am quoting altogether independent sources that happen to be bound together between two covers of the same book.

**SKEPTIC:** “Okay Charlie! But, Jesus was only talking about the *Old* Testament when He said those things. The New Testament had not been written.”

You’re right! It was not written yet. But listen to what Jesus said to His disciples in John 14:26. He promised the aid of the Holy Spirit to His disciples in writing the new. Jesus said, “But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you” (John 14:26). In John 16:13, Jesus told His disciples, “However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come.”

As these men went out into the world to make disciples, to preach, and teach, to pen the New Testament gospels and epistles, they were going to have the supernatural guidance of the Holy Spirit!

So, Jesus validated the trustworthiness of the Old Testament and He promised the trustworthiness of the New. Based on Jesus’ testimony, you can trust both.

## **CONCLUSION: GOOD NEWS AND BAD NEWS**

Friend, you can trust the Bible! You can read it with confidence! You can stand upon its promises! You can draw comfort from its passages. You can gain wisdom from its pages and best of all, you can know your creator by reading it. What a joy it is to know God and to live for Him!

Do you know the God of the Bible? Do you know your creator? Are you experiencing the joy of walking with God? Are you experiencing the peace that comes with knowing your sins have been forgiven and that all is right between you and God? You can.

That is why Jesus, God in the flesh, suffered on that cruel wooden cross two thousand years ago. He was paying the penalty for your sins so that you could be forgiven, so that you could escape eternity in Hell and be brought back into a right relationship with your creator. He rose from the grave three days later, ascended into Heaven and today He is offering all of mankind—you!—the complete forgiveness of sins and everlasting life to all who will place their faith in Him. Have you done that? Is Jesus Christ your Lord?

The Bible says that one day you will stand before God to give an account for your life. If you have never placed your faith in Jesus Christ, the Bible says that books will be opened that contain a

thorough record of all the sinful things you have ever done, the lies you told, the things you stole, the immoral behavior, even those things you thought you got away with in secret, the things you thought no one else found out about (Matthew 12:36, Revelation 20:12).

Your guilty standing before God will result in your judgment, condemnation and separation from God for all eternity (Romans 2:5; Revelation 20:11–15).

Is that what you want—an eternity of misery apart from God—the very source of love, hope, peace, joy and all that is good? If you are like most people I have met, the answer is no. You want to go to Heaven. And there is a good chance you think you *are* going to Heaven. Most people believe they are. They think they are going to Heaven because they are basically good people. Maybe you think that. And you may be a good person if you compare yourself to a murderer or the drug lord locked up in the state penitentiary. But how you measure up against other people does nothing to affect your standing before a holy, sinless, just God. How you compare to others does nothing to undo the thousands of sins you have committed over the course of your lifetime.

So, let's make sure you are going to Heaven, not on your terms, but on God's terms. Click here and I will share with you **three steps to peace with God**.



### About Charlie Campbell:

Charlie Campbell is the Director of the Always Be Ready Apologetics Ministry and a popular guest speaker at churches and conferences. He is the author of three books:

- *One Minute Answers to Skeptics*
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His DVDs and books have been endorsed by:

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He resides in southern California with his wife and five children.

### Scheduling Charlie to Teach:

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### Additional Resources by Charlie Campbell

**DVDS. BOOKS. CDS. MP3S.**



