

How Do We Know We Can Trust the Bible?
Part 1: The Origin of the Bible

A. Knowing the Challenge

1. This week and next week our topic is “How Do We Know We Can Trust the Bible” and we will address it in two parts:
 - a. The Origin of the Bible (How did we get our Bible? Who wrote it?)
 - b. The Accuracy of the Bible
2. The world claims the Bible was written by men
3. The world claims the Bible is just one of many equally valid religious books
 - a. The Bible: Christianity
 - b. The Torah: Judaism
 - c. The Quran: Islam
 - d. The Book of Mormon: Mormonism
 - e. The Vedas, the Upanishads and the Bhagavad Gita: Hinduism
 - f. The Tripitaka: Buddhism
4. The world claims that the Bible has been corrupted and changed over time, so that we can’t know what it said originally

B. Knowing the Truth (Three reasons why we can trust the Bible)

1. The First reason: The Bible is trustworthy because it wasn’t just written by men—it was **WRITTEN** by God: How did God do this?
 - a. The Bible is Inspired: 1 Timothy 3:16-17: “**All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; 17 so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.**”
 - 1) “**All Scripture**”
 - a) In Paul’s day, this would have referred first and foremost to the Torah
 - b) But, it also referred to the Gospels, Acts, the letters that were being written by the Apostles (see 2 Peter 3:16 where Peter equates Paul’s letters with Scripture)
 - c) So, “all Scripture” is a reference to what we now call the Bible
 - 2) “**Inspired**” – literally “**God-breathed**”
 - b. The Holy Spirit moved the authors to write what they wrote: 2 Peter 1:21: “**But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, 21 for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.**”
 - 1) “**one’s own interpretation**” – the Greek word refers to one’s own ability to understand and explain something and in this instance refers not to interpretation as we think of it (e.g. explaining a Biblical text), but rather the creation of Scripture based on one’s own understanding of spiritual matters
 - 2) “**act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.**” – this means that no passage of Scripture was initiated by the human author himself, but rather the

Holy Spirit moved him to speak or write exactly what God wanted said or written (Big Word Time: verbal plenary inspiration)

- c. So, since God is the ultimate author of the Bible, we expect it to be perfect, accurate and true just as He is which means we can trust it:
 - 1) John 17:17: **“Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth.”**
 - 2) Psalm 19:1-7:
 - a) **“perfect”** – complete and sound
 - b) **“sure”** – trustworthy
 - c) **“right”** – straight
 - d) **“pure”** – not mixed with error
 - e) **“true”** -- reliable
 - d. Evidence of inspiration is apparent when we consider the incredible unity of the Bible:
 - 1) 66 different books, letters, poems and songs
 - 2) Written over nearly 1500 to 2000 years in three different languages
 - 3) By 40 different men from all different walks of life (e.g. shepherds, kings, scholars, fishermen, priests, prophets, and even a doctor)
 - 4) On three different continents
 - 5) Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit as we learned last week
 - 6) Inspiration is apparent because there is so much amazing diversity as described above, yet the Bible maintains an incredible consistency from the first chapter of Genesis to the last chapter of Revelation when it comes to depicting God’s nature, character, actions, words and spiritual truths
 - 7) This defies natural explanation!
2. The Second Reason: The Bible is trustworthy because it was **ASSEMBLED** by God (e.g. put together):
- a. The Bible isn’t one book but a collection of books
 - b. Old Testament
 - 1) The earliest Bible started with Moses when God commanded him to put copies of his writings (the first five books of the OT) into the Ark of the Covenant in the Holy of Holies (Deuteronomy 10:2)
 - 2) As God spoke to the people through the prophets, the people of Israel continued to add the writings of the prophets to the books of Moses until the last prophet, Malachi, finished his book (about 420 BC).
 - 3) Scribes were responsible for maintaining these writings, and followed very strict rules for making copies
 - 4) Then, sometime around 200 BC, the king of Egypt commissioned a copy of the Hebrew Bible to put into the Library of Alexandria (probably the largest library in the world at the time) so 72 Jewish scribes made a Greek translation of the Old Testament. It was called the Septuagint (or LXX) which means 70 in Greek.
 - 5) So, the Old Testament was in its completed form and even translated into another language by at least 200 BC
 - c. New Testament

- 1) As the Apostles wrote books and letters to the churches during the first century, the Holy Spirit moved Christians to recognize certain writings as inspired by God and they began to preserve, copy and distribute these writings among themselves
 - 2) They even began keeping lists of which writings were inspired
 - 3) Overtime, by the end of the 1st century, the Church recognized 27 different books and letters as inspired and they became our New Testament
 - 4) What's remarkable about this, no one individual or group decided what books made up our New Testament
 - 5) Rather, the Holy Spirit moved Christians in different places to recognize the same writings as God's Word
 - 6) Some people try to claim that certain men at different Church Councils (like the Council of Nicea in 325 AD) decided what books to include and which to exclude
 - 7) However, this is untrue—all these men did was recognize what books were already considered God's Word by Christians
- d. So God is ultimately the one behind the assembly of the Bible:
- 1) He moved the authors to write the actual contents through the process of inspiration
 - 2) He then moved Christians to collect and organize the books and letters into the Old and New Testaments
3. The Third reason: The Bible is trustworthy because it was PRESERVED by God:
- a. The Bible was originally written in Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek and God has preserved copies of the original books and letters—in these languages—so that we have the actual words written by the authors
 - b. This is referred to as something called the Doctrine of the Preservation of Scriptures
 - c. We know this is true for TWO REASONS:
 - 1) Reason #1: God promised He would preserve His Word:
 - a) Jesus (Matthew 5:18): **"For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished."**
 - b) Jesus (Matthew 24:35): **"Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away."**
 - c) Isaiah 40:8 (also quoted by Peter in 1 Peter 1:24-25): **"The grass withers, the flower fades, But the word of our God stands forever."**
 - 2) Reason #2: We have the evidence that God preserved His Word:
 - a) We don't have the original books or letters (e.g. the actual stone tables or scrolls Moses wrote or the physical letters Paul wrote), so we have to rely on ancient (very old) copies that have been copied over and over again and handed down from generation to generation
 - b) The good news is that we have thousands and thousands of ancient or early copies and fragments (parts of books and letters)
 - We have over 10,000 partial and complete ancient copies of the Old Testament, and over 24,000 of the New Testament
 - Plus, we have the writings of the Church Fathers and they quoted verses from the Bible over 86,000 times
 - c) These manuscripts come from all over the ancient near east (e.g. Israel, Egypt, Syria, Iraq, Iran, etc.)

- d) Some of the copies were actually made just 100 or 200 years after the original books or letters were written
- e) When we compare the different copies or pieces from each book or letter of the Bible to one another they are nearly identical—with less than a 1% difference—which means that they were copied almost completely without error by hand over thousands and thousands of years!
- f) And, this 1% difference is made up of very minor copying mistakes like spelling errors or a repeated or missing word (like Christ Jesus instead of Jesus Christ)—and NONE of these differences change the meaning of the verses!

C. Knowing How to Respond

Remember, your goal is not to prove anything or convince anyone. You simply need to give a defense for why you believe the Bible can be trusted.

- S. The Bible is just another religious book written by men.
- A. The Bible's not just another religious book; it's the most unique book in history. For instance, did you know that the Bible isn't one book? It's actually sixty six different books and letters written by 40 different people from three different continents over two thousand years? What I find amazing about this is that most of the writers didn't know each other, and lived at totally different times in different places, and yet what they wrote about God is incredibly consistent. They all say the same things about God—like His nature, His character, His love for us, how to know Him and how to find salvation. This is one reason why we Christians believe the Bible is God's Word and not just man's. The Bible claims to be inspired by God meaning that the writers weren't just writing their own words, but God's actual Words. This is why so many writers could say all the same things—they weren't just writing their words, but the words God gave them to write. This is why the Apostle Paul wrote in 2 Timothy 3:16-17 that **"All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; 17 so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work."** It's also why Peter wrote, **"No prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God"** (2 Peter 1:21).
- S. You can't trust the Bible because it's changed or been corrupted over time.
- A. That statement just isn't supported by the facts. The Bible is the most well preserved book in history—not just religious book but ANY book. We obviously don't have the original documents the Bible writers made. However, we do have very old (ancient) copies that go back thousands of years. Between the Old and New Testaments, we have over 30,000 different ancient manuscripts or parts of manuscripts. When you compare the oldest copies (some going back to the first century AD) with the newest copies they are almost identical. There is less than a 1% difference between them and these differences are extremely minor. This means that what we have today in our Bible is exactly what the original writers wrote. No other book in history has this kind of evidence to support its accuracy. In fact, the second best preserved ancient book is Homer's Iliad and that has only 650 ancient copies and they have five times the number of differences between them than the Bible does it's 30,000 copies (for more on manuscript evidence see <https://carm.org/manuscript-evidence>). I believe this points to God's protection of the Bible which is something He promised. The prophet Isaiah wrote, **"The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God stands forever"** (Isaiah 40:8). Jesus also promised that His words would never pass away: **"Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away"** (Mark 13:30).