

## **Is the Bible the Word of God?**

The Bible is a unique book. Its history, message, influence, unity, and accuracy are incomparable with any other book in the world. No other book has been so vigorously attacked, scrutinised, and vilified, yet the Bible has never been proved false on any single point. Its message touches on the most difficult and important issues of life, such as the meaning and purpose of life, the nature of good and evil, the problem of sin, the destiny of mankind, the source of true happiness, the way to salvation, and the hope of the world.

The Bible was written over a period of at least 1500 years by more than forty different authors from every walk of life: Moses, an Egyptian prince; Amos, a herdsman; Solomon and David, kings of Israel; Matthew, a tax collector; Luke, a physician; Peter, a fisherman; Paul, a Pharisee. In spite of its diversity there is one consistent theme, one solution, and one plan of redemption for mankind. Don Stewart, after examining the uniqueness of the Bible, remarked:

*How can this be explained? By the fact that there is only one author behind all the books of the Bible: God Himself – Don Stewart.*

The case for the Bible depends not merely on its uniqueness, but on solid evidence as presented in this paper. The Bible is more than a wonderful collection of writings – it is the Word of God.

*A man has deprived himself of the best there is in the world who has deprived himself of a knowledge of the Bible – Woodrow Wilson.*

*The existence of the Bible, as a book for the people, is the greatest benefit which the human race has ever experienced. Every attempt to belittle it is a crime against humanity – Immanuel Kant.*

### **Reason Demands It**

Throughout the ages man has searched for answers to the ultimate questions such as, “Why am I here?”, “Where did I come from?” and, “Where am I going?” Only God can answer these questions.

Without divine revelation, man’s search for truth is a hopeless quest. Nature is inadequate to act as a guide for the existence of man. Man himself is limited and finite, and hence he cannot act as an authority on, nor possibly ascertain any notion of, ultimate truth. God alone has absolute knowledge, and only he has the authority to reveal truth and knowledge to man.

Logically, if man is to know the truth about God and about life, it is essential that God reveal this truth to him. God has provided everything else for man’s existence on earth, so it is reasonable to expect that he would also provide a complete and absolute standard of truth by which man can live.

*Only God can provide us with an eternal perspective and speak to us with absolute and final authority – R. C. Sproul.*

*Human thought cannot conceive any system of final truth that can give a patient what he needs in order to live – Carl Jung.*

Man cannot know God’s will without God’s revelation. God, being infinite in power, is able to communicate with man and, since revelation is both possible and necessary, it is therefore reasonable that God should give man a revelation. The Bible provides just such a revelation.

### **History Verifies It**

The wonder of the Bible does not simply stand on its ethical teachings, but on its historical facts. The Bible contains an extraordinary amount of detail which means that it is historically verifiable. Historians the world over have confirmed the accuracy and reliability of the Bible.

*There exists no document from the ancient world witnessed by so excellent a set of textual and historical testimonies, and offering so superb an array of historical data on which an intelligent decision may be made. An honest man cannot dismiss a source of this kind. Skepticism regarding the historical credentials of Christianity is based upon an irrational bias – Dr. Clark Pinnock.*

*When you consider the great writings of the Egyptians, the Babylonians, the Greeks, and the Romans, how they are saturated with mythology, superstition, and fantasy ... replete with scientific blunders, surely it is impossible the Bible could escape without error. Still it stands without a single proven error after thirty-four centuries of scholarship – G. B. Hardy.*

Historian Will Durant, in his momentous work, “The Story of Civilisation”, makes the following comment on the gospel writers:

*They record many incidents that mere inventors would have concealed – the competition of the apostles for high places in the Kingdom, their flight after Jesus’ arrest, Peter’s denial, the failure of Christ to work miracles in Galilee, the references of some auditors to his possible insanity ... no one reading these scenes can doubt the reality of the figure behind them – Will Durant.*

The historical reliability of the Bible is one of a kind. No other religious book can match its reliability or authenticity.

*What the church lacks in our day is not a reliable text of the Bible, but the faith in the sufficiently reliable text – Francis Piper.*

## **Archaeology Supports It**

The accuracy of the Bible is abundantly confirmed by the science of archaeology. The Bible contains an enormous amount of historical data including dates, customs, people, behaviour, places and cities. As archaeological discoveries have increased our knowledge and understanding of history, so the Bible has been increasingly shown to be without fault in even the smallest details.

*Through the wealth of data uncovered by historical and archaeological research, we are able to measure the Bible’s historical accuracy. In every case where its claims can be thus tested, the Bible proves to be accurate and reliable – Jack Cottrell.*

During the nineteenth century, when liberal theology was at its height, the Bible was commonly treated as a book of legends, myths and fiction. Many of its characters and events were rejected as unhistorical. Today, archaeology has refuted the scepticism of the critics and confirmed the reliability of the biblical history. No eminent scholar would share the liberal views of the nineteenth century critics.

*The excessive skepticism shown towards the Bible by important historical schools of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, certain phases of which still appear periodically, has been progressively discredited – Dr. William F. Albright.*

*The reviewer has spent many years in biblical archaeology, and, in company with his colleagues, has made discoveries confirming in outline or in detail historical statements in the Bible. He is prepared to go further and say that no archaeological discovery has ever been made that contradicts or controverts historical statements in Scripture – Prof. Nelson Glueck.*

*If the Bible has been shown to be truthful in these obscure details, it is very unlikely that any part of it is the work of a forger – Dr. Jauncey.*

If all the lines of historical and archaeological evidence demonstrate the reliability of the Bible, then the Bible's own claims to being God's inspired Word should be taken seriously.

*The Christian can take the whole Bible in his hand and say without fear or hesitation that he holds in it the true Word of God, handed down without essential loss from generation to generation throughout the centuries – Sir Frederic G. Kenyon.*

*... you who have received the law that was put into effect through angels ... (Acts 7:53).*

## **Prophecy Proves It**

One of the most powerful evidences for the divine origin of the Bible is the remarkable number of fulfilled prophecies found in it. It has been estimated that prophecy constitutes about one third of the Bible. History testifies to the accurate fulfilment of those prophecies relating to past events, most of which were predicted hundreds of years before they were fulfilled.

God alone knows the future, so the only explanation for these accurate predictions is that they were inspired by God.

*Only the supernatural mind can have prior knowledge to the natural mind. If the Bible has foreknowledge, historical and scientific, beyond the permutation of chance ... it truly then bears the fingerprint of God – G. B. Hardy.*

Some Bible prophecies, such as those in the books of Isaiah and Daniel, contain extraordinary detail. This has led some sceptics to claim that they must have been written *after* the events they describe. But careful examination of the language used and the historical and archaeological evidence contained in the Bible supports the dates given for the prophecies.

The Bible itself makes the fulfilment of prophecy the test for its own validity:

*I am God, and there is none like me. I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come (Isaiah 46:9-10).*

*But there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries. He has shown ... what will happen (Daniel 2:28).*

The majority of the Old Testament prophecies relate to the first appearance of Jesus Christ, the Messiah, and contain some extraordinary detail. For example:

- He would be born of a women (Genesis 3:15).
- He would be born into the lineage of King David (Isaiah 9:6-7, 16:5).
- He would be from the tribe of Judah (Genesis 49:9-10).
- He would be born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2).
- He would be born of a virgin (Isaiah 7:14).
- He would be crucified (Psalm 22:14-18).
- He would be resurrected (Psalm 16:9-11).

After his resurrection, Christ said to his disciples: "This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms" (Luke 24:44).

## **Christ Confirmed It**

Jesus testified that the Old Testament was the Word of God. For example:

- He held the teachings of the Law and the Prophets to be perfect and relevant “until heaven and earth disappear”, and required his disciples to obey all of the commandments contained in them (Matthew 5:17-20).
- He held the biblical description of the creation to be literal (Matthew 19:3-9).
- He pointed to the Scriptures as the basis for the correct understanding of spiritual matters (Matthew 22:23-32, 41-46).
- He regarded as blessed those who “hear and obey the Word of God” (Luke 11:27-28).
- He regarded Scripture as inviolate: “... the Scripture cannot be broken” (John 10:34-35).
- He rebuked the religious leaders of his day for replacing the commandments of God with human traditions (Matthew 23:1-36; Luke 11:37-54).

As discussed in a companion paper, there is strong evidence that Jesus Christ was the Son of God as he claimed.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, if Jesus believed that the Bible is the Word of God, then so should we.

*To Christ the Bible is true, authoritative, inspired, to him the God of the Bible is the living God, and the teaching of the Bible is the teaching of the living God. To him what Scripture says, God says – John W. Wenham.*

*The Bible is not infallible because it says so – but because he says so. There is no more reliable witness to the nature of Scripture than the one who died and rose to be our saviour – Clark Pinnock.*

## **Implications of the Bible as the Word of God**

There are good reasons for accepting that the Bible was inspired by God and is the Word of God. Reason demands that God should provide man with knowledge and truth beyond what we can learn for ourselves, and the Bible provides this. History and archaeology support the accuracy of the Bible. Prophecy proves that it was divinely inspired. And Jesus Christ, who showed himself to be the Son of God, confirmed that the Bible is the Word of God.

Given that God has provided the Bible as a reliable source of knowledge about spiritual matters, how should we respond to this? The following are some of the critical implications:

- ❖ **Studying the Bible gives insight and understanding.** God has provided the Bible for our benefit. It is by studying the Bible and praying to God for understanding that we become wise. “Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful” (Joshua 1:8). The Bible is a guide for our lives and spiritual food for our souls. “Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path” (Psalm 119:105). “Man does not live by bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God” (Matthew 4:4).
- ❖ **The Bible is the basis of all true knowledge.** Throughout the ages there have been many religious scripts and countless texts written on religious matters. The Bible, however, is the point of reference against which all other religious writings, and many secular writings, should be compared for accuracy. If a man says something that is not in accord with Scripture, then what he has said is not correct. Conversely, a man’s words will be true and trustworthy to the extent that they agree with Scripture. “Every word of God is flawless” (Proverbs 30:5).
- ❖ **The Bible provides an absolute standard of right and wrong.** Since the Bible was inspired by God, we can be confident that its teachings and commandments are

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<sup>1</sup> See the article *Was Jesus Christ God?* in this series.

trustworthy. If the Bible teaches that a certain thing is right or wrong, then we can be sure of this even if we are not sure why. “All Scripture is God breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness” (2 Timothy 3:16).

- ❖ **We should not replace the teachings of the Bible with those of men.** The Bible was provided by God to meet all our spiritual needs until the end of the age (Matthew 5:18). It does not need to be updated, added to, or subtracted from to bring it into alignment with some current view. While it is good for people to study and expound the Word of God, there is no need to invent new teachings or modify those already given. “Do not add to his words, or he will rebuke you and prove you a liar” (Proverbs 30:6). “But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned!” (Galatians 1:8).

## **Conclusions**

When we examine the Bible and all its extraordinary wisdom, we are faced with only two choices. Either it was written by men, or it is the revelation of God. If it was written by men, then we should expect that it would contain all the errors and failings common to men. But the Bible is astonishingly accurate, consistent in its message, and authoritative in its teachings. It shows all the hallmarks of having been inspired by God.

The Bible itself claims to be the Word of God. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, held it to be so. And it has been shown to be accurate in all of its extensive historical, archaeological and prophetic detail.

We can conclude, therefore, that both the rational and the scientific evidence point clearly to the Bible being divinely inspired. The true wonder of the Bible, however, lies not in the fact of its origin, but in the authority of its words.

*The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul. The statutes of the Lord are trustworthy, making wise the simple. The precepts of the Lord are right, giving joy to the heart. The commands of the Lord are radiant, giving light to the eyes. The fear of the Lord is pure, enduring forever. The ordinances of the Lord are sure, and altogether righteous. They are more precious than gold, than much pure gold; they are sweeter than honey, than honey from the comb. By them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward (Psalm 19:7-11).*

If you would like to know the God of the Bible, this is what you should do:

- ❖ **Pray to Jesus Christ.** “The Lord is near to all who call on him ... he hears their cry and saves them” (Psalm 145:18-19).
- ❖ **Read the Bible.** You should start by reading the whole of the New Testament, asking Jesus to help you to understand what you are reading.
- ❖ **Join a church.** It is vital that you find a church which holds the Bible to be the final authority in all matters of faith and practice for those who believe in Jesus Christ.

## **List of Papers in This Series**

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## **Acknowledgments**

The following sources were used in the preparation of this paper:

*Christianity for Skeptics* by Steve Kumar and John Heining, World Wide Press., 1994.

*Christianity for Skeptics* by Steve Kumar, Hendrickson Pub., 2001.

Bible quotations are from the New International Version, 1984.