

Can we trust the Bible?

1 Peter 3:15 But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear;

The impossibility of changing the Bible

- Many people claim the Bible has been changed. Is it possible that some atheist, Caesar or even group of devoted enemies of Scripture could find thousands of copies of scrolls, change them all in the same way, change the references to these verses in the patristic citations, and yet hide this fact from history?
- How could the changed Bible accusation account for recent discoveries, like the Dead Sea scrolls which were found in the 1940s and which match existing copies of the Old Testament with nearly complete accuracy?
- If the Bible had been changed, wouldn't some of the changes have affected facts which are verified by modern archaeology? If so, there would be Bible stories which would be proven to be wrong, but this has never happened.
- Changes would have introduced scientific errors, yet the Bible is scientifically accurate.

Evidence from the Manuscripts

- "The New Testament documents, for example, have more manuscript authority than any 10 works of antiquity put together. As mentioned earlier, we have over 24,000 manuscript copies of portions of the New Testament dating from before A.D. 350. In comparison, the number two book in all of ancient history for manuscript authority is the *Iliad* with 643 manuscripts."
- When we read other ancient books, which have far fewer ancient copies in existence, we believe we are reading what the author originally wrote. We should believe this about the Bible even more so, because of the weight of the evidence.
- For example, we have 10 copies of the writings of Julius Caesar, and these are dated from the tenth century, yet when we read them, we believe they are accurate.
- There are no significant differences in the 24, 000 manuscripts regarding major doctrines. Most differences have to do with spelling of Greek words.
- Critics of the Bible argue about less than 1% of the 60,000 words used in Scripture, and none of these relate to major doctrines.
- "The Bible contains 66 books written over 1600 years by 44 authors and yet they all agree. The Koran does not even agree with itself and yet it was written in the span of a few decades."
- "The individual writers, at the time of writing, had no idea that their message was eventually to be incorporated into such a Book, but each nevertheless fits perfectly into place and serves its own unique purpose as a component of the whole. Anyone who diligently studies the Bible will continually find remarkable structural and mathematical patterns woven throughout its fabric, with an intricacy and symmetry incapable of explanation by chance or collusion."

Fulfilled prophecy

- "Explain David's graphic portrayal of Jesus' death by crucifixion (Psalm 22) 1000 years previous to crucifixion being established as a form of capital punishment?"

- How could any mere human pinpoint the birth town of the Messiah seven full centuries before the fact, as did the prophet Micah?
- Account for the odds (1 in 10 to the 157th power) that even just 48 (of 300) Old Testament prophecies were fulfilled in one person, i.e. Jesus.
- How was it possible for the Old Testament prophet Isaiah to have predicted the virgin birth of Jesus (Isaiah 7:14) 700 years before it occurred?"
- "The remarkable evidence of fulfilled prophecy is just one case in point. Hundreds of Bible prophecies have been fulfilled, specifically and meticulously, often long after the prophetic writer had passed away. For example, Daniel the prophet predicted in about 538 BC ([Daniel 9:24-27](#)) that Christ would come as Israel's promised Savior and Prince 483 years after the Persian emperor would give the Jews authority to rebuild Jerusalem, which was then in ruins. This was clearly and definitely fulfilled, hundreds of years later. There are extensive prophecies dealing with individual nations and cities and with the course of history in general, all of which have been literally fulfilled. More than 300 prophecies were fulfilled by Christ Himself at His first coming. Other prophecies deal with the spread of Christianity, as well as various false religions, and many other subjects. There is no other book, ancient or modern, like this. The vague, and usually erroneous, prophecies of people like Jeanne Dixon, Nostradamus, Edgar Cayce, and others like them are not in the same category at all, and neither are other religious books such as the Koran, the Confucian Analects, and similar religious writings. Only the Bible manifests this remarkable prophetic evidence, and it does so on such a tremendous scale as to render completely absurd any explanation other than divine revelation."
- Of the 40-50 books used by religions around the world as "scripture," none except the Bible have the evidence of Divine inspiration as shown by fulfilled prophecies.
- 1 of every 6 verses in the Bible is prophecy. The life of Jesus demonstrates over 300 fulfilled prophecies. The odds of this happening by chance are 1 in 10¹⁵⁷.

Patristic citations

- Most of the New Testament was quoted in Patristic citations, which are manuscripts of the writings and sermons of early church leaders.
- These quotations do not contradict the manuscripts used to translate modern Bibles, which confirms that these manuscripts are accurate.

Archaeology

- Nelson Glueck, a world-famous Jewish archaeologist, went so far as to say that "it may be stated categorically that no archaeological discovery has ever controverted (contradicted) 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,"
- Many archaeologists doubted the accuracy of the Old Testament stories until later discoveries proved them to be true.
- "The discovery of the Ebla archive in northern Syria in the 1970s has shown the Biblical writings concerning the Patriarchs to be viable. Documents written on clay tablets from around 2300 B.C. demonstrate that personal and place names in the Patriarchal accounts are genuine. The name "Canaan" was in use in Ebla, a name critics once said was not used at that time and was used incorrectly in the early chapters of the Bible. The word "tehom" ("the deep") in [Genesis 1:2](#) was said to be a late word demonstrating the late writing of the creation story. "Tehom" was part of the vocabulary at Ebla, in use some 800 years before Moses. Ancient customs reflected in the

stories of the Patriarchs have also been found in clay tablets from Nuzi and Mari."

- "The Hittites were once thought to be a Biblical legend, until their capital and records were discovered at Bogazkoy, Turkey. Many thought the Biblical references to Solomon's wealth were greatly exaggerated. Recovered records from the past show that wealth in antiquity was concentrated with the king and Solomon's prosperity was entirely feasible.
- It was once claimed there was no Assyrian king named Sargon as recorded in Isaiah 20:1, because this name was not known in any other record. Then, Sargon's palace was discovered in Khorsabad, Iraq. The very event mentioned in Isaiah 20, his capture of Ashdod, was recorded on the palace walls. What is more, fragments of a stela memorializing the victory were found at Ashdod itself."
- "Another king who was in doubt was Belshazzar, king of Babylon, named in Daniel 5. The last king of Babylon was Nabonidus according to recorded history. Tablets were found showing that Belshazzar was Nabonidus' son who served as coregent in Babylon. Thus, Belshazzar could offer to make Daniel "third highest ruler in the kingdom" (Dan. 5: 16) for reading the handwriting on the wall, the highest available position. Here we see the "eye-witness" nature of the Biblical record, as is so often brought out by the discoveries of archaeology."

"Other examples of extra-Biblical confirmation of Biblical events:

- Campaign into Israel by Pharaoh Shishak (1 Kings 14:25-26), recorded on the walls of the Temple of Amun in Thebes, Egypt.
- Revolt of Moab against Israel (2 Kings 1: 1; 3:4-27), recorded on the Mesha Inscription.
- Fall of Samaria (2 Kings 17:3-6, 24; 18:9-11) to Sargon II, king of Assyria, as recorded on his palace walls.
- Defeat of Ashdod by Sargon II (Isaiah 20:1), as recorded on his palace walls.
- Campaign of the Assyrian king Sennacherib against Judah (2 Kings 18:13-16), as recorded on the Taylor Prism.
- Siege of Lachish by Sennacherib (2 Kings 18: 14, 17), as recorded on the Lachish reliefs. *
Assassination of Sennacherib by his own sons (2 Kings 19:37), as recorded in the annals of his son Esarhaddon.
- Fall of Nineveh as predicted by the prophets Nahum and Zephaniah (2:13-15), recorded on the Tablet of Nabopolassar.
- Fall of Jerusalem to Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon (2 Kings 24:10-14), as recorded in the Babylonian Chronicles.
- Captivity of Jehoiachin, king of Judah, in Babylon (2 Kings 24:15-16), as recorded on the Babylonian Ration Records.
- Fall of Babylon to the Medes and Persians (Daniel 5:30-31), as recorded on the Cyrus Cylinder.
- Freeing of captives in Babylon by Cyrus the Great (Ezra 1:1-4; 6:3-4), as recorded on the Cyrus Cylinder.
- The existence of Jesus Christ as recorded by Josephus, Suetonius, Thallus, Pliny the Younger, the Talmud, and Lucian.
- Forcing Jews to leave Rome during the reign of Claudius (A.D. 41-54) (Acts 18:2), as recorded by Suetonius."
- "Copies of the Old Testament have been found to be so accurate even in the spelling of ancient names from the Babylonians and Assyria that Robert Wilson in his book, "Which Bible?" estimates the odds of such an accomplishment at 750 quintillion to 1."
- "If the Bible tells us the truth about the names of cities, major political figures, local customs, and wars, then we could probably expect it to tell us the truth regarding its central themes and characters."

- <http://christiananswers.net/archaeology/home.html>

"The earliest preachers of the gospel knew the value of.. first-hand testimony, and appealed to it time and again. 'We are witnesses of these things,' was their constant and confident assertion. And it can have been by no means so easy as some writers think to invent words and deeds of Jesus in those early years, when so many of His disciples were about, who could remember what had and had not happened

"And it was not only friendly eyewitnesses that the early preachers had to reckon with; there were others less well disposed who were also conversant with the main facts of the ministry and death of Jesus. The disciples could not afford to risk inaccuracies (not to speak of willful manipulation of the facts), which would at once be exposed by those who would be only too glad to do so. On the contrary, one of the strong points in the original apostolic preaching is the confident appeal to the knowledge of the hearers; they not only said, 'We are witnesses of these things,' but also, 'As you yourselves also know' [Acts 2:22]. Had there been any tendency to depart from the facts in any material respect, the possible presence of hostile witnesses in the audience would have served as a further corrective." F.F. Bruce, *The New Testament Documents: Are They Reliable?*, 5th ed. (Downers Grove, IL: Inter Varsity Press, 1960), pp. 45-46.

The Bible claims to be the Word of God

2 Tim. 3:16 All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,

2 Peter 3:16-18 as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures. You therefore, beloved, since you know this beforehand, beware lest you also fall from your own steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked; but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and forever. Amen.

2 Peter 1:19-21 And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts; knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.

God promises to preserve the Bible

Isaiah 40:8 The grass withers, the flower fades, But the word of our God stands forever."

Matthew 5: 18 For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled.

Matthew 24:35 Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.

Rev. 22:18-19 For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.

The apostles claimed to be witnesses of the events of the Bible

2 Peter 1:16 For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty.

Acts 1:1-3 The former account I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, until the day in which He was taken up, after He through the Holy Spirit had given commandments to the apostles whom He had chosen, to whom He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.

Luke 1:1-4 Inasmuch as many have taken in hand to set in order a narrative of those things which have been fulfilled among us, just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word delivered them to us, it seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write to you an orderly account, most excellent Theophilus, that you may know the certainty of those things in which you were instructed.

1 John 1:1-3 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life-- the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us-- that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.

Acts 2:32 This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses.

- "If one will seriously investigate these Biblical evidences, he will find that their claims of divine inspiration (stated over 3,000 times, in various ways) were amply justified."
- Psalm 19:7-9 - "The law of the Lord is perfect ... the testimony of the Lord is sure ... the commandment of the Lord is pure ... the judgments of the Lord are true forever."
- Psalm 119:43 - "the word of truth."
- Psalm 119:142 - "Thy law is the truth."
- Psalm 119: 160 - "Thy word is true from the beginning."
- John 17:17 - "Thy word is truth."

An inaccurate Bible contradicts God's character quality of absolute truthfulness.

- Titus 1:2 - "God who cannot lie."
- Hebrews 6:18 - "It is impossible for God to lie."

Scientific Accuracy

"Another striking evidence of divine inspiration is found in the fact that many of the principles of modern science were recorded as facts of nature in the Bible long before scientist confirmed them experimentally. A sampling of these would include:

- Roundness of the earth (Isaiah 40:22)
- Almost infinite extent of the sidereal universe (Isaiah 55:9)
- Law of conservation of mass and energy (II Peter 3:7)
- Hydrologic cycle (Ecclesiastes 1:7)
- Vast number of stars (Jeremiah 33:22)

- Law of increasing entropy (Psalm 102:25-27)
- Paramount importance of blood in life processes (Leviticus 17: 11)
- Atmospheric circulation (Ecclesiastes 1:6)
- Gravitational field (Job 26:7)

"It is significant also that no real mistake has ever been demonstrated in the Bible -- in science, in history, or in any other subject. Many have been claimed, of course, but conservative Bible scholars have always been able to work out reasonable solutions to all such problems."