

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, 8-21-16 PM NOTES
"HOW DO YOU KNOW THAT THE BIBLE IS TRUSTWORTHY?"
VARIOUS SCRIPTURES
#2 in Series, "Answering 10 Questions Skeptics Ask"

1 Peter 3:15 (NIV) says, "But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect."

I. The Bible Claims to Be God's Word

2 Timothy 3:16 "All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness."

2 Peter 1:21 "for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God."

Psalms 33:6 "By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, and by the breath of His mouth all their host."

1 Thessalonians 2:13 "For this reason we also constantly thank God that when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but for what it really is, the word of God, which also performs its work in you who believe."

2 Peter 3:15b, 16 "...our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given him, wrote to you, as also in all his letters, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which the untaught and unstable distort, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction."

II. The Bible Was Transmitted to Us Accurately

A. The Old Testament

B. The New Testament

The works of Tacitus were written in about 100 AD. The earliest copy we have is 900 AD and there are 10 copies. The works of Thucydides were written in the 5th Century BC, but the earliest copies are 900 AD and there are only 8 copies. The works of Herodotus were written in the 5th Century BC, but the earliest copies are 900 AD and there are only 8 copies. The works of Demosthenes were written in the 4th Century BC and the earliest copies are 1100 AD and there are 200 copies. The works of Homer were written in the 9th Century BC. Scholars aren't sure of the date of the earliest copy, but there are 643 copies. The New Testament was written in the 1st Century AD. The earliest copies are in the 2nd Century AD, but there are parts of the New Testament that have been dated at about 130 AD. There are 5,000 ancient copies of the New Testament! [Norman Geisler, Christian Apologetics, page 307]

"The interval then between the dates of original composition and the earliest extant evidence becomes so small as to be in fact negligible, and the last foundation for any doubt that the Scriptures have come down to us substantially as they were written has now been removed."
—Sir Fredric Kenyon

III. The Bible Is Affirmed by Archeology

Archeology—"A study based on the excavation, decipherment and critical evaluation of the records of the past as they affect the Bible."
—The New American Standard Open Bible

“It may be stated categorically that no archeological discovery has ever controverted a biblical reference. Scores of archeological findings have been made which confirm in clear outline or exact detail historical statements in the Bible.”

—Nelson Glueck

IV. The Scientific Accuracy of the Bible

“If the Bible and science seem to disagree, be patient; science may eventually catch up.”

—Adrian Rogers

A. Astronomy

Jeremiah 33:22a, “As the host [stars] of heaven cannot be counted and the sand of the sea cannot be measured...”

Psalms 19:6a “Its rising is from one end of the heavens, and its circuit to the other end of them...”

Job 26:7 “He stretches out the north over empty space.”

Isaiah 40:22a “It is He who sits above the circle of the earth...”

B. Medicine and the Human Body

Leviticus 17:11, 14 “For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you on the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood by reason of the life that makes atonement... For as for the life of all flesh, its blood is identified with its life. Therefore I said to the sons of Israel, ‘You are not to eat the blood of any flesh, for the life of all flesh is its blood; whoever eats it shall be cut off.’”

Leviticus 13:46 “He shall remain unclean all the days during which he has the infection; he is unclean. He shall live alone; his dwelling shall be outside the camp.”

V. The Bible’s Prophecies

A. Messianic Prophecies

B. Prophecies Concerning the Nations

C. Prophecies Concerning the End Times

First Baptist Church Powell 8 21 2016 PM

Sermon 2: How Do You Know That the Bible Is Trustworthy

Various Scriptures

Series: Answering Ten Questions Skeptics Ask

In the first message in this series, we defined a skeptic as: “a person who habitually doubts, questions, or suspends judgments upon matters generally accepted.” As we saw last week, an honest skeptic deserves an answer from those who are Christians. 1 Peter 3:15 (NIV) says, “But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect.” One of the purposes of this series is to equip you to obey

1 Peter 3:15.

Since Christianity is revelational truth and that revelation is written down in the Bible, we need to know that the Bible is worthy of our trust; we need to know that it is accurate. If the Bible is not trustworthy, Christianity falls apart because Christianity is based on the “Book.” If the Bible is trustworthy, I would propose that the following would have to be true of the Bible:

1. It would need to claim to be God’s Word.
2. It would need to be transmitted to us accurately so that we know that the copies we have are an accurate representation of what was originally said.
3. It would be historically accurate and not be in disagreement with undisputed archeological findings. A book that confuses dates and events and names could not be the “breathed out” Word of God.
4. This book should be without any scientific absurdities that would be a dead giveaway it had only human authorship.
5. If this book prophesied any future event and the time of that prophesy has now passed, you would expect that history would record the events as happening just as it was prophesied.

These five things that must be true of the Bible, if Christianity is considered true, will make up our outline in this study. We will not be going deep in any of these five about the Bible.

I. The Bible Claims to Be God’s Word

The Bible claims to be the very word of God. We read in 2 Timothy 3:16: “All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness.” The word “inspired” literally means “to breathe out.” Verse 16 literally says that all Scripture is God breathed. Someone objects and says, “But the Bible was written by men – human beings just like you and me.” 2 Peter 1:21 tells us how they wrote, “for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.” That word “moved” means to be carried along as a storm would carry along a vessel. In other words, the human writers were so directed by the Spirit of God that even though they used their own styles, the result was that the words they wrote were the very words of God, breathed out from Him through these holy men.

This concept of the Bible being the breath of God is found also in the Old Testament. Psalms 33:6: “By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, and by the breath of His mouth all their host.” God breathed out (spoke) and the heavens were formed and God breathed out through Holy men of old and the result is the written word of God. There are scores of instances in the Old Testament that says, “The LORD said” or “The word of the LORD came to me saying,” or “Thus says the LORD.”

How about the New Testament? There are numerous claims that the New Testament is God’s Word.

John claimed that the visions which make up the book of Revelation are the words of the Lord.

Paul, who wrote close to half of the books of the New Testament, claimed that he received revelation from God and wrote what God told him to say. 1 Thessalonians 2:13 says, “For this reason we also constantly thank God that when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you accepted it

not as the word of men, but for what it really is, the word of God, which also performs its work in you who believe.”

Peter who was considered the leader of the apostles in the early church considered Paul’s writings to be Scripture. 2 Peter 3:15b, 16: “... our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given him, wrote to you, as also in all his letters, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which the untaught and unstable distort, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction.”

The Bible in both the Old and New Testaments claim to be the Word of God.

II. The Bible Was Transmitted to Us Accurately

Even if the Bible was given to man as the very Word of God, but was corrupted over time, we would not have a trustworthy account of the inspired Word from God.

A. The Old Testament

Interestingly, the accuracy of the copies of Old Testament Scriptures we have is not questioned nearly as much as the New Testament. We know that the Jewish office of “Scribe” (the ones who copied the Old Testament texts) was a highly professional office. They had all sorts of checks to make sure that the copies of Scripture were accurate. For instance, they would count the number of letters in a book and then subject the copy to the test. If there were more or less letters, they would go back and find their mistake. Ah, but what if a letter had been added and later a letter deleted? They had a second check. They would count and find the middle letter of the master document and make sure it was the middle letter of the copy. The date of the earliest copies we had of the Hebrew text was about 900 AD. Then, in 1947 a Bedouin goat herdsman accidentally discovered, in a cave in the Judean wilderness close to the Dead Sea, a lot of large clay pots that contained old Hebrew manuscripts. They came to be known as the Dead Sea Scrolls. There was the complete book of Isaiah and fragments of almost every book of the Old Testament. Remember that the oldest manuscripts we had were 900 AD. These scrolls were dated around 100 BC. They were almost 1000 years older than the previous documents. How did they compare? How accurate were the texts we had been using for centuries? They were amazingly accurate! For instance, the two copies of Isaiah proved to be word for word identical with our Hebrew texts in more than 95% of the text. The 5% variation could be explained by obvious slips of the pen and variations in the spelling of words. The Dead Sea Scrolls present compelling evidence that the Old Testament we now possess is trustworthy and accurate.

B. The New Testament

Some of the critics of the Bible are quick to point out that we cannot make claims about the trustworthiness of the Bible because we do not have the original copies. Anyone who says that shows their total lack of understanding as to how ancient documents are deemed trustworthy. We don’t have the originals of any ancient documents. We have copies and the accuracy of those copies is determined primarily by two factors:

1. How close in time are the copies to the originals?
2. How many ancient copies do we possess?

In comparing ancient copies to one another, it becomes fairly obvious when something has been added to or subtracted from a manuscript. How does the Bible compare to other ancient manuscripts? Here are a few examples:

The works of Tacitus were written in about 100 AD. The earliest copy we have is 900AD and there are ten copies. The works of Thucydides were written in the 5th Century BC, but the earliest copies are 900AD and there are only eight copies. The works of Herodotus were written in the 5th Century BC, but the earliest copies are 900AD and there are only eight copies. The works of Demosthenes were written in the 4th Century BC and the earliest copies are 1100 AD and there are 200 copies. The works of Homer

were written in the 9th Century BC. Scholars aren't sure of the date of the earliest copy, but there are 643 copies. The New Testament was written in the 1st Century AD. The earliest copies are in the 2nd Century AD, but there are parts of the New Testament that have been dated at about 130AD. There are 5,000 ancient copies of the New Testament! [Norman Geisler, *Christian Apologetics*, page 307]

No other book is even a close second to the New Testament in the number or early dating of the copies. Sir Fredric Kenyon was a world-renowned scholar of ancient manuscripts. He said: "The interval then between the dates of original composition and the earliest extant evidence becomes so small as to be in fact negligible, and the last foundation for any doubt that the Scriptures have come down to us substantially as they were written has now been removed." [Quoted in Paul Little, *Know Why You Believe*, page 79]

The bottom line is this, the Bible we have includes the inspired books and the text we have is totally trustworthy.

III. The Bible Is Affirmed by Archeology

Let's make sure that we understand what archeology really is. Someone defined archeology as the study of durable rubbish. That's really not a bad definition. Here is the definition I like of Biblical Archeology: "A study based on the excavation, decipherment and critical evaluation of the records of the past as they affect the Bible." [The New American Standard Open Bible, 1978, page 1257]

Archeology is not an exact science. Dating methods are not exact, but even with those limitations, we will find archeology an interesting tool in evaluating the accuracy of the Scriptures.

Sir William Ramsey was an atheist and the son of atheists. He was wealthy and had a PhD from Oxford. He gave his whole life over to archeology and determined that he would prove the Bible to be inaccurate. He went to the Holy land and set his focus on disproving the book of Acts. After many years of study Ramsey was impressed by the accuracy of Luke in his writings down to minute details. Instead of discrediting the Bible he found amazing evidence supporting the historical accuracy of the Bible. Ramsey shocked the whole critical world by declaring himself to be a Christian [James Kennedy, *Why I Believe*, pages 21, 22]

This whole subject of archeology is so massive that I am simply going to give you two summary statements from two renowned scholars.

Dr. Clifford Wilson wrote a 17 volume survey *Archeology, the Bible and Christ*. In these volumes he brings together over 5,000 facts relating to archeology and the Bible. One of Dr. Wilson's summary statements is, "Archeology is highly relevant for Bible studies, consistently demonstrating that the Bible is the world's most accurate history text book..." [Quoted in John Ankerberg, *Ready With an Answer*, page 288]

Nelson Glueck, a renowned Jewish archeologist said, "It may be stated categorically that no archeological discovery has ever controverted a biblical reference. Scores of archeological findings have been made which confirm in clear outline or exact detail historical statements in the Bible." [Ankerberg, page 274]

IV. The Scientific Accuracy of the Bible

The Bible is not a scientific textbook and does not use scientific jargon, but when the Bible speaks to matters of science, it is accurate. It has long been thought that there is a conflict between the Bible and science. That isn't totally accurate. The problem is when science stops being science and starts being religion. Science can deal with the observable and reproducible. When science starts dealing with subjects such as origins and destinies it has left its realm. The conflict is between science acting as a religion and the Word of God; the conflict is not between true science and the Bible.

Accepted science is in a continual state of change. I'm not saying that the facts change; I am saying that as science discovers more and more, the conclusions of the scientific community (accepted science) change because of the additional information. It has been stated that the library in the Louvre in Paris has three and one half miles of books on science and most every one of them is obsolete. In 1861 the French

Academy of Science wrote a pamphlet stating there were fifty-one inconvertible scientific facts that proved the Bible not true. Today there is not a reputable scientist on earth that believes even one of those fifty-one so called “facts.” [Adrian Rogers, *What Every Christian Should Know*, page 8]

Accepted science is always changing. The Word of God never changes. When the Bible was written, it contradicted the accepted science of its day. Adrian Rogers said, “If the Bible and science seem to disagree, be patient; science *may* eventually catch up.”

My approach to this point is to look at just two areas where science has “caught up” with what the Bible stated long ago. [Most taken from *Ready with an Answer* by John Ankerberg, page 336 and following]

A. Astronomy

The prophet Jeremiah wrote in the 8th Century BC when the astronomers believed it was possible to number the stars. Jeremiah wrote in Jeremiah 33:22a: “As the host [stars] of heaven cannot be counted and the sand of the sea cannot be measured...” Today we know that there are at least 100 billion stars in our galaxy and possibly several billion galaxies in the universe. It would be impossible for any human being to find and number the stars.

Some 3000 years ago the Psalmist wrote in Psalms 19:6a about the sun, “Its rising is from one end of the heavens, and its circuit to the other end of them...” That certainly is true. Today we know that the sun does move in a “circuit” at speeds of close to 600,000 miles per hour.

At the time Job and Isaiah wrote, the prevailing “science” said that the earth was flat and that it had to rest on something. Over the years there were various theories of what the earth rested on. Some said a giant elephant, some a giant turtle, and some on the back of Atlas. Listen to Job (possibly the earliest book of the Bible written) in Job 26:7: “He stretches out the north over empty space and hangs the earth on nothing.” Isaiah wrote in about 700BC in Isaiah 40:22a “It is He who sits above the circle of the earth...” The Hebrew word for “circle” could better be translated “sphere.”

B. Medicine and the Human Body

[Some from *What Every Christian Should Know* by Adrian Rogers, page 11 and following]

We take for granted that our blood is flowing through our body as what some have called, “a red river of life.” It wasn’t however until 1628 that William Harvey (a medical doctor) discovered that the blood circulates through the body. Today we know that the blood carries fuel to the cells, oxygen to burn that fuel, and carries out waste, and fights disease, and maintains a constant temperature in the body. In the olden days before modern medicine, when someone was sick, the diagnosis would be “bad blood.” The treatment would be to drain the blood. Many times they would take sick people to a barber who would “bleed them” as a treatment for their sickness. That’s why the “barber’s pole” is red and white striped. It was to represent a bandage because that’s where people went to have some blood drained. Another method was to put a leech on the sick person to suck the blood out. In about 1400 BC, however, Moses (being inspired by the Holy Spirit) wrote in Leviticus 17:11, 14: “For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you on the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood by reason of the life that makes atonement... For as for the life of all flesh, its blood is identified with its life. Therefore I said to the sons of Israel, ‘You are not to eat the blood of any flesh, for the life of all flesh is its blood; whoever eats it shall be cut off.’”

If time allowed, we could talk about geology, meteorology, biology, physics, and other branches of science. While the Bible is not a science book, there is nothing in true science that contradicts the Bible. Someone summarized it like this, “The Bible was not written to tell us how the heavens go, but to tell us how to go to heaven.” That is true, however when the Bible speaks to science it is accurate.

V. The Bible’s Prophecies

In my opinion, fulfilled prophecy is the most convincing evidence of all that the Bible is trustworthy. In all the writings of Buddha, Confucius, and the Hindu “holy books,” there is not a single instance of

predicted prophecy. In the Koran there is one “self-fulfilling” prophecy where Mohammed wrote that he would return to Mecca. He did. That’s quite different from the prophecy of Jesus that he would raise from the dead.

There are three kinds or categories of prophecy in the Bible:

Messianic – Prophecies concerning the Messiah.

The Nations – There are many prophecies about the nations and their rising and falling.

End Times

Let’s look at one example from each category.

A. Messianic Prophecies

In the Old Testament, God so intricately predicted the Messiah and how to identify Him that anyone really searching for the truth would find it. There are some who ignorantly say “Yes, Jesus knew the prophecies and fulfilled them. It was rigged.” Listen to some things he would have to have arranged. First, He would have to have arranged the place of His birth. Seven hundred years before Jesus was born, the prophet Micah said He would be born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2).

Second, He would have to arrange to be crucified on a cross. Psalm 22 was written by David about 1,000 years before Christ was born. It gives a description of crucifixion like a man standing at the foot of the cross describing what he saw. It talks of piercing his hands and feet, the gambling for His garments and even the reality of His being separated from the Father while He bore our sins. This one psalm contains thirty-three direct prophecies fulfilled at Calvary. Here’s the amazing thing. When David wrote Psalm 22, crucifixion wasn’t even known as a type of capital punishment!

Third, He would have to arrange to be crucified between two thieves as prophesied in Isaiah 53:9-12.

Fourth, He would have to have arranged for Judas to betray Him for thirty pieces of silver which Zechariah prophesied in Zechariah 11:12.

Fifth, and here is the most amazing thing He would have to have arranged. He would have to have arranged His resurrection from the dead! It had been prophesied in Psalm 16:10. Most all of the prophecies (300 of them) were not fulfilled with the help of His friends but by his enemies.

B. Prophecies Concerning the Nations

As an example of prophecies concerning the nations, let’s look at Cyrus, King of Persia. How would you like to try to predict who the president of the United States will be 150 years from now? In addition, could you predict what one of his executive decisions would be concerning the captives of another nation?

That’s exactly what the prophet Isaiah did. Isaiah was writing 700-680 BC and predicted that Babylon would take Judah captive. That was accomplished about 100 years later. He went on to prophesy that that Babylon would be conquered by the Persians. At the time Isaiah wrote this, Persia wasn’t even a powerful country. He said that the leader of the Persians would release the Jewish captives and then he even names the Persian king (Isaiah 44:26-28)! That is just one of many.

C. Prophecies Concerning the End Times

Of course, many of these have not yet been fulfilled because Christ has not yet returned. However, we have seen the circumstances change which prepares the way for His coming. One example of an end time prophesy that we have seen God prepare the way for is the return of Israel to the land. There are multitudes of things the Bible says will happen as the end comes that we see today beginning.

Fulfilled prophesy indeed evidences that the Bible is indeed the Word of God.

Conclusion

In addition to the five evidences that the Bible is true and that it is indeed the Word of God, there are the millions who would attest that the truths revealed in the Bible, when applied to their lives, have radically changed them. The Christian has mountains of truth to answer the skeptic’s question – “How do you know that the Bible is trustworthy?”