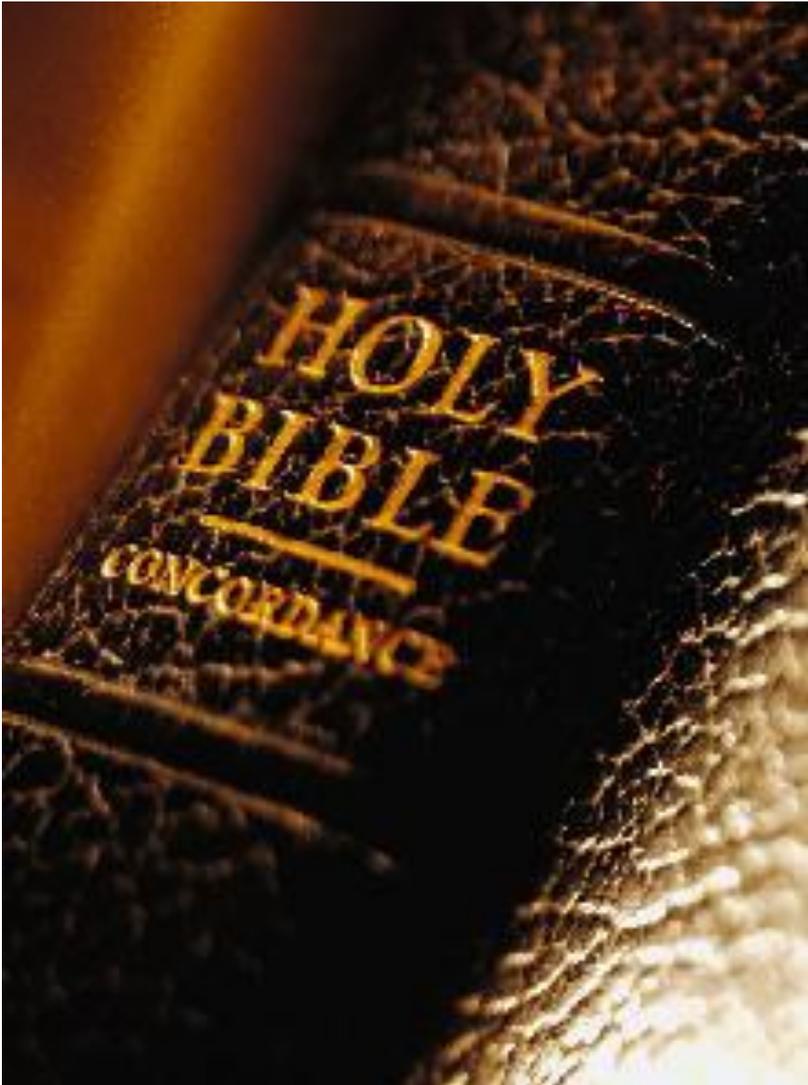


*Essentials Series:*

*The Holy Bible.*



## **Essentials Series: The Bible.**

In my years of ministry I have come to see that men do not reject the Bible because it contradicts itself, but rather because it contradicts them. When I started my own journey towards faithfulness to God I asked sincerely and honestly to what His will was for my life. I read many religious books like the Pali, Bhagavad Gita, the Tibetan book of the dead, Book of Mormon and the Koran ex ex. My Spiritual search started with a logical curiosity that needed an overall coherency. I soon learnt what these “holy books” taught on eternity, salvation, holiness and duty. Ravi Zacharias wrote that religion strives to answer four questions: Origin, meaning, morality and finally destiny. The search was on, and through empirical fact and overwhelming evidence, I concluded that the Bible is surely the only sure way to know God. In the words of H.J. Van Dyke – “After all, the Bible must be its own argument and defense.” I put it to the test and found all other texts wanting.

The Author of the book of Hebrews wrote (4:12-14) "For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. 13 Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight."

In the end I didn't just scrutinize these books we call the Bible, it scrutinized me. And in conclusion it made me ask a few honest questions. Paul exhorts a young man by the name of Timothy and says "from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God[a] may be thoroughly equipped for every good work." (2 Timothy 3:15-17.)

I didn't want to drift in a seeming less void of relativistic culture not knowing some answers to the four essential questions posed above. And here I

found my answer, the bible is there to “equip” me for this eternal journey that starts in the here and the now. I knew that eternity is too long to get it wrong. I wanted to know for sure! The other religious texts just were not coherent and not one taught the same ideals. But the cardinal difference was all other religious texts spoke about upholding laws but the bible specifically spoke about uplifting some one and that was the God of the Bible in Jesus Christ His Son.



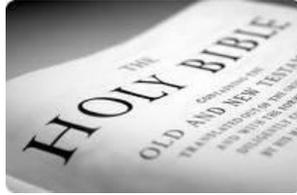
**What is the Bible?**

Dr Walter Martin observes “What do we mean, then, when we say, “The Bible is the Word of God”? It is obvious that we are asserting that the Bible is a revelation from God – that it does not just illumine our thinking but reveals to our minds things which

God knows and which we are incapable of learning apart from His communication with us.” The Bible is a collection of 66 books written by about 40 authors, in three different languages, on three different continents, over approximately 1600 years. It therefore cannot be asserted logically that the Christian is arguing in a circle because he allegedly quotes the Bible to prove the Bible, as some critics maintain. The error arises when we think of the Bible as one book, since in reality it is a collection of books. Christians believe that God inspired people from all walks of life to write down His will as revelation by His Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity. In fact, the Greek word “theopneustos” literally means "God-breathed." The Bible is not one book but many, written by people of different time periods, all of whom bear witness to their relationship with an ultra dimensional Being who lives outside our time-space continuum – a Being who wishes us to know that He is our Creator and desires to be our loving heavenly Father. Books

were included in this group because: they had the authority of the apostles, they had been accepted as authoritative by all parts of the church, and they had been recognized as being inspired by the Holy Spirit. The books also in no way contradicted the overall scope of the Bible's message. The Bible claims to be inspired and inerrant. This means that the Bible claims to be from God and that it is without error in everything it addresses. It is interesting to note that the Bible contains many different styles of writing such as poetry, narration, fiction, history, law, and prophecy and must be interpreted in context of those styles. It is the source of the Christian religion in that the Bible contains the words of God and how the Christian is to apply the words of God to his life. The Bible describes the origin of man in the Garden of Eden along with his fall into sin and out of fellowship with God. It then describes how God called out a special people to Himself, the Israelites. He promised the Israelites a future Messiah who would restore

mankind's relationship with God. The Bible is the account of the work of God in history bringing to fruition His prophetic declarations concerning Jesus. In short, the Bible points to Jesus, "You search the Scriptures, because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is these that bear witness of Me." (John 5:39). Furthermore, the Bible teaches us that forgiveness of sins is found in Jesus alone, "And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved," (Acts 4:12). Some say that the Bible is nothing more than fairy tales. But this cannot be for it contains great wisdom and truth and it has been verified throughout history as being accurate. In its translation the accuracy of our Bible copies increases rather than decreases. How do we know the bible is true? Charles Hodge points us into a good direction, he says "The best evidence of the Bible's being the word of God is found between its covers."



## **How accurate is the bible?**

There have been hundreds of books written on the subject of the evidences of the divine inspiration of the Bible, and these evidences are many and varied. But, if the greatest and most influential book of the ages, containing the most beautiful literature and the most perfect moral code ever devised, was written by deceiving fanatics, then what hope is there for ever finding meaning and purpose in this world? 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. Here are a few things we can correlate and look at to affirm this:

## **1. Fulfilled Prophecies**

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. The Bible features nearly 300 prophecies of the Messiah, the latest of which dates to more than 200 years before the birth of Jesus. Every prophecy has been fulfilled, with the exception of those pertaining to His glorious return. Many are clear and specific, including:

† His virgin birth (Isa. 7:14; Matt. 1:21)

† His being “cut off” or killed 483 years after the declaration to reconstruct the temple in 444 B.C. (Dan. 9:24-26)

† His birthplace in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2; Matt. 2:1; Luke 2:4-7)

† His miracle-working authority (Isa. 35:5-6; Matt. 9:35)

† His rejection by the Jews (Ps. 118:22; Isa. 53:3; Acts 4:11; 1 Peter 2:7)

† His suffering and death (Ps. 22; Isa. 53; Matt. 27:27ff)

† His resurrection (Ps. 2:7; 16:10; Mark 16:6; Acts 2:31; 1 Cor. 15:3-8)

† His ascension into heaven (Ps. 68:18; Acts 1:9)

† His place today at the Father's right hand (Ps. 110:1; Heb. 1:3)

If we should contrast these specific predictions and their fulfillment in Jesus of Nazareth with the predictions of psychics today (according to "The People's Almanac". 1976) we can clearly see that modern psychics are wrong 92 percent of the time. Even the highly reputed visions of Nostradamus are suspect. He often was wrong, especially when being

specific, and his predictions were usually so vague as to be practically useless. But if we look for example to Daniel the prophet, he 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.

## **2. Unique Historical & Archeological accuracy**

The historical accuracy of the Scriptures is likewise in a class by itself, far superior to the written records of Egypt, Assyria, and other early nations. Archeological confirmations of the Biblical record have been almost innumerable in the last century. Dr. Nelson Glueck, probably the greatest modern authority on Israeli archeology, has said: "No archeological discovery has ever controverted 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."

Norman Geisler writes, "No archaeological find has ever refuted a biblical claim, and thousands of finds have confirmed in general and in detail the biblical picture" (Systematic Theology, Vol. 1, p. 557). Examples of archaeological confirmations include the Tower of Babel (Gen. 11); Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. 18-19); the fall of Jericho (Josh. 6); King David (2 Sam.); and the Assyrian Captivity (Isa. 20). In the New Testament book of Acts alone there are hundreds of archaeological confirmations. Sir William Ramsay (Surely no relation to the hyper T.V. Chef Gordon Ramsey) a skeptic wrote after decades of research, "I found myself often brought into contact with the book of Acts as an authority for the topography, antiquities, and society of Asia Minor. It was gradually borne in upon me that in various details the narrative showed marvelous truth" (St. Paul the Traveler and the Roman Citizen, p. 8, quoted in Systematic Theology, p. 558). These are the words of a well known skeptic and researcher!

### **3. 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 side real 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)
- and many others.

It is significant also that no real mistake has ever been demonstrated in the Bible—in science, in history, or in any other subject.

#### **4. Unique Structure**

Even though the Bible was recorded by some 40 different authors – from different backgrounds, occupations and levels of education; who spoke in three different languages; who wrote over a period of 1,500 years – there is remarkable unity amid the vast diversity of scripture’s 66 books. 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. The one consistent theme of the Bible, developing in grandeur from Genesis to Revelation, is God's great work in the creation and redemption of all things, through His only Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

## **5. Bible's Unique Effect**

The Bible is unique also in terms of its effect on individual men and on the history of nations. It is the all-time best seller, appealing both to hearts and minds, beloved by at least some in every race or nation or tribe to which it has gone, rich or poor, scholar or simple, king or commoner, men of literally every background and walk of life. No other

book has ever held such universal appeal nor produced such lasting effects.

## **6. The testimony of the scrolls**

While the autographs, or original manuscripts, of the Bible have not survived the ravages of time, no other book from the ancient world has more, earlier, or better copied manuscripts than the Bible. Examples abound:

### ***A. The number of manuscripts and their age***

According to scholar F.F. Bruce, we have nine or 10 good copies of Caesar's Gallic Wars; 20 copies of Livy's Roman History; two copies of Tacitus's Annals; and eight manuscripts of Thucydides' History. The most documented secular work from antiquity is Homer's Iliad with 643 copies. But there are roughly 5,000 Greek manuscripts of the New Testament, making this collection of 27 books the most highly documented book from the ancient

world (The New Testament Documents, Are They Reliable?, p. 16).

***B. The accuracy of the manuscript copies***

Mormons and Muslims allege that the Bible's documents were substantially corrupted as they were copied over time, but there is overwhelming evidence that proves these claims wrong. Scholars of almost every theological stripe attest to the profound care with which the Old and New Testament documents were copied. For the New Testament, for example, the books were copied in Greek, and later translated and preserved in Syriac, Coptic, Latin and a variety of other ancient European and Middle Eastern languages. The New Testament is the most accurately copied book from the ancient world. Textual scholars Westcott and Hort estimate that only one-sixtieth of its variants rise above "trivialities," which leaves the text 98.33

percent pure. Noted historian Philip Schaff calculates that of the 150,000 variants known in his day, only 400 affected the meaning of a passage; only 50 were of any significance; and not even one affected an article of faith (Companion to the Greek Testament and English Version, p. 177).

***C. The eyewitness accounts in the presence of hostile witnesses.***

The New Testament was written by eyewitnesses and contemporaries of Jesus. For example, Luke probably wrote his gospel around 60 A.D., before he wrote Acts. Since Jesus died around 33 A.D., this would place Luke only 27 years after the events, while most eyewitnesses – and potentially hostile witnesses – were still alive and could have refuted Luke’s record. The apostle Paul speaks of more than 500 eyewitnesses of the resurrected Christ when he wrote 1 Corinthians, which critics date around 55-56 A.D. John and Peter add similar testimonies (1 John 1:1-2; 2 Peter 1:16). One of the oldest books in the

New Testament is the Letter of Galatians which Paul wrote. Modern scholars agree that it was written 16 years after the death of Christ.

#### ***D. The testimony of the Savior***

Jesus claimed to be the Messiah / Christ, the divine Son of God and the divine Son of Man (Matt. 16:16-18; 26:63-64; John 8:58). He was confirmed by acts of God (John 3:2; Acts 2:22), and declared that He had been given all authority in heaven and earth to rule and to judge (Matt. 28:18; John 5:22). Therefore, His views on the Bible are extremely important. What did He have to say? Norman Geisler writes, "Jesus declared that the Old Testament was divinely authoritative (Matt. 4:4, 7, 10); imperishable (Matt. 5:17-18); infallible (John 10:35); inerrant (Matt. 22:29; John 17:17); historically reliable (Matt. 12:40; 24:37-38); scientifically accurate (Matt. 19:4-5; John 3:12); and ultimately supreme (Matt. 15:3, 6)" (Systematic Theology, Vol. 1, p. 559). Jesus also personally

affirmed many things that Bible critics deny, for example: 1) God created a literal Adam and Eve (Matt. 19:4); Jonah was actually swallowed by a great fish (Matt. 12:40); the whole world was destroyed by a flood in Noah's day (Matt. 24:39); and there was one prophet Isaiah (not two or three) who wrote all of Isaiah (Mark 7:6-7; Luke 4:17-20). Jesus called the Old Testament "the word of God" (Matt. 15:6; Mark 7:13; John 10:35). He introduced Biblical quotes with "It is written," the standard Jewish introduction to Scripture. In Matt. 22:43, he referred to David's words in Psalm 110:1 as spoken by the Holy Spirit. He also promised that the Spirit would bring more truth, referring to the New Testament (John 14:25-26; 16:13). Jesus promised that the New Testament would be God's Word. He told the apostles that the Holy Spirit would teach them "all things" and lead them into "all truth" (John 14:26; 16:13). The apostles later claimed this divine authority for their words (John 20:31; 1 John 1:1; 4:1, 5-6). Peter acknowledged

Paul's writing as "Scripture" in (2 Peter 3:15-16). Clearly there is a coherent and overwhelming witness to these evidences.

### ***E. The testimony of the Spirit***

The same Holy Spirit who authored all Scripture (2 Tim. 3:16-17) lives in the hearts of all believers and "testifies with our spirit that we are God's children" (Rom. 8:16). This means the indwelling Holy Spirit confirms the truth of God's Word to us and through us.

### ***F. The testimony of the saved***

The Bible's life-changing power is widely known through the testimony of those who have come to know Christ. The apostle Paul, once known as a Christ-hating persecutor, declared, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is God's power

for salvation to everyone who believes, first to the Jew, and also to the Greek" (Rom. 1:16).

**In Closing:**

Norman Geisler concludes, "The Bible is the only known book in the world that both claims to be and proves to be the Word of God.... The testimony of science that demonstrates it, of the scrolls that transmit it, the scribes who wrote it, the supernatural that confirms it, the structure that manifests it, the stones that support it, the Savior who verified it, the Spirit that witnesses to it, and the saved who have been transformed by it. These combined testimonies confirm that the Bible is what it claims to be – the divinely inspired, infallible, and inerrant Word of God" (Systematic Theology, Vol. I, p. 561) An unknown writer said, "This Book is the mind of God, the state of man, the way of salvation, the doom of sinners, and the happiness of believers. Its doctrines are holy, its precepts are binding; its histories are true, and its decisions are immutable.

Read it to be wise, believe it to be safe, practice it to be holy. It contains light to direct you, food to support you, and comfort to cheer you. It is the traveler's map, the pilgrim's staff, the pilot's compass, the soldier's sword, and the Christian's character. Here paradise is restored, heaven opened, and the gates of hell disclosed. Christ is its grand subject, our good its design, and the glory of God its end. It should fill the memory, rule the heart, and guide the feet. Read it slowly, frequently, prayerfully. It is a mine of wealth, a paradise of glory, and a river of pleasure. Follow its precepts and it will lead you to Calvary, to the empty tomb, to a resurrected life in Christ; yes, to glory itself, for eternity.

**-The End.-**

## ***How to receive Christ:***

Receiving Christ is as easy as A-B-C.

### **A – Admit your sins**

You must first repent of your sins. This means turning away from them and asking God to forgive you. Acts 3:19 says "Therefore repent and return, so that your sins may be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord."

### **B – Believe and confess**

What does it mean to believe? It means to trust your life to Jesus. If you jump out of a falling airplane with a parachute, you don't just know or hope the parachute will save you. You believe it! You trust your life to the parachute. Similarly, believing in Jesus means trusting your eternal life to him. Acts 16:31 says "They said, 'Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household.'" Paul affirms this in Romans 10:9-10 "That if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation."

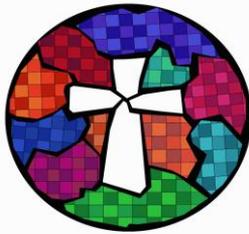
In verse 13 it says "For whoever will call on the name of the Lord will be saved."

### **C – Call on Jesus as your savior**

Through prayer, invite Jesus to come in and change your life through the Holy Spirit. Invite him to save you. "Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." – Romans 5:1 (NASB) Remember "he who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life. These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life." – 1 John 5:12-13 (NASB)

### **What Now: Find a Family not just a Church**

If you accepted Christ as your savior, the next step is to find a local, Bible-preaching Church in your area. A place where you belong! The author of Hebrews writes "And let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near." – Hebrews 10:24-25 (NASB)



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