

Appendix B Why Believe the Bible

The Christian faith is not a blind faith, but a logical response to conclusive evidence. It is based on real events that can be investigated.

We believe that God directed the writing of the Bible, guiding the writers to say what God wanted said.

We believe that the Bible which we have is an accurate translation of what the writers wrote.

The few differences between our copies are minor and do not relate to significant doctrinal issues, but more likely to the spelling of proper names, etc.

Archaeological evidence attests to the historical accuracy of the Bible.

A God powerful enough and intelligent enough to create this beautiful complex universe with black holes, DNA, gravity, electromagnetism, photosynthesis, life, etc. is both powerful enough and intelligent enough to keep his word safe from those who want to destroy it.

We believe that God cares about this world and his children in it, so much so that when we got off track he sent his son, Jesus, to suffer and die for us to save us from the consequences of our deeds. Now God wants us to love others and to help him get them back on track.

Who wrote the Bible?

The Bible consists of sixty-six books, the first 39 comprise the Old Testament which was written mostly in Hebrew with a little Aramaic. The New Testament's 27 books were written in Greek. The Greek that it is written in is called Koine Greek and is a dead language in that modern Greek has evolved significantly away from it. Similarly, Middle English sounds like German and is incomprehensible to me. Since it is a dead language, the meanings of the words in Koine Greek have not evolved over time, but today many can speak, read and write Koine Greek. The Greek New Testament is available for those willing to spend the time to learn the language. Many document fragments from the second century are in Koine Greek, some are available to be seen on-line. You can even download an audio Greek New Testament.

The New Testament wasn't written until after Jesus died, rose again, and ascended into heaven. The Apostle Paul is credited with writing most of the New Testament epistles. The four Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John) do not name their authors, but the early Church Fathers were nearly unanimous that the apostles whose names are borne by the Gospels were their authors. [1]

Do we have enough of these Greek and Hebrew manuscripts to believe their veracity?

"Fortunately, we have many fragmented copies of ancient Greek manuscripts written in the second, third and fourth centuries. Over 5,600 Greek manuscripts are cataloged, but Wallace and his team are consistently putting more up on their website. If you go beyond the Greek manuscripts and consider all the copies of the Latin Vulgate and other translations, that number approaches 24,000."[2]

"Dr. Craig Blomberg, former senior research fellow at Cambridge University in England and professor of New Testament at Denver Seminary, explains that the texts of the New Testament 'have been preserved in far greater number and with much more care than have any other ancient documents.' He concludes that '97–99 percent of the New Testament can be reconstructed beyond any reasonable doubt.'"[3]

Haven't a lot of errors crept in to the New Testament?

These documents are copies of copies? Humans make mistakes. Aren't there a lot of variations in the text? How can we be sure that in the process of copying and recopying the copiers didn't either insert their own opinions or make mistakes?

"When all variations are considered, only about one percent involve the meaning of the text. One percent! But even this fact can be overstated. For instance, there is disagreement about whether 1 John 1:4 should be translated, 'Thus we are writing these things so that our joy may be complete' or 'Thus we are writing these things so that your joy may be complete.' While this disagreement does involve the meaning of the passage, it in no way jeopardizes a central doctrine of the Christian faith. This is why the authors of Reinventing Jesus conclude, "The short answer to the question of what theological truths are at stake in these variants is--none."[4]

What about the "Higher Criticism" of the Bible?

C. S. Lewis wrote an excellent essay on "Modern Theology and Biblical Criticism" which is quoted in "The New Evidence that demands a Verdict." by Josh McDowell. Here is what Lewis says of these "critics". " First then, whatever these men may be as biblical critics, I distrust them as critics. They seem to me to lack literary judgment, to be imperceptive about the very quality of the texts they are reading."[5]

For example he suggests that we turn to John and read about the Samaritan woman at the well and the healing of the blind man. Lewis says, "I have been reading poems, romances, vision literature, legends, myths all my life.

I know what they are like. Not one of them is like this. Of this text there are only two possible views, either this is reportage -- or some unknown writer in the second century, without known predecessors or successors, suddenly anticipated the whole technique of modern, novelistic realistic narrative."[6] His opinion of these biblical critics is colorfully summed up in his description of their competency: "They claim to see fern-seed and can't see an elephant ten yards away in broad daylight."[7]

Before reading Lewis I had formed my own opinion of the higher critics, similar to Lewis's opinion. The "higher critics" much like the evolutionists, start with the assumption that there is no supernatural, no God. Then they build houses of cards based on how they imagine things to be or have been. Given incorrect assumptions and the desire to be approved of and lauded by their colleagues, they come up with all sorts of explanations and interpretations of the scripture and generally miss the point of what it really says. For example, the latter part of the book of Isaiah is said to be written by a different person than the first part. I believe that as Isaiah grew older, he may have changed his writing style. As a man or woman grows older their writing style may change for two reasons: they learn new facts and techniques or they may forget some facts and techniques they used to know. Also Isaiah may have had a scribe (secretary) write part of his book as Paul did some of his or he may have been in poor health while writing part of it.

What about the Old Testament?

Another volume by ancient historian K. A. Kitchen "On the Reliability of the Old Testament" confirms the archaeological and historical accuracy of the Old Testament stating that, "In terms of general reliability-- and much more could have been instanced than there was room for here -- the Old Testament comes out remarkably well, so long as its writings and writers are treated fairly and evenhandedly, in line with independent data, open to all."[8] When he speaks of treating the Old Testament unfairly he was probably thinking of the "higher critics".

There are many volumes of archaeological information which confirm the validity of the Bible. For example, "The Bible as History", by Werner Keller confirms many of the Old Testament names and places. I especially enjoyed the following: During the First World War Major Vivian Gilbert, a British army officer's brigade had orders to take a village called Michmash from the Turks. He searched his Bible and found Michmash described there.

1 Samuel 14:4-5 Between the passes, by which Jonathan sought to go over to the Philistines' garrison, there was a rocky crag on the one side, and a rocky crag on the other side: and the name of the one was Bozez, and the name of the other Seneh. The one crag rose up on the north in front of Michmash, and the other on the south in front of Geba.

1 Samuel 14:11-14 The men of the garrison answered Jonathan and his armor bearer, and said, "Come up to us, and we will show you something!" Jonathan said to his armor bearer, "Come up after me; for the LORD has delivered them into the hand of Israel." Jonathan climbed up on his hands and on his feet, and his armor bearer after him: and they fell before Jonathan; and his armor bearer killed them after him. That first slaughter, which Jonathan and his armor bearer made, was about twenty men, within as it were half a furrow's length in an acre of land.

That night Major Gilbert woke his commander and they sent out scouts who overcame the thinly scattered guards, climbed the cliff and found the flat place on top overlooking the Arab camp. Their company took up a position on the "half-acre" of land and when the Turks woke up the next morning they were trapped under the British guns and were all killed or captured. The British won a battle based on the accuracy of the Old Testament.[9]

Several recent twentieth and twenty-first century, archaeological discoveries confirm the accuracy of the New Testament manuscripts.[10]

Many facts about the people and times of the New Testament were treated as spurious by archaeologists, but that has significantly changed with many of the new discoveries. The story of Sir William Ramsey is an example of an honest man trying to disprove the Bible. "Ramsey was an archaeologist who set out to disprove the validity of God's Word. He decided to use Luke's recorded events in an effort to disprove the factual accuracy of the Bible. However, every time he turned over his spade, he was confronted with the historical accuracy of Luke's account. Every city he uncovered matched precisely to the information given hundreds of years earlier by Luke." [11]

Another archaeological reference to King Aretas has been validated and it even helps tell just when Paul was in Damascus.

2 Corinthians 11:31-33 The God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, he who is blessed forevermore, knows that I don't lie. In Damascus the governor under King Aretas guarded the city of the Damascenes desiring to arrest me. Through a window I was let down in a basket by the wall, and escaped his hands.

"Aretas is called by Josephus the king of Arabia. He was Haretat IV, King of the Nabathæan Arabs." There are several inscriptions on monuments defining just when all this transpired somewhere between 31 AD and 46 AD.[12] So we know Paul was in Damascus for a while during this time.

Before 1947, the oldest complete Hebrew manuscript dated to AD 900. But with the discovery of 223 manuscripts in caves on the west side of the Dead Sea, we came into possession of Old Testament manuscripts dated by paleographers to around 125 BC. These scrolls were a thousand years older than any previously

known manuscripts. But here's the exciting part: Once the Dead Sea Scrolls were compared with later manuscript copies, the then-current Hebrew Bible proved to be identical, word for word, in more than 95 percent of the text. The other 5 percent consisted mainly of spelling variations. For example, of the 166 words in Isaiah 53, only 17 letters were in question. Of those, 10 letters were a matter of spelling, and 4 were stylistic changes; the remaining 3 letters comprised the word light, which was added in verse 11. In other words, the greatest manuscript discovery of all time revealed that a thousand years of copying the Old Testament had produced only very minor variations, none of which altered the clear meaning of the text or brought the manuscript's fundamental integrity into question. [13] & [13-38]

Who decided which books would be included in the Bible?

"Contrary to what some modern critics say, early Jewish and church leaders did not create the canon. In other words, a group of religious leaders did not determine which books would be called Scripture, the inspired Word of God. Rather, those leaders merely recognized or discovered which books were "God-breathed" from their very inception. That is to say, a writing was not given the authority of being Scripture because the early Jewish or Christian leaders accepted it as such. Instead, it was accepted by the leaders and the people because it was clear to them that God himself had given the writing its divine authority." [14]

Why do Christians believe that the Bible is Gods Inspired Word?

The evidence is based on real events that can be investigated.

1) Timid disciples turned into brave roaring lions who changed the world.

The disciples ran when Jesus was arrested. After the crucifixion, scared of the Romans they were hiding in a locked room when the resurrected Christ appeared to them.

John 20:19 When therefore it was evening, on that day, the first day of the week, and when the doors were locked where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them, "Peace be to you."

After the resurrection Christ spent time with them on several occasions. Before ascending back to the father, he commanded them to go into all the world and preach the gospel. (Matt. 28:18-20) He asked Peter, who had denied him, to feed his sheep. (John 21:17)

After seeing and spending time with the risen Saviour, they changed from

timid mice to brave men. They went everywhere preaching the word in spite of opposition and persecution.

Acts 4:18-20 They called them, and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John answered them, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, judge for yourselves, for we can't help telling the things which we saw and heard."

These witnesses really believed or they wouldn't have been willing to suffer and die for their testimony. They endured whippings, stoning and persecution for Christ. All but one of the Apostles died for his faith. Would they have been willing to suffer and die for a lie? Would you? They really believed in Christ and his resurrection.

2) The Bible says that it is inspired by God.

If the early church had not believed that it was inspired they would not have assembled the New Testament. Appendix C lets the New Testament itself tell why it was written.

3) Fulfilled prophecy

God knows in advance what is going to happen.

Isaiah 46:9-10 Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me; declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things that are not yet done; saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure;

His thinking and his plans are beyond our comprehension. We just have to trust him and seek him.

Isaiah 55:6-8 Seek the LORD while he may be found; call you on him while he is near: let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return to the LORD, and he will have mercy on him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," says the LORD.

Many Old Testament prophecies have been fulfilled already. For example Daniel Chapter 2 describes the Babylonian, Persian, Greek, and Roman Empires long before they appeared. In the days of the Roman empire the kingdom that will never be destroyed was established, the Church.

Daniel 8 describes Alexander the Great who defeated the Persians and conquered most of the world, but died at an early age. His empire was split up among four of his generals, as was prophesied many years before by Daniel.

Isaiah 53 describes Christ's suffering and how by his suffering he would justify many. For a detailed treatment of "Old Testament Prophecies Fulfilled in Jesus Christ", see Josh McDowell, *The New Evidence That Demands a Verdict* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1999), 165-202.[15]

4) Unparalleled Honesty

The Biblical narratives show its character's human failings as well as their strengths. Abraham lied. Jacob lied to his father, Isaac, and stole his brother, Esau's, birthright. Moses had a short temper and killed a man. King David, committed adultery and then murder and betrayal to cover it up. He repented and was forgiven, but the damage to his family was terrible. One of his sons, Amnon, raped his half-sister, Tamar. Later her brother, Absalom, killed Amnon. David forgave Absalom, but Absalom wanted to be king so he led a revolt against David and tried to kill him. King Solomon, the wisest man that every lived did not follow the command for a Jew not to marry a foreigner (Exodus 34:15-16) and for a king not to have many wives (Deuteronomy 17:14-21). He married many foreign women who led him to worship idols, not God and as a result upon his death his kingdom was split. In the New Testament, Peter denied Christ three times. The Bible portrays its characters as real people, warts and all. So far as I know other religious writings tend to ignore or gloss over their leader's faults.

Conclusions

Science points to an Intelligent Designer, see Appendix A.

The world and the stars show the glory of God.

Evidence shows that there was a bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ and that he is the Son of God, Jehovah, the Intelligent Designer.

Evidence shows that the Bible is his inspired word, a lamp to guide us and light our way in this dark world.

The New Testament explains why a written New Testament was needed, please refer to Appendix C.

We have good reason to believe that God does exist.

We have evidence that we have an accurate translation of the Bible and that it is inspired by God.

References

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[3] Craig L. Blomberg, "The Historical Reliability of the New Testament," in William Lane Craig, *Reasonable Faith* (Wheaton: Crossway, 1994), 226. Quoted by McDowell and McDowell, *More Than a Carpenter*, Quoted in McDowell, Josh; Dave Sterrett (2010-12-17). *Is the Bible True . . . Really?: A Dialogue on Skepticism, Evidence, and Truth* (The Coffee House Chronicles) (Kindle Locations 789-792). Moody Publishers. Kindle Edition.

[4] Komoszewski, Sawyer, and Wallace, *Reinventing Jesus*, 215. Quoted by McDowell and McDowell, *More Than a Carpenter*, Quoted by McDowell, Josh; Dave Sterrett (2010-12-17). *Is the Bible True . . . Really?: A Dialogue on Skepticism, Evidence, and Truth* (The Coffee House Chronicles) (Kindle Locations 857-862). Moody Publishers. Kindle Edition.

[5] C. S. Lewis, essay on "Modern Theology and Biblical Criticism" quoted in "The New Evidence that demands a Verdict." by Josh McDowell, Thomas Nelson, 1999, pages 574.

[6] *Ibid.* Lewis, page 575.

[7] *Ibid.* Lewis, page 576.

[8] K. A. Kitchen "On the Reliability of the Old Testament" 2003, W, B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., page 500.

[9] Werner Keller, "The Bible As History", Bantam Books, 1982, pages 187-188

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[13-38] Adapted from Josh McDowell and Sean McDowell, *The Unshakable Truth* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 2010), 96.

[14] McDowell, Josh; McDowell, Sean (2012-08-01). 77 FAQs About God and the Bible (The McDowell Apologetics Library) (p. 159). Harvest House Publishers. Kindle Edition.

[15] Josh McDowell, The New Evidence That Demands a Verdict (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1999), pages165-202.