

Can I Trust the Bible?

Series: Getting to Know THE BOOK that Knows Me
Brad Bailey – January 22, 2017

“All Scripture is inspired by God ...” - 2 Timothy 3:16 (HCSB)

Isaiah 55:8-9 (GW)

“My thoughts are not your thoughts, and my ways are not your ways,” declares the LORD. “Just as the heavens are higher than the earth, so my ways are higher than your ways, and my thoughts are higher than your thoughts.”

The Bible can be trusted to communicate the Divine truth we need because...

1. It is historically accurate.

- It bears accuracy in its accounts (rooted in first-hand eyewitnesses)
- It bears accuracy in its transmission of texts over time
- It bears accuracy in archeological findings

2. It is thematically cohesive.

3. It is prophetically proven

“Then he said to them, “These are the words I spoke to you while I was still with you. I told you that everything written about me in Moses’ Teachings, the Prophets, and the Psalms had to come true.” - Luke 24:44 (GW)

4. It has proved enduring

“Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.” - Mathew 24:35

“The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of God stands forever.” - 1 Peter 1:24-25

5. It has transforming power.

“If you continue in my Word, then you are my disciples indeed; And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free!” - John 8:31-32

Memory Verse for the week:

Psalms 19:8 (NIV)

The precepts of the LORD are right, giving joy to the heart. The commands of the LORD are radiant, giving light to the eyes.

Can I Trust the Bible?

Series: Getting to Know THE BOOK that Knows Me

Brad Bailey – January 22, 2017

Good morning. It's **good to see you all**. I want to **welcome you into our series** which we are **starting the year with...**entitled: **Getting to Know THE BOOK that Knows Me**.

We began last week asking ourselves: **What are we building our lives upon?** What is the foundation you are building your life upon?

And it's **in the face of such a question** that the **life of Jesus speaks so profoundly**. Jesus **never rooted his life** in the **human ideas or institutions**. He was **rooted in something** he understood as the only source that is ultimately solid and unchanging, and that is **what God has established and expressed**.

He tells that parable of two lives who each built homes... one on sand...one on rock...and when they faced life's storms and winds...**the results showed how significant** their choice of foundations was.

So it's in the midst of a world where everything seems to feel **more uncertain...**more **fragile** and **fleeting...**that we are **starting this year** focusing on **building our lives on what is truly solid**.

We are focusing on **getting to know the Book that knows us**.

So during these weeks we are going to consider...:

1. An Orientation of What the Bible Is
2. Why Can I Trust the Bible? - Integrity
3. The Bible's Unfolding Story - Integration
4. How to Read the Bible – Interpretation & Application
5. Engaging Difficult Parts of the Bible - Interpreting the difficult aspects
6. How the Bible's Revelation Changed the World – Impact

During these 6 weeks...which we just began...each week we will also integrate...

- Smaller gatherings...Home Churches... is where you will be able to both explore and practice.
- Daily Reading
- One verse each week to memorize and meditate on.

Last week....orientation... Bible is a **library...**a collection of 66 books. It's **divided into two testaments...** which means two terms by which God has related to the human life he created...and that these are the Books that are **“inspired” by God**.

All Scripture is inspired by God ...” - 2 Timothy 3:16

The Greek word Paul used for “inspired” literally means **“God-breathed.”**

That's the idea behind the inspiration of the Scriptures. God-breathed. **Breathed out** by God. **Exhaled** by God. **Produced** by God.

What it reveals does **not ultimately emanate** from the **minds of men**.

It was **written by humans**, but as they were **moved by God**. It reflects **their culture, their personality, vocabulary** and **writing style**, but the insight and ideas were brought forth by God.

The idea of inspiration is that God used people to write the books of the Bible, but He so influenced the process that they conveyed what He wanted.

We are wise to be **thoughtful about what is being described**. It is **not describing God** simply sending a written letter that **explains everything**. We are engaging something far beyond that on so many levels.

This is the **infinite engaging the finite**.

Isaiah 55:8-9 (GW)

“My thoughts are not your thoughts, and my ways are not your ways,” declares the LORD. “Just as the heavens are higher than the earth, so my ways are higher than your ways, and my thoughts are higher than your thoughts.”

There is that which cannot be **contained in words**...truth that cannot be fully conveying through any language. [1]

So when Solomon writes...

“Every word of God is flawless.” Prov. 30:5 (NIV)

It means that within the nature of human language and minds involved ...there is that which God is speaking...and that is flawless...which means it is **perfect in conveying the truth we need**. [1b]

The point is this:

God's Word is accurate in conveying what we need to know.

This is the essence of referring to the Scriptures as the “infallible” word of God.

The Scriptures are “infallible”...unfailing in communicating all matters of faith and practice.

God is not afraid the human element. He knows divine truth can be conveyed through earthly dynamics.

Notice what Paul wrote,,,,,

“...you have known the sacred Scriptures, which are able to give you wisdom for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus...so that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.” - 2 Timothy 3:15-17 (HCSB)

In that light... **Can we trust the Bible to bear the Living truth** to give us wisdom for salvation... so that we become complete... restored in who we really are... and able to know

how we can rightly live?

Now **we don't have time today** to give a **full and fair exploration** of all that is involved in these various areas...but I want to help us grasp the **most foundational truth**...and I will **include some notes online** if you want to explore more.

The Bible can be trusted to communicate the Divine truth we need because...

1. It is historically accurate.

There are actually **three important factors** to determining if something is bearing what is truly historical to us.

The first one is the **source of the accounts**.

- **It bears accuracy in its accounts (rooted in first-hand eyewitnesses)**

The Bible is primarily eyewitness accounts. That's **why it's good history**. Moses was there when the Red Sea split. Joshua was there when the walls of Jericho fell. The **disciples of Jesus** sat in the **upper room** and **saw the resurrected Jesus appear** and then they wrote down what happened and we read about it. **Matthew** was there, he wrote it down. **John was there** and he wrote it down. **Peter was there** and he **told a guy by the name of Mark**, and he wrote it down in the gospel of Mark. **And Luke talked to all of them, including Jesus' mother** and heard about what had happened. So it's eyewitness accounts of what had happened.

Lee Strobel is a former journalist who was an atheist... and later explored the truth of the Bible based on journalistic investigation. I want to let him explain what he discovered by way of some video from a few years back...

VIDEO: Case for Christ – eyewitnesses [2]

- **It bears accuracy in its transmission of texts over time**

You may have heard people say, "I'm sure it was right when it was first written. But it's been passed down generation after generation. All these changes have come in..." Ever heard that? If you've heard that you know somebody just hasn't taken the time to study it, to look into it. When you look into it you find out the extreme care with which the Bible was copied.

We not only have manuscripts that have **revealed remarkable accuracy** going far back to the **early years...** we **just keep finding more**.

The accuracy of the Old Testament records became even clearer by such findings as the famous Dead Sea Scrolls in 1947. [3]

[PICTURE – Dead Sea Scrolls – mountain & rolled up [4]]

...providing **manuscripts 1,000 years older than any previously known** Hebrew manuscripts of the Bible and representing almost every Old Testament book except Esther was found in these caves.

When the Dead Sea Scrolls were **first discovered**, there were **more than a few skeptics** who said, “Okay, here it is – now we’ll find out how much the Bible is off course.” **We’ll find out how much it’s been altered through time. Now that we’ve got thousands of manuscripts so close to the originals, we’ll see how far off the Bible we’ve had is.**

So there’s this thousand years gap. All of a sudden we get to check out how much change came in in those thousand years.

You wonder how much? **About five percent.** That was **almost all** just the **spelling of words** and the **spelling of the names.** Over a thousand years, those copyists were proved to be right as they copied again and again and again and made it right. That’s another proof of the historical accuracy of the Bible.

They didn’t find anything that tore the Bible down. In fact, what they found **built the Bible up.** Because **instead of revealing errors, it revealed integrity.**

[PICTURE: Dead Sea Scroll – Glass case [5]]

It moved archeologists and others to grasp the historical integrity that was at hand.

The Old Testament copyists, the scribes, when they would copy these scrolls from one to the other, they would copy like a Xerox copy. It had to be exact. They had this long list of rules they had to go by to make sure it was exact. [6]

What about the New Testament documents. [7]

Again, lets hear Lee Strobel explain his investigation of fact...
VIDEO: Care for Christ – Textual Integrity [8]

So despite what people might like to spout off...based on the dating of the texts we have...it’s actually most reasonable to believe that these are eyewitness accounts bound in the credibility of the time such accounts were being given.

- **It bears accuracy in archeological findings**

Another line of evidence for historical accuracy is archeology. You look at archeology and it **proves again and again** that the Scriptures are truly historical....You can go find these places. We’ve dug up these places.

The **Areopagus where Paul was**, the theater in Athens where there was this riot... We’ve dug them up. We can see them today.

The Pool of Siloam where the **blind man was healed**, portions of **Herod’s Temple**, all these places that are talked about in the Bible, they’ve dug them up. We can see them.

The book of Acts is all about historical accuracy. Luke, an historian as well as a doctor, he wrote the book of Acts. He talks about **fifty-four cities, thirty-nine countries, and nine different islands** – complete historical accuracy.

One of the great things about how archeology works with the Bible is how it's again and again shown that actually the Bible is more accurate about some facts than researchers had even known by all their research.

There have been many times when we've had an idea of what is historical and said the Bible must be wrong. And the Bible has proved itself to be right.

The book of Genesis makes mention of the infamous cities of **Sodom and Gomorrah** which were destroyed suddenly by God for their utter abandonment to wickedness.

The problem was, no record of such places existed outside of the biblical record, which gave rise to critics and skeptics to question the Bible's historical credibility.

And then it was found... [PICTURE: Sodom and Gomorrah] [9]
an archeologist unearthed the place of pagan worship for the inhabitants of the two cities at Bab ed-Dra,
...including evidence of sudden and unexplained destruction about 2,000 B.C.

And for a long time historians said, we're not sure that guy named Solomon lived in the Old Testament and we're certainly sure he didn't have horses like it talked about. They only had camels back then. So that can't be right. Until at Megiddo, they discovered one of Solomon's chariot cities with thousands of stables for horses! So the Bible was proved right.

One of the greatest examples of that is an empire called the Hittites. There's this whole empire called the Hittites talked about in the Bible that was not talked about anywhere else. So for centuries historians said the Bible just made it up. Until the early 1900s a professor by the name of Hugo Winkler discovered the capital of the Hittites
PICTURE: Hittites – entrance [10]
PICTURE: Hittites : broad
Now everyone believes in the Hittites.

There are so many more archaeological finds we could talk about. [11]

We've found reference to King David....**burial box of Caiaphas, the high priest Jesus was brought to before** for his trial before his crucifixion.

We've found **inscriptions related to Pontius Pilate**, the fifth governor of Roman Judea, also a key player in the trial and crucifixion of Jesus.

Sir William Ramsay of Oxford University is regarded as one of the greatest archaeologists ever to have lived. And he took up a thorough examination of the biblical record.

He set out to put the writer of Acts on trial. He devoted his life to unearthing the ancient cities and documents of Asia Minor. After a lifetime of study, however, he concluded:

'Further study ... showed that the book could bear the most minute scrutiny as an authority for the facts of the Aegean world, and that it was written with such judgment, skill, art and perception of truth as to be a model of historical statement' [11b]

In fact, what he found in the archaeological evidence alone was so overwhelming that Ramsay himself eventually became a Christian.

2. It is **thematically cohesive**. (...unified)

It is thematically cohesive...or unified. What do I mean by that?

It is **telling a cohesive story**... in which what is **raised at the start**...continues to be **carried through**...and is ultimately **fulfilled in the end**.

What's the big deal about that? I know a lot of books that carry the same theme from beginning to end. But this is 66 books...written over sixteen hundred years of time..., by forty different authors?

This book was written over one thousand six hundred years, from the first book to the last, by forty different authors, on three different continents, in three different languages, **and they didn't know about each other**. How do you think they all got the same story? It wasn't even collected in one book until a thousand years later after they'd died, in the Old Testament. How do you think they knew that?

We are **going to focus next Sunday morning** on the **amazing integration of the Bible**... how the issues that we discover between us and God unfold and become fulfilled in profound ways. [12]

But if there's such overall cohesiveness...

What about contradictions? It's not uncommon for critics to talk about how the Bible contradict itself.

Usually these refer to the Gospel accounts. The truth is that there are a number of accounts about events that have differences in order or placement.

The simple response I have...is that I have never been particularly bothered by them because **not one of them is without either some reasonable way to reconcile... or is not related to the actual event or teaching**. [13]

All it is, is that different details are added that other ones didn't record.

The issue is do those details contradict each other, or did just one writer add things the other one didn't.

Each account is drawn from different views or camera angles... and compiled differently....so some include different things Jesus said on the cross... but they don't deny that he may have said another statement. John is not suggesting that what Mark said was wrong, he's just saying that there is something else he wanted us to know; some other things that he said.

In Matthew, we are told that Peter will deny Christ before the cock crows, and in Mark we are told that Peter will deny Christ before the cock crows twice.

Peter was to deny Christ before the cock crowed; Mark simply supplies an added detail – that he didn't just crow once, but crowed twice.

Not exactly a scandal.

That's not a contradiction.

When describing the events of the crucifixion... Mark's describes the agony....and Luke records Jesus speaking out to John to care for his mother.

But if you just have Mark saying something that Jesus said on the cross, and John comes along and says and here's something else Jesus said on the cross.

But this is not a contradiction. And this is one of the most important things to understand.

A contradiction is a logical fallacy – you can't have A and non-A and both of them be true. That's what a contradiction is.

It would be like Mark saying Jesus died, and then Luke saying Jesus didn't die. Now that's a contradiction....and there is no contradiction of such a nature.

3. It is prophetically proven.

What does that mean? The Bible includes well over a thousand prophecies where God says, This is going to happen ...and it would come upon Israel as God has warned...and the foretelling of a Messiah... savior...was fulfilled in countless ways in the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus.

Again, I want to add Lee Strobel's voice in describing this...

VIDEO: Case for Christ – Prophecy [14]

Luke 24:44 (GW)

Then he said to them, “These are the words I spoke to you while I was still with you. I told you that everything written about me in Moses' Teachings, the Prophets, and the Psalms had to come true.”

4. It has proved enduring

Every historian would agree that the Bible has had the **greatest impact on human civilization**...unlike any other book. It has shaped the a world that views the world with order that can be explored... with an affirmation that every life matters equally to God and bears inherent dignity and has inalienable rights...that values not just survival amidst meaninglessness...but beauty and therefore the arts. **We are going to look at the impact of the Bible** in our **final week** of this series. **But such power** is one of the reasons that it has **become the most threatening book** as well...and faced more attacks than any other.

The Bible has also been the **most denied**, the **most disputed**, the most **dissected**, the most **debated**, the most outlawed, the most destroyed, and the most banned book ever in history.

It is illegal to exist in some countries...and millions of people have died because they refused to give up their Bible. Today if you take a Bible into North Korea you can get arrested and thrown in jail and you can be killed for it. (And it's not because Kim Jung-Un doesn't understand it's power...it's because in some respects he does.)

Despite every effort to **deny access** ...or **discredit it's authority** to it...it continues to spread across countries and lives.

Despite every effort to deride it... it is still the **most read** book in the world, the **most published** book in the world, the **most translated** book in the world, the **greatest single source of art and music**...and the one that **changes more lives**.

Jesus says something quite profound...

Jesus said this in...

Mathew 24:35 *"Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away."*

What comes from eternity ...is eternal.

And...

1 Peter 1:24-25 *"The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of God stands forever."*

The temporary stuff doesn't last.... But truth will last.

We often live as if what we like is what matters most. But it's what real that will endure. I can decide I don't believe in gravity.... But at some point we are going to face what is more enduring...our idea or gravity.

And at some point we are going to face what is more enduring...our idea or what God has revealed.

5. It has transforming power.

Jesus said it like this in....

John 8:31-32, “If you continue in my Word, then you are my disciples indeed; And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free!”

It has transforming power.

We are wise to recognize that it **gets channeled through** a lot of **religious** and **relational dynamics**...so many people who have related to the Bible may carry dysfunctional beliefs and confusion...**but the Bible itself**... the more clearly it is understood... has transformed lives unlike any other force.

It bears Jesus...for whom it is said...came full of **grace and truth**. That is what it brings to bear...**divine truth** and **divine grace**.

Many of us sense that indeed we have been transformed by it.

I have seen countless lives begin to change...from **lost to found**...from **self-absorbed** to **servicing others**....from hopeless to hopeful.

It speaks to the human heart. You can make all the laws in the world, it isn't going to change the heart. You can make a law that outlaws racism and bigotry, but no law is going to change our hearts.

Jesus said it brings FREEDOM.

You know what the most amazing thing is; **secular universities all around the world have the second half of this verse printed in stone on buildings**: The truth will make you free. Then they ignore God and ignore the Bible.

They forget the first part: “If you continue in my Word, you will know the truth and the truth will make you free.” Not just if you go out and make up your own opinion, or follow what Oprah or your favorite celebrity says.

“If you continue in my Word, you will know the truth...”

So today...I want to challenge each of us to consider...what are we building our lives on?

The fate of our future depends on what we decide.

This is the book that tells you **your life is not an accident**. Science doesn't tell you that.

This is the book that tells **your life** has a **lasting purpose**. Science doesn't tell you that.

This is the book that says **God made you to love you**.

This is the book that says you can be forgiven. This is the book that says your past can be forgiven, you can have a purpose for living, you can have a home in heaven. This is the book that says no matter what problem you go through, God can use it for good in your life. This is the book that says there is a reason for hope.

Prayer:

Thank you that you're not silent. Thank you, God, for loving me enough to speak to me through

your Word. Thank you that you are not silent. Thank you that you spoke through about forty men and women, over sixteen hundred years, on three continents, in three languages, to tell me the true story...the family story.

I want to give each is us a moment to express to God what role His Word will play in our life... is it that which we will just sue as we want... take it on and off the shelf when we feel comfortable... or is it the light our souls will seek to guide all we do?

Closing word and verse...

One final word.... It's a verse of God's Word that you are invited to join in memorizing this week. Let's read it aloud together.

Psalm 19:8 (NIV)

The precepts of the LORD are right, giving joy to the heart. The commands of the LORD are radiant, giving light to the eyes.

Resources: This message drew from both James Emery White's message from "How to: Bible" series and Rick Warren's 40 Days in the Word Campaign. The series we are launching is different in various aspects of what we are choosing to include in our focus, but I am indebted to both for the foundational messages for such a series...and the heart of the campaigns which they developed.

Notes:

1. Some more verses that call out to grasp that an infinite God is beyond the mind of finite creatures...with related to and commentary - drawn and adapted from "8 Bible Verses on Our Awesome God" By Ryan Nelson (<https://blog.faithlife.com/blog/2014/09/8-bible-verses-about-how-big-god-is/>)

We may need a reality check to grasp the upper limit of our ability to understand power, wisdom, and time.

Isaiah 55:8-9

For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.

It is a clear reminder of God's transcendence. His nature and plan are infinitely beyond human understanding. God is infinitely different from us in His thoughts and ways.

The biblical portrait of God develops both transcendent and immanent aspects of His nature. The transcendent nature is not like people and infinitely above people. The immanent nature is intimately present with people and among people. God's transcendence places Him beyond the

limits of time and space. His nature as uncreated and separate from His creation is a fundamental concept distinguishing a biblical understanding of God from other philosophical or religious theories, such as pantheism or monism.

Isaiah 40:28

Have you not known? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable.

Psalm 147:5

Great is our Lord, and abundant in power; his understanding is beyond measure.

“Beyond measure” is a tough concept to grasp. In [*The Heavens: Intimate Moments with Your Majestic God*](#), Kevin Hartnett grapples with what understanding beyond measure looks like:

“Indeed, through His own gracious revelation of Himself, we can understand God in part, but we can never fully comprehend Him, or even a single one of His qualities. There will always be more of His wisdom to understand, more of His power, more of His holiness, more of His love. We will never fathom Him, and we will never tire of Him. Through all eternity, we will look upon Him and marvel at the endlessly creative, wonderfully gracious, uniquely righteous, timelessly beautiful, unsearchably glorious, infinitely loving Maker and Ruler of all.”

Psalm 8:3–4

When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him?

Luke 12:7

Why, even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not, you are of more value than many sparrows.

[Dale C. Allison Jr.](#) says, “Throughout the Scriptures God is held up as one who can count the humanly uncountable: clouds, sand, streams, the length of heaven, stars, etc. Faith does not make clear all mysteries, but it is consoling to believe that a loving God knows the answers.”

In [*What Jesus Demands from the World*](#), [John Piper](#) elaborates on the verse, “In other words, the suffering you may undergo in speaking the truth is *not* because God is disinterested in you or unfamiliar with your plight. He is close enough to separate one hair from another and give each one a number. Fear not; he is close. He is interested; he cares. Be of good courage, and speak the truth whatever the cost.”

1b. One way to think of God speaking infinite truth to finite beings is to consider that it is accurate in the way a parent relates to a child. What a parent communicates to a child may be true in the essence of what it says... while not always accurate in the inessential or extraneous

elements... which are beyond the scope of understanding or necessity. (If we hear a parent telling their child that the sun is coming up.....we would never consider that the parent is unreliable...wrong... or fallible.... even though we might realize that that is not cosmologically accurate....because the sun isn't moving at all...the earth is the element that is moving. The parent is stating what is true in the most essential way. In a similar way, heaven may not be up and hell down... but those terms may reflect not what is false but what is true in every way meaningful but within our scope of space.)

2. Video is from "Case for Christ" - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SsFiGNinKRY>
16:20 – 18:35; 21:21 – 23:15 = 4:10 total

3. More thorough exploration of the Dead Sea Scrolls can be found at links below:
WHAT'S NEW(S) ABOUT THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS? - By Daniel J. Harrington
<http://www.crosscurrents.org/deadsea.htm>

A Closer Look: The Significance of the Dead Sea Scrolls - Ed Stetzer -
<http://www.christianitytoday.com/edstetzer/2012/february/closer-look-significance-of-dead-sea-scrolls.html>

4. PICTURE – Dead Sea Scrolls – mountain & rolled up can be found at:
<http://exploringbiblelands.com/israel/negev/qumran/>
and also scrolls close up <http://www.ancient-origins.net/news-history-archaeology/archaeologists-search-last-dead-sea-scrolls-cave-skulls-005969>]

5. Picture: Viewed in glass display shown to President Obama Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu can be found at: <http://www.vosizneias.com/126742/2013/03/21/israel-obama-visits-israel-museum-dead-sea-scrolls/>]

6. In regards to the type of rules which copyist of the Scriptures had to go through, the 40 Days in Word message note the following:

Rules like, when they had a scroll, they had a specified number of columns throughout it so it would always be the same. And the length of those columns always had to be from forty-eight to sixty in length and it always had to be exactly thirty letters wide so they could always check it out.

To make sure that it was always right, they had this rule that you had to copy letter by letter and not word by word. You know on your phone, when it does text prediction and it sends the wrong word to somebody that you didn't want to send? They wanted to make sure that didn't happen, so they could only copy letter by letter. And they went by these tests to make sure it was right after they copied it. They knew in a book how many letters of the alphabet were in each book. So for instance our letter "a", they would know that there were 1,653 "a"s in this book. And if it had 1,654 when they counted it, they threw the scroll away and started over.

They were so exact, they knew the middle letter of the first five books of the Bible, the Pentateuch. They knew the middle letter of the whole Old Testament. And after they copied all of this, they would go to that middle letter and count forward and backward; and if it didn't come out exactly the number it should, they would throw it away and they'd start over. That's how

exact they were.

7. Some more facts regarding comparing the manuscripts we have of Biblical texts in comparison to others:

Ultimately, the integrity of the texts is easy to explore. The integrity of any ancient writing is determined by the number of documented manuscripts, or fragments of manuscripts, we have to examine.

For example, there are only nine or ten good manuscripts of Caesar's Gallic Wars in existence, the oldest of which is a copy dating about 900 years after Caesar's time.

Yet no historian of which I am aware has serious doubts about the reality of Caesar, or of the integrity of the text itself.

There is also less than ten existing copies of the ancient manuscripts of Plato which are available to study and compare in order to determine the accuracy and quality of the transmission of his writings throughout the years.

The oldest of these manuscripts is a copy dating about 1400 years after Plato's original writings.

And again, that's very sufficient – 8-10 good manuscripts within 1500 years of his writings.

Yet you don't find scholars discounting the historicity of the writings of Plato, or expressing concern that what we have of Plato's writings is less than true to his original thought.

So how does the Bible compare?

And you're probably already sensing this: if the Bible doesn't have at least 8-10 good, documented manuscripts, within about 1000 years of the writings of the apostles, then we've got a problem.

So how does the Bible do?

Well, there are not 8 or 10 good manuscripts. **There are over 5,000 handwritten manuscripts** in the Greek language **in support of the New Testament alone** that **help us ensure the accuracy** of its writings.

Many of the earliest copies are separated from the originals not by 900 years, much less 1400 years, but **by only fifty years.**

And there are **even some**, such as the **Magdalen Papyrus**, which are **thought to be written** within **twenty-five years!** The Magdalen Papyrus is called that because it was found at Magdalen College at Oxford, and it's **from the book of Matthew**, which you see here.

Pictures – Image of Magdalen Papyrus - found at:
<http://www.lavia.org/english/archivo/magdalenen.htm>

<https://vimeo.com/133744793>

8. Case for Christ - From <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SsFiGNinKRY>

18:35 – 21:08 = 2:33 total= textual closeness, incl early creed]

Note that in this video presentation, Strobels states that there is an early creed that dates as close as 24 to 36 months after the resurrection of Christ. The only reference I assume he is referring to is that of 1 Corinthians 5:1-11 in which Paul describes having “delievered” to them what himself had “received” and then states the core beliefs that had been passed on. Indeed this is understood by most as suggesting a creed of some nature. May would suggest good evidence that Paul wrote this about 15 years after the resurrection but likely received it after his conversion which would place the creed as early as 5 to 7 years after the resurrection.

A good article on this text is [Analysis of the Pre-Pauline Creed in 1 Corinthians 15:1-11](#) by Ryan Turner

9. Sodom and Gomorrah Picture - <http://www.churchmilitant.com/news/article/archaeologists-uneearth-city-of-sodom>

Article - ARCHAEOLOGISTS UNEARTH CITY OF SODOM -

<http://www.churchmilitant.com/news/article/archaeologists-uneearth-city-of-sodom>

10. Regarding the discovery of the Hittite –

Picture – [https://s3.amazonaws.com/museopics-museum-photos/Ancient-Images/Hittite-](https://s3.amazonaws.com/museopics-museum-photos/Ancient-Images/Hittite-Article/86019-Hattusa-Hittite-Capital-Picture-Photo-Image-Turkey-2.jpg)

<Article/86019-Hattusa-Hittite-Capital-Picture-Photo-Image-Turkey-2.jpg>

<http://c8.alamy.com/comp/B40YKC/geography-travel-turkey-bogazkoe-y-hattusa-capital-of-the-hittites-B40YKC.jpg>

Article - Hidden Hittites by Kyle Butt, M.Div. -

<https://apologeticspress.org/apcontent.aspx?category=13&article=888>

Encyclopedia - <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Hugo-Winckler>

11. More on archeological findings:

Another example is **King David**, mentioned over 1,000 times in the Bible, yet until recently, no record of such a person could be found outside of the Bible.

Again, feeding frenzy time for skeptics. If we can't find some archaeological support, obviously the Bible must be wrong.

This led some to put the biblical King David on the same footing as the mythical King Arthur.

Then in 1993 and 1994, at the northern Israelite site of Tel Dan, pieces of a 3,000 year-old monumental basalt stone was found that bore inscriptions about the "King of the House of David." The first non-Biblical attestation of David's existence.

Image of House of David Inscription

<http://www.bible.ca/archeology/bible-archeology-tel-dan-hazael-stele-ben-hadad-ahab-joram-ahaziah-jehoram-house-of-david-inscription-jehu-841bc.jpg>

Article - <https://israel-tourguide.info/2011/03/24/house-of-david-stele/>

During a severe drought in the mid 1980's, which brought the Sea of Galilee to unusually low levels, two brothers discovered the **remains of a 2,000 year old boat** buried in the mud along the shore.

Now the reason this was significant is because another attack on the Scriptures was that all this talk about Jesus and the disciples out on the Sea of Galilee, talk of all 13 of them being in a boat out there and walking on the water –

They said boats back then didn't even exist of that type or of that size. No boats like that had ever been found,...much less ones that would have carried Jesus and all 12 of His disciples, as the New Testament claims. Then they found one, dating to the very time of Christ. A boat that could either be rowed or sailed, and could hold some 15 individuals. Perfectly matching the New Testament descriptions.

Image of Galilee Boat Link:

Picture – <http://holylandmark.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/2000-Year-Old-Boat.jpg>

Video on Galilee boat - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M_w5qPO99Ns

11b. The generally objective Wikipedia says of Ramsay ..

Sir William Mitchell Ramsay (15 March 1851 – 20 April 1939) was a Scottish [archaeologist](#) and [New Testament](#) scholar. By his death in 1939 he had become the foremost authority of his day on the history of Asia Minor and a leading scholar in the study of the New Testament. Although Ramsay was educated in the Tübingen school of thought (founded by [F. C. Baur](#)) which doubted the reliability of the New Testament, his extensive archaeological and historical studies convinced him of the historical accuracy of the New Testament.

William Ramsay was known for his careful attention to New Testament events, particularly the [Book of Acts](#) and [Pauline Epistles](#). When he first went to Asia Minor, many of the cities mentioned in Acts had no known location and almost nothing was known of their detailed history or politics. The Acts of the Apostles was the only record and Ramsay, skeptical, fully expected his own research to prove the author of Acts hopelessly inaccurate since no man could possibly know the details of Asia Minor more than a hundred years after the event—this is, when Acts was then supposed to have been written. He therefore set out to put the writer of Acts on trial. He devoted his life to unearthing the ancient cities and documents of Asia Minor. After a lifetime of study, however, he concluded: 'Further study ... showed that the book could bear the most minute scrutiny as an authority for the facts of the Aegean world, and that it was written with such judgment, skill, art and perception of truth as to be a model of historical statement' (*The Bearing of Recent Discovery*, p. 85). On page 89 of the same book, Ramsay accounted, 'I set out to look for truth on the borderland where Greece and Asia meet, and found it there [in Acts]. You may press the words of Luke in a degree beyond any other historian's and they stand the keenest scrutiny and the hardest treatment...'

When Ramsay turned his attention to Paul's letters, most of which the critics dismissed as forgeries, he concluded that all thirteen New Testament letters that claimed to have been written

by Paul [were authentic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Mitchell_Ramsay). (Article - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Mitchell_Ramsay)

11c. Ramsay wasn't alone among archeologists who have concluded that the Bible is solidly historical. Dr. William F. Albright, late professor emeritus of John Hopkins University, declared that there can be no doubt that archaeology has confirmed the historicity of the Bible.

Historian and archaeologist Joseph P. Free notes that to this day, even the most recent of discoveries continue to produce "material that confirm[s] the Scriptures at point after point."

12. In regards to the integration and unity of the Bible, Rick Warren further says:

It'd be one thing if one person wrote this book. The Quran was written by one person – Mohammed. The Analects of Confucius are written by Confucius. The writings of Buddha are written by Buddha. You would expect them to be uniform.

The Bible was written by forty different people, in every age and stage of life, as I said on three different continents, in three different languages, over one thousand six hundred years. And they got the same story. This book was written by poets and prophets. It's written by princes and kings. It's written by sailors and soldiers. This book was written by attorneys and a doctor, an M.D. It's written by kings. It's written by prisoners. It's written by common people. It's written by prophets. All kinds of people wrote the Bible. And it was written in all kinds of locations. Some of the Bible was written in a cave. Some of the Bible was written on ships. Some of it was written in homes. Some of it was written in palaces. Some of it was written in prison. And they all come up with the same theme. You've got to be kidding me! It has the same theme of redemption from cover to cover, over one thousand six hundred years. You couldn't get a more diverse group – fishermen and tax collectors and scholars and businessmen, and over a period of almost two thousand years, coming up with the same story.

Let me give you an example of this. If I were to take fifty pieces of paper right now [there are sixty-six books in the Bible. But let's just say I were take fifty pieces of paper] and I were to hand them out to people today and I said to each of you, "I want you to tear this piece of paper anyway you want to, in any shape you want to. I'm not going to tell you how I'm going to use it. I just want you to tear it in a shape." So you tear it up in a shape. Then I take the fifty pieces back.

What would be the odds that all fifty of those pieces of paper would form a perfect map of the United States of America and the fifty states? You wouldn't believe it. You'd say it's a trick. The odds are too astronomical to just accept that they all unify and fit together.

But the Bible is more than that. It was many places, many people and many centuries and yet it all fits together with the same unified theme.

Jesus said in Luke 24 "*Beginning with Moses* [that's the first five books of the Bible – Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy – the first five books of the Bible written by Moses] *and all the Prophets*, [that's the rest of the Old Testament] *Jesus explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.*"

13. James White notes how the recent work of Bart Ehrman...and the exchange with Stephen Colbert.

I did not choose to show this because it was talk show with the usual upper hand of the host, but the push back, while mixed with humor, is notable.

Bart Ehrman/Colbert Interview

[*http://www.colbertnation.com/the-colbert-report-videos/224128/april-09-2009/bart-ehrman](http://www.colbertnation.com/the-colbert-report-videos/224128/april-09-2009/bart-ehrman)

*Length: 6:41

14. Case for Christ - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SsFiGNinKRY>

27:28-31:18 = 3:50 minutes – prophecy through estimates on fulfilling 8 (later goes onto odd of 48)

Home Church Study

“Can I Trust the Bible?”

Series: Getting to Know THE BOOK that Knows Me
Week of January 22-27, 2017

This week we are continuing our new series entitled: “*Getting to Know The Book that Knows Me.*” We are learning how to build our lives on the foundation of the Bible... God’s Word.

Getting Started

1. What is some entity or institution that you have developed a high degree of trust in...and why?.
2. It’s common today to hear or read some statement that claims some reason to discredit the Bible...often which may be found to be based on simply having accepted something they heard... or propositions they have never sought to verify.
Why might such statements be an expression of something other than actual facts or reason?

Exploring

1. Human history has certainly had what might be called “religious stories” which may cause many to dismiss the Bible as having no distant validity to. However, the Bible stands out in human history as distinct in that it is rooted in historical reality....and so much more.
Take just a couple minutes to discuss what is significant about each of the following points...and why? (While it is beyond the scope of the group time to explore all the facts to establish such point, it is helpful to consider why each is so significant.)

The Bible can be trusted to communicate the Divine truth we need because...

- It bears accuracy in its accounts (i.e. is rooted in first-hand eyewitnesses)
- It bears accuracy in its transmission of texts over time (i.e. does not reflect later legend nor corruption over time)
- It bears accuracy in archeological findings (i.e. we have generally been able to find much evidence of the places and people as actually existing)
- It is thematically cohesive. (...unified It is telling a cohesive story... in which what is raised at the start...continues to be carried through...and is ultimately fulfilled in the end.
- It is prophetically proven.
- It has proved enduring. Despite every effort to deny access ... or discredit it... or destroy it...the Bible has endured as the most read book in the world, the most published book in the world, the most translated book in the world, the greatest single source of art and music....and the one that changes more lives.

2. Jesus said,
“Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.” (Mathew 24:35)
And.. Peter writes,
For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God. ²⁴ For, "All men are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall, ²⁵ but the word of the Lord stands forever." (1 Peter 1:23-25)

How do these words speak to you?

Practice

One way to engage what God's Word says to us is to allow focus on each word. Read this week's memory verse – Psalm 19:8...over and over again, but emphasize each word in the verse...one at a time. After each word, stop and write down your thoughts, even if it's just a word or two.

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 precepts of the Lord are RIGHT, giving joy to the heart. The commands of the Lord are radiant, giving light to the eyes.

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 precepts of the Lord are right, giving joy to the heart. The COMMANDS of the Lord are radiant, giving light to the eyes.

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 precepts of the Lord are right, giving joy to the heart. The commands of the LORD are radiant, giving LIGHT to the eyes.

Which word has the most meaning for you? Why did you choose that word?

How does this verse apply to your life right now?