

I. Intro

A. Chat

Over the years, a lot of misinformation has crept into our culture and onto the Internet about the Bible. And I want to help clear up as much of that as I can for you in the next thirty minutes. Because of the nature of this study, we're going to go over a lot of *information*. So, get ready to engage your mind as you learn or review the Bible's design, reliability, accuracy, and authenticity.

B. Text: **Prov. 30:5-6**

"Every word of God is flawless;

He is a shield to those who take refuge in him.

⁶*Do not add to his words,*

or he will rebuke you and prove you a liar.

C. My Personal Experience With the Bible

D. Flawless

1. **Proverbs 30:5–6:** *"Every word of God is flawless; he is a shield to those who take refuge in him. Do not add to his words, or he will rebuke you and prove you a liar."*

Before we go any further, I want to be very clear about where I stand with the Bible: ***The Bible is flawless.***

Flawless (pure): *refined, tested, proven true. The implications are as gold that has withstood the heat of the fire and is found to be without dross or impurities.*

The Bible claims to be absolutely flawless. And I believe it without a doubt. I'm just letting you know exactly where I stand. I'm convinced that when God spoke to the original writers of Scripture about what to write, what they wrote down was flawless. Now, we'll get into translations and variants in just a little bit, but let's start with the foundation that the Bible claims to be flawless. I believe it to be so, but I'll give you information to help you decide for yourself.

In the next half hour, I want to ask the following sub-questions:

- *What is the Bible and how did it get here?*
- *Is the Bible like every other ancient/ religious book?*
- *Is the Bible that we have now consistent with the original scriptures?*
- *Isn't the Bible disproved by history and science?*
- *Are the Bible's predictions (prophecies) accurate?*

II. **What is the Bible and how did it get here?**

A. Design

Old Testament

History:

Genesis

Exodus

Leviticus

Numbers

Deuteronomy

Joshua

Judges

Ruth

1 Samuel

2 Samuel

1 Kings

2 Kings

1 Chronicles

2 Chronicles

Ezra

Nehemiah

Esther

Poetry:

Job

Psalms

Proverbs

Ecclesiastes

Song of Songs

Prophecy:

Isaiah

Jeremiah

Lamentations

Ezekiel

Daniel

Hosea

Joel

Amos

Obadiah

Jonah

Micah

Nahum

Habakkuk

Zephaniah

Haggai

Zechariah

Malachi

New Testament

<u>History:</u>	<u>Paul's Letters</u>	<u>Other Letters</u>	<u>Prophecy:</u>
<i>Matthew</i>	<i>Romans</i>	<i>Hebrews</i>	<i>Revelation</i>
<i>Mark</i>	<i>1 Corinthians</i>	<i>James</i>	
<i>Luke</i>	<i>2 Corinthians</i>	<i>1 Peter</i>	
<i>John</i>	<i>Galatians</i>	<i>2 Peter</i>	
<i>Acts</i>	<i>Ephesians</i>	<i>1 John</i>	
	<i>Philippians</i>	<i>2 John</i>	
	<i>Colossians</i>	<i>3 John</i>	
	<i>1 Thessalonians</i>	<i>Jude</i>	
	<i>2 Thessalonians</i>		
	<i>1 Timothy</i>		
	<i>2 Timothy</i>		
	<i>Titus</i>		
	<i>Philemon</i>		

1. Who Wrote the Old Testament and When Was It Written?

- a. Pentateuch (Moses)
- b. Joshua (Joshua)
- c. Judges – 1 Samuel (Samuel)
- d. 2 Samuel (Sons of the Prophets)
- e. 1 Kings, 2 Kings, Jeremiah, Lamentations (Jeremiah)
- f. 1 & 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah (Ezra)
- g. Esther (Mordecai)
- h. Psalms (David, Moses, Asaph, Sons of Korah, Solomon)
- i. Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Songs of Songs (Solomon)
- j. Various Self Named Prophet Books.

2. Are there writings between Malachi and New Testament that were left out?

According to the Talmud (two ancient books that included Jewish laws and stories) and the historian Josephus, the prophets who wrote their prophecies ended in Nehemiah's day, with the final prophet being Malachi.

Thus, the Old Testament was completed about 400 BC. This begins what is known as “the four hundred years of silence.” Much of what happened in Israel during this “Intertestamental Period,” the period between the conclusion of the Old Testament and the beginning of the New Testament, was written down, but there were no authoritative prophets, so the writings of this period do not bear the marks of canonicity.

3. Who Wrote the New Testament?

- a. Gospels
 - a. Matthew (Tax Collector & Apostle)
 - b. Mark (Peter’s Disciple)
 - c. Luke (Physician, Paul’s Apostle)
 - i. Acts
 - d. John (Fisherman, Apostle)
 - i. 1st, 2nd and 3 John
 - ii. Revelations
- b. Paul’s Letters: Almost half of the New Testament
- c. Remaining Letters
 - a. 1st & 2nd Peter
 - b. James (Jesus’ half-brother)
 - c. Jude (Jesus’ Half-brother)
 - d. Hebrews (Highly debatable Authorship): Actual sermon that was preached, recorded and circulated.

III. Isn’t the Bible like every other Religious Text?

- A. God-Breathed: *¹⁶All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right. ¹⁷God uses it to prepare and equip his people to do every good work. (2 Tim. 3:16-17)*
- B. God-Inspired: ²⁰Above all, you must realize that no prophecy in Scripture ever came from the prophet’s own understanding,^[th] ²¹ or from human initiative. No, those prophets were moved by the Holy Spirit, and they spoke from God.

C. The Bible Is Absolutely Unique...

1. In Its Composition

- a. It was written over 1,600 years (from 1900 BC to AD 90)

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- b. By more than forty authors
 - c. With different backgrounds
 - d. In three different languages, from three continents
 - e. Yet with continuity and agreement from cover to cover
 - 2. **In Its Circulation:**
 - a. It's the single most-published book in the history of the world.
 - 3. **In Its Translation**
 - 4. **In Its Durability**
 - 5. **In Its Effect on People**
 - a. *People who read it never get through with it.*
 - b. *It alters their view of the world.*
 - c. *It changes their relating patterns.*
 - d. *It changes their values and ethics.*
 - e. *It changes their vocabulary.*
 - f. *It changes their view of eternity.*

IV. Is Today's Bible Consistent With the Original?

A. The Bible is a uniquely reliable Ancient Writing. It was Meticulously Translated

1. ***The Bible was written in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek.***

99% percent of the Old Testament was written in Hebrew. The middle section of the book of Daniel and a few chapters in the book of Ezra were written in Aramaic because that's when the Israelites were living in Babylon, and Aramaic was the trade language used there. All of the New Testament was written in Koine Greek, the version of Greek spoken at that time.

Here's how the Old Testament and New Testament were preserved.

2. ***The Talmidim were meticulous.***

The *Talmidim* (Hebrew for "students") shepherded the transmission of the Torah [Old Testament] from AD 100–500. These scribes were meticulous to preserve the original text's accuracy.

3. ***The Masoretes were MORE meticulous.***

The *Masoretes*, who oversaw the Torah from AD 500–900, adopted an even more elaborate means of ensuring transcriptional accuracy. They numbered the verses,

words, and letters of each book and calculated the midpoint of each one. When a scroll was complete, independent sources counted the number of words and syllables forward, backward, and from the middle of the text in each direction to make sure that the exact number had been preserved. Proofreading and revision had to be done within thirty days of a completed manuscript. Up to two mistakes on a page could be corrected. Three mistakes on a page condemned the whole manuscript.

If the *Talmidim* were meticulous, the *Masoretes* were more meticulous.

4. ***24,000 N.T. manuscripts to compare.***

<u>Author</u>	<u>When Written</u>	<u>Earliest Copy</u>	<u>Time Span</u>	<u># of Copies</u>
Caesar	100–44 BC	AD 900	1,000 years	10
Plato	427–347 BC	AD 900	1,200 years	7
Tacitus	AD 100	AD 1100	900 years	20
Thucydides	460–400 BC	AD 900	1,300 years	8
Herodotus	384–322 BC	AD 900	1,300 years	8
Aristotle	450–385 BC	AD 900	1,400 years	49
Homer (Iliad)	900 BC	400 BC	500 years	643
New Test.	AD 40–100	AD 125	25 years	24,000

This is a list of some of the most important and trusted documents of antiquity. The closest one to the New Testament in sheer numbers is *The Iliad* (Author's Note: Option to hold up a copy or show slide of *The Iliad*).

B. **Is the Bible Watered Down by so many Translations?**

1. ***The English Bible is translated directly from the original languages.***

When you open your Bible, you're not looking at the product of several successive translations. You are actually only looking at one direct translation from the

original text. Instead of translating the Bible from Hebrew to Syriac to Latin to Old English to English, translators go straight from the original Hebrew and Greek texts and translate it into English and all other modern languages—even today! And groups like the NIV Committee continue to meet together regularly to check the accuracy of their English word choice. As our modern vernacular changes, these translators work to continue to find ways to make it both accurate and understandable. That’s why you’ll see a year of publication in your Bible.

V. How Does the Bible Compare to Academia?

Let’s talk about science and history for a minute. Many people say, “*The Bible isn’t a scientific or historic book, it’s a religious book, a theological book.*” Some even believe that science and history legitimately challenge the Bible’s accuracy. Let’s look at that idea:

A. Is the Bible Scientifically Accurate?

The Bible is not a scientific textbook, but it does describe how the universe works. Consider the following, and then give it a grade:

<u>What the Bible Says</u>	<u>What People Thought</u>	<u>What We Now Know</u>
<i>Earth is a sphere.</i>	<i>Earth is a flat disk.</i>	<i>Earth is a sphere.</i>
<i>Number of stars = more than a billion.</i>	<i>Number of stars = 1,100.</i>	<i>Number of stars = more than a billion.</i>
<i>Every star is different.</i>	<i>All stars are the same.</i>	<i>Every star is different.</i>
<i>Light is in motion.</i>	<i>Light is fixed in place.</i>	<i>Light is in motion.</i>
<i>Air has weight.</i>	<i>Air is weightless.</i>	<i>Air has weight.</i>

For centuries, scientific theory was at odds with the Genesis 1 description of the physical and biological development of the earth. Today scientists are in substantial agreement with the initial conditions of Genesis 1, as well as with subsequent events and the order in which they occurred. We’ll cover this more a few weeks from now when we cover creation versus evolution. How unlikely is it that Moses, writing 3,400 years ago, could have guessed all these details about the structure of the universe?

In addition to the phenomena just mentioned, the Bible describes:

- The conservation of mass and energy (**Ecc. 1:9, 3:14-15**).
- The hydraulic cycle of evaporation, condensation, and precipitation (**Job 36:27-29**)
- Gravity (**Ecc. 1:7, Is. 55:10**)
- The effect of emotions on physical health (**Prov. 15:30, 16:24; 17:22**)
- The spread of contagious disease by close contact (**Lev. 13:45-46**)
- The importance of sanitation to health (**Numb. 19, Deut. 23:12-13**)

What grade would you give a book that could do this and was completed two thousand years ago?

Astronomer Robert Jastrow sums it up this way: *“For the scientist who has lived by his faith in the power of reason, the story ends like a bad dream . . . he is about to conquer the highest peak [of scientific truth]; as he pulls himself over the final rock, he is greeted by a band of theologians who have been sitting there for centuries.”*

B. Is the Bible Historically Accurate?

1. Hittites

The Old Testament makes frequent reference to a people group called the *Hittites*. For centuries, historians were unable to find a trace of these supposed neighbors of the Israelites. So, they concluded that the Hittites never existed. They were a myth cooked up by some biblical authors to make certain points that couldn't be substantiated by actual history. This caused the credibility of the Bible to be called into question.

However, in 1906, an archeological dig confirmed the existence of the Hittite nation. Archeologists even unearthed the capital city of the Hittites and forty other cities of its empire. The biblical account was the accurate account.

II. Conclusion

A. The Bible stands up to the harshest natural criticism (literary, historical, scientific).

B. What sets the Bible apart is that the Bible is super-natural.

1. Uncanny track record for Predicting the Future
 - a. The city Christ would be born

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- b. The family Christ would be born to.
 - c. The details surrounding Christ's birth would be, how
 - d. The manner in which Christ would live
 - e. How Christ would die
 - f. How Christ would rise again.

All told, at least 332 prophecies were fulfilled in Jesus's first coming.

2. The odds of these prophecies coming to pass is the Clincher

- a. Peter Stoner (Westmont College): Probability of 8 biblical prophecies fulfilled = 1×10^{17}

- i. Illustration: *Take 10^{17} silver dollars and lay them on the face of Texas. They will cover all of the state two feet deep. Now mark one of these silver dollars, and stir the whole mass thoroughly, all over the state. Blindfold a man and tell him that he can travel as far as he wishes, but he must pick up one silver dollar and say that this is the right one. What chance would he have of getting the right one? 1×10^{17} .*

- b. Peter Stoner (Westmont College): Probability of 48 biblical prophecies fulfilled = 1×10^{157}

*Considering that there are only 10^{80} atoms in the universe, that's a very big number.

C. When you read the Bible, it will undoubtedly read you
So is the Bible true? The evidence is persuasive. But don't take my word for it!
This week, encounter the Bible for yourself by: