

Scripture

Is the Bible Really What We Say it Is?

What we say about it:

The Bible, consisting of 39 Old Testament books and 27 New Testament books, is the only infallible rule of faith and practice. The Bible is “God-breathed”. God inspired human authors to write his Word. He did this by working through the authors’ personalities and circumstances. God inspired every word of the Bible. The Bible is inerrant in the original manuscripts. It is completely truthful since God is the ultimate author of the Bible and He is truthful. The Bible is clear in its message. Although some passages are hard to understand, the teaching of the Bible, through the power of the Holy Spirit, is understandable to those who desire to know and obey God. Disagreements over biblical passages are not due to problems with the Bible but due to problems with the interpreters. The Bible reveals all we need to in order to know, trust, and obey God. Nothing is to be added or taken away from the Bible. God does not lead or teach his people contrary to Scripture.-Examine the Scriptures themselves:

-What Does the Bible Say about itself?

1. The Bible is “God-breathed”. God inspired human authors to write his Word. He did this by working through the authors’ personalities and circumstances. God inspired every word of the Bible.
 - a. All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, [17] that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work. (2 Timothy 3:16-17 ESV¹)
 - b. knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. [21] For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. (2 Peter 1:20-21 ESV)
 - c. But he answered, “It is written, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.” (Matthew 4:4 ESV)
2. The Bible is inerrant in the original manuscripts. It is completely truthful since God is the ultimate author of the Bible and He is truthful.
 - a. in hope of eternal life, which God, who never lies, promised before the ages began (Titus 1:2 ESV)
 - b. And now, O Lord GOD, you are God, and your words are true, and you have promised this good thing to your servant. (2 Samuel 7:28 ESV)
 - c. Every word of God proves true; he is a shield to those who take refuge in him. (Proverbs 30:5 ESV)
3. The Bible is clear in its message. Although some passages are hard to understand, the teaching of the Bible, through the power of the Holy Spirit, is understandable to those who desire to know and obey God. Disagreements over biblical passages are not due to problems with the Bible but due to problems with the interpreters.
 - a. Think over what I say, for the Lord will give you understanding in everything. (2 Timothy 2:7 ESV)
 - b. The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul; the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple; (Psalm 19:7 ESV)
 - c. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. [7] You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. (Deuteronomy 6:6-7 ESV)
4. The Bible reveals all we need to in order to truly know God. What God reveals through Scripture is sufficient for knowing, trusting, and obeying God. Nothing is to be added or taken away from the Bible. God does not lead or teach his people contrary to Scripture.
 - a. But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it [15] and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred

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- writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. [16] All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, [17] that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work. (2 Timothy 3:14-17 ESV)
- b. You shall not add to the word that I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God that I command you. (Deuteronomy 4:2 ESV)
 - c. I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book, [19] and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book. (Revelation 22:18-19 ESV)
 - d. The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law. (Deuteronomy 29:29 ESV)
 - e. Do not despise prophecies, [21] but test everything; hold fast what is good. (1 Thessalonians 5:20-21 ESV)

Additional Notes:

-Peter clearly and specifically lists the writings of Paul as scripture:

*And count the patience of our Lord as salvation, just as our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you according to the wisdom given him, as he does in all his letters when he speaks in them of these matters. There are some things in them that are hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other Scriptures.
(2 Peter 3:15-16 ESV)*

Jesus clearly and specifically affirmed the O.T. (see CARN page)

-Inward/Personal Witness:

-perhaps it is best summed up in the words of the old Gaither tune, "He Lives." "You ask me how I know he lives, he lives within my heart."

-This inward witness to the authority and validity of scripture is acknowledged by Scripture. Scripture tells us...

For when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do what the law requires, they are a law to themselves, even though they do not have the law. They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness, and their conflicting thoughts accuse or even excuse them

(Romans 2:14-15 ESV)

For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

(Jeremiah 31:33 ESV)

"This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my laws on their hearts, and write them on their minds,"

(Hebrews 10:16 ESV).

-it is important to note: the inward witness does **NOT** actually affirm the Bible as Authoritative, Inerrant, and God Breathed. What it does is affirm the content of the Bible as true. In other words if we were to stand in a room of completely unchurched people and declared...

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*The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?
(Jeremiah 17:9 ESV)*

...everyone in the room would know deep down that that was truth. God has written on their hearts. They may try to deny or suppress this truth (Romans 1) but they absolutely know it to be true.

External Evidence:

- This is the detective work stuff. Can the Bible really stand up to its critics?
- Tons of material here to use and enjoy. You can read Josh McDowell's, Lee Stroebel, Gary Habermas, or listen to R.C. Sproul's Defending the Faith series to dig deeply into this. Today we will give a sampling utilize Tim Keller's *The Reason for God*.
- Keller addresses one of the most common criticisms of the Bible; that it is an "unreliable collection of legends²." Focusing mostly on just the Gospels, he gives 3 reasons that they cannot possibly be legends.

1. The Timing Is far too early to be legends:

-Legends are born just like fish stories.

****Legend that MIGHT survive:** Chance goes off on a fishing trip all alone and catches a minnow. He then comes home, tells a bunch of his buddies who weren't there that he caught the Legendary Loch Ness Monster!

****Legends that WON'T survive:** Chance goes off on a fishing trip with Matt catches a minnow. He then comes home, tells a bunch of his buddies who weren't there that he caught the Legendary Loch Ness Monster! Matt then informs said buddies that it was actually...just a minnow.

-the Gospels were written, at most, 40-60 years after Jesus' death

-this means people who participated in the events of the Gospel could refute the claims made in them if they were not true.

-The Gospels cite living witnesses.

And they compelled a passerby, Simon of Cyrene, who was coming in from the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to carry his cross.

(Mark 15:21 ESV)

(Not actually a Gospel quote) *Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep.*

(1 Corinthians 15:6 ESV)

² Timothy Keller, *The Reason for God*, p.103.

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2. The content is far too counterproductive for the Gospels to be legends:

-Many assert that the Gospels were written by early church leader to promote their policies, gain power, and build their movement.

-If this were true, we should expect that the Gospels would depict Jesus taking a particular side in the debates going on in the early church. ie. circumcision. However, Jesus is utterly silent on this issue.

-Legends don't include negative details of the people who invent/spread them.

***Legend WON'T survive:* Chance Cecil, president and founder of the International Association of Nessie Believers, was the brave pioneer who discovered Nessie on a fishing trip enjoying a sandwich and some Justin Bieber music.

-Likewise, if the Gospels were legendary, why constantly depict the leaders of the Christian movement (the Apostles, especially Peter) as "petty, jealous, almost impossibly slow witted, and in the end as cowards who either actively or passively failed their master?"

3. The literary form of the Gospels is too detailed for them to be legends:

"I have been reading poems, romances, vision literature, legends, and myths all my life. I know what they are like. I know none of them are like this. Of this Gospel text there are only 2 possible views. Either this is reportage...or else, some unknown ancient writer...without predecessors or successors, suddenly anticipated the whole technique of modern novelistic, realistic narrative³" (C.S. Lewis)

-Ancient forms of fiction never, EVER, included odd details like:

So Simon Peter went aboard and hauled the net ashore, full of large fish, 153 of them. And although there were so many, the net was not torn.

(John 21:11 ESV)

This they said to test him, that they might have some charge to bring against him. Jesus bent down and wrote with his finger on the ground.

(John 8:6 ESV)

-these seemingly purposeless details add nothing to the message of scripture, they are in the Bible for the sole reason that they actually happened and the writer remembered it and wanted to give an accurate account.

³ C.S. Lewis, *Christian Reflections*, p.155.

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Closing:

- The Bible does claim to be what we say it is
- Inside we all have the truth of the Bible written on our hearts
- The Bible can stand up to an degree of scrutiny thrown at it.
- At Reformation we will
 - Acknowledge scripture as our highest authority
 - Emphasize the Preaching of Scripture
 - Preach and Teach ALL of Scripture
 - Next week, we will learn about principles for Interpreting Gods Word as purely as possible so that in studying Scripture, we can unveil the unfathomable Glory of our Great God.