

# The Bible: Can We Trust It?

## Premise #1 - The Claims of the Bible

*2Timothy 3:16*

*All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness*

A. The Bible claims to be **Inspired**

Inspired – *theo* – *pneustos* – God Breathed

B. The Bible claims to be **profitable** – our lives will improve by following the teaching of the Bible

*Psalms 19:7-10*

*The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul;*

*The testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple;*

*<sup>8</sup> The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart;*

*The commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes;*

*<sup>9</sup> The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever;*

*The judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether.*

*<sup>10</sup> More to be desired are they than gold,*

*Yea, than much fine gold;*

*Sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.*

A. The Bible claims to be **perfect**

B. Bible claims to be able **to convert us** to the condition required for salvation

C. Bible claims to be **more valuable** than gold

Job added that it is **more necessary than food**

*Job 23:12*

*I have not departed from the commandment of His lips;*

*I have treasured the words of His mouth*

*More than my necessary food*

*Hebrews 4:12*

*For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*

- A. The Bible claims to have the **power to change your life**
- B. The Bible claims to be **living**, meaning that it will speak to you in the midst of the circumstances you are facing

*Matthew 24:35*

*Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.*

- A. The Bible claims to be **unchanging**
- B. Although culture, mores and morals will change, the Bible will always remain the same

## Premise #2 - Anyone can claim anything

### A. This is one of the components of advertising

In the late 1800's **Clarke Stanley AKA "The Rattlesnake King"** sold a concoction he called "Snake Oil" claiming it had vast healing powers.

People bought it in mass until it was later discovered that it was made of **mineral oil, beef fat, red peppers and turpentine.**

### B. Extravagant claims are common in sports as well

In 2003 during a playoff game, **Matt Hassleback** won the overtime coin toss and responded "**We will take the ball and we will score**"

His claim resonated through the loud speaker at Lambeau Field, minutes later he threw an interception that was returned for a Green Bay touchdown

### C. Religious writings are not short on Claims

#### 1. The Book of Mormon

The Prophet Joseph Smith said: "I told the brethren that **the Book of Mormon was the most correct of any book on earth**, and the keystone of our religion, and a man would get nearer to God by abiding by its precepts, than by any other book."

Mormons claim the book of Mormon was received directly from heaven, written on golden tablets in a supposed ancient Egyptian hieroglyphic

## 2. The Koran

Muslims believe – “It is the last testament in a series of divine revelations from God. It comprises the unaltered and direct words of God, revealed through the Angel Gibrael, to the final Prophet, Muhammad some 1400 years ago.

Muslims believe that the Quran **is the Speech of God** and not a book written by Muhammad himself

## Premise #3 - The Bible's claims stand up to criticism?

### 3 Premises

- The Bible is historically accurate
- The Bible is internally consistent
- The Bible shows evidence of divine origin

## The Bible is historically accurate

- Imagine if you found a chest filled with hand written articles dating back to the 1800's. As you sifted through your discovery you found one dated May of 1840, and in it was written that Alex Smith was the first President of the US. You would immediately recognize the document, as being false because all previous documents unanimously record that George Washington was the first US president
- If you found another one dated October 1800, which declared that, the US was victorious over the British with the aid of a large Chinese army that was armed with machine guns and a vast air force. Again you would dismiss this document as false because history refutes the idea of Chinese Soldiers aiding the Colonies and those weapons were not invented until many years later.
- **The Book of Mormon**, which claims to be divine in origin, declares that a group of Jews migrated to the Americas in 600BC and formed a people group known as Nephites. Later after the resurrection of Christ He appeared to the descendants of this group, choosing 12 of them as apostles and establishing true Christianity. The book goes on to describe the conditions of the ancient world.

The problem is that his writings not only contradict history they describe a world of make believe. He projects conditions from 19<sup>th</sup> century America back to the ancient world; including animals, and machinery that were not in the New World until many centuries after Christ.

This has led scholars to write:

Hank Hanegraaff

Furthermore, while archeology is a powerful testimony to the accuracy of the Bible the same cannot be said for the Book of Mormon. Not only is there no archeological evidence for a language such as “reformed Egyptian hieroglyphics,” there is no archeological support for lands such as the “land of Moron” (Ether 7:6). Nor is there any archeological evidence to buttress the notion that the Jaredites, Nephites, and Lamanites migrated from Israel to the Americas. On the contrary, both archeology and anthropology demonstrate conclusively that the people and places chronicled in the Book of Mormon are little more than the product of a fertile imagination.

**The National Geographic Society** put out this statement regarding the Book of Mormon in 1998:

“Archaeologists and other scholars have long probed the hemisphere’s past, and the Society does not know of anything found so far that has substantiated the Book of Mormon.” –National Geographic Society (August 12, 1998)

**The Smithsonian Institution** in Washington D.C. put out a three page statement regarding the Book of Mormon in 1996. They said:

“The Smithsonian Institution has never used The Book of Mormon in any way as a scientific guide. Smithsonian archaeologists see no direct connection between the archaeology of the New World and the subject matter of the book.”

- **The Koran** is also filled with unsubstantiated and obviously false claims.

The Koran claims that Abraham offered his Son Ishmael, not Isaac to the Lord and that the two of them traveled to Mecca where he build the ancient city and place of worship.

The Bible that was written centuries before the Koran is the only ancient history of Abraham and his family. The Bible clearly teaches that Abraham offered his son Isaac and there is NO evidence what so ever that he made a trip to Saudi Arabia, in fact this is contrary to the facts at hand.

- **What about the Bible?** Does it stand up to the test of history and Archeology?

“No archeological discovery has ever controverted [overturned] 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.” [Nelson Glueck, *Rivers in the Desert*, p. 31.]

On the contrary the historicity of the Bible has been supported time and time again by Archeology. Many of the supposed falsities in the Bible have been cleared up through discovery.

## **DAVID**

Until 1993, not a shred of evidence could be found anywhere outside the Bible that David, the king of Israel, as a result some treated David a figure of religious mythology

However in 1993 a 3000-year-old inscription was unearthed in Israel mentioning David the king of Israel. This was a tremendous discovery and helped to verify for the first time outside the Bible that David was an actual historical figure.

In light of this discovery, Time magazine stated:

“The skeptics’ claim that King David never existed is now hard to defend.” Time magazine, December 18, 1995]

## **Pontius Pilate**

According to the New Testament he was the Roman governor of Judea at the time of Jesus who oversaw His trial and then sentenced Him to death by crucifixion (**Matthew 27:2; Luke 3:1**)

Critics claimed he was a fictitious figure because of the lack of any secular references to his rule

In 1961, a team of Italian archaeologists digging in Caesarea made an astonishing find. They uncovered a limestone block that bore an inscription in Latin dating to the early part of the first century that mentioned “**Pontius Pilate, Prefect of Judea.**”

This inscription verifies that Pontius Pilate was an actual historical person, that he reigned in the very position ascribed to him by the Gospels, and as prefect he would have had the authority to condemn or pardon Jesus, just as the Gospel accounts report.

## The Bible is internally consistent

The Bible is a book that was written by over 40 authors, in a 1,500 year period of time, on 3 continents in 3 languages and covers a wide variety of the most controversial subjects like:

- Sin
- Salvation
- God
- Heaven
- Hell
- Life
- Death

Yet the Bible addresses all this without contradiction

That is quite a claim, especially in light of the fact the Bible is constantly being accused of being filled with contradictions

What about the supposed contradictions that fill the pages of your Bible?

### **What is a contradiction**

Contradiction could be defined as “something cannot be both “A” and “NOT A” at the same time and place.

It is contradictory to say “I was home last night at 8PM” and to say that “I was not home last night at 8PM”

Many things that are accused of being contradictory are not

For example; “I was at church last night” and “I was at home last night” BOTH of those statements could be true, one does not make the other impossible.

Also, we recognize that the Bible has been passed down for thousands of years and that there are some obvious scribal errors. When things like numbers of people listed are different a passage, we have to conclude somewhere a scribe made an error. That is not a cop out, for again nowhere do these errors affect doctrine

For example

2Kings 8:26 – Ahaziah is 22

2Chron 22:2 – He is 42

Fortunately there is enough information in the Bible text to show that the correct number is 22. Earlier in 2Kings 8:17 the author mentions that the kings father was 32 when he became king and died 8 years later at 40. His son could not have been older than him

Finally, we must also point out that a miraculous event is not contradictory. Just because it is hard for a person to believe something happened does not mean it is a contradiction

#### Examples of “Contradictions in the Bible”

(These are taken from websites that are by their own admission “Anti – Christian” and Atheistic

- Which women went to the tomb?

*Matt 28:1*

*In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came **Mary Magdalene** and the other **Mary** to see the sepulchre.*

*Mark 16:1*

*And when the sabbath was past, **Mary Magdalene**, and **Mary the mother of James**, and **Salome**, had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint him*

*John 20:1*

*The first day of the week cometh **Mary Magdalene** early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre*

This is stated as a contradiction, which disproves the reliability of the Bible.

Is it a contradiction? ABSOLUTELY NOT!

Clearly these three accounts compliment one another

- The death of Judas

*Matt 27:5*

*And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself.*

*Acts 1:18*

*Now this man purchased a field with the reward of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out*

Again this does not form a contradiction because both accounts could be true

It is likely that upon hanging the rope or branch broke or was cut and his body fell down the hillside

- Peter's denial

*Matt 26:34*

*Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, That this night, before **the rooster crows**, thou shalt deny me thrice.*

*Mark 14:30*

*And Jesus saith unto him, Verily I say unto thee, That this day, even in this night, **before the rooster crows twice**, thou shalt deny me thrice.*

Matthew's record of one rooster in no way contradicts Mark's record of two. In fact Peter related the story to Mark and



probably wanted his readers to see that Jesus had even provided a way out so that he did not have to fall

While the lists of supposed contradictions go on, ALL of them can be easily remedied by honest inquiry

## The Bible Shows Evidence of Divine Origin

*2Timothy 3:16*

*All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness*

While archeology and internal consistency can prove the truthfulness of the Bible, they do not prove that it is inspired by God.

I have many books on my bookshelf that are historically accurate and do not contradict themselves BUT these books are not God breathed nor do they claim to be

What evidence could we bring to the stand to prove the Divine nature of the Bible?

*Isaiah 46:9-10*

*" Remember the former things of old,  
For I am God, and there is no other;  
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,'"*

*Isaiah 48:3-5*

***"I have declared the former things from the beginning;**  
They went forth from My mouth, and I caused them to hear it.  
Suddenly I did them, and they came to pass.  
Because I knew that you were obstinate,  
And your neck was an iron sinew,  
And your brow bronze,  
Even from the beginning I have declared it to you;  
**Before it came to pass I proclaimed it to you,**  
Lest you should say, 'My idol has done them,  
And my carved image and my molded image  
Have commanded them.'"*

Prophecy is the number one evidence that the Bible has been inspired by God

Peter put it this way in

*2Peter 1:16-19*

*For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, **but were eyewitnesses** of his majesty.*

*17 For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.*

*18 And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount.*

*19 **We have also a more sure word of prophecy**; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts:*

Matthew alone refers to over 12 OT prophecies being fulfilled by Jesus

- Born of a virgin
- Born in Bethlehem
- Come out of Egypt
- Children would be murdered at His birth
- Come out of Nazareth
- Preceded by John the Baptist
- Would be filled with the Spirit
- Would speak in parables
- Would enter Jerusalem on a donkey
- The people would rejoice and sing songs
- His followers would flee when he was arrested
- He would be betrayed for 30 pieces of silver