

The Bible: A Remarkable Book

Is the Bible true? Certainly the Bible is a remarkable book -- unquestionably the world's all-time bestseller with countless millions of copies in print. A single Bible distribution organization reported delivering over 627,000,000 Bibles worldwide in one year alone (United Bible Societies, 1999). Actually, the Bible is a compilation of 66 books written by over 40 separate authors from a variety of backgrounds (from lowly peasants to noble kings) over a period of at least 1,600 years. These 66 books are divided in two principle parts, the "Old Testament" (39 books) and the "New Testament" (27 books). The Bible was completed in its entirety nearly 2,000 years ago and stands today as the best-preserved literary work of all antiquity with over 24,000 ancient New Testament manuscripts discovered thus far. Compare this with the second best-preserved literary work of antiquity, Homer's *Iliad*, with only 643 preserved manuscripts discovered to date.

Is the Bible True? - "...By inspiration of God"

So, is the Bible true? If the Bible is indeed what it claims to be, the implications for us are considerable. The Bible candidly claims to be "given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" (2 Timothy 3:16). Of course, the Bible is not the only book to claim divine inspiration, but it is unique in that it offers substantial evidence to back its claims. It even goes so far as to challenge its readers to put it to the test, exhorting us to "Test all things" (1 Thessalonians 5:21).

Is the Bible True? - The Test of Prophecy

Is the Bible True? Unquestionably, the single greatest evidence lending to the veracity of the Bible's claims of divine inspiration is the fulfillment of Bible prophecy. Consider this: if man were able to clearly and consistently foresee the future, would the billion-dollar Las Vegas gambling industry exist? We're willing to bet it wouldn't. As man by himself is unable to foresee future events, prophecy is a reasonable indicator of supernatural inspiration. The Bible purports to contain more than a thousand [inspired prophecies](#). The vast majority of these prophecies have already come to pass and can be [verified by secular history](#). Consider, for example, Ezekiel's prophecies concerning God's judgment against the ancient Phoenician capital of Tyre (Ezekiel, chapter 26). The prophecy states that Tyre would first be razed by Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar. Later, it would be utterly destroyed by a coalition of nations, flattened like the top of a rock, its ruins (and even its dust) scraped and thrown into the sea, becoming a place for fishermen to spread their nets. The surrounding nations would witness Tyre's fate and surrender without a fight. It's a rather odd prophecy. Amazingly, the conditions of Ezekiel's prophecy were fulfilled, even to the tiniest detail. Nebuchadnezzar sacked Tyre. Later, Alexander the Great led a coalition of nations against Tyre, demolished it, scraped it to bedrock and threw its ruins into the sea. The ancient site became (and remains to this day) a place for local fishermen to spread their nets to dry. (For secular confirmation, see *General History for Colleges and High Schools*, Boston, Ginn & Co., p. 55).

Prophecy is not just a phenomenon of the ancient past. Bible prophecy is being fulfilled today before our eyes. Consider the [nation of Israel](#). The Jews were "the least of all peoples" (Deuteronomy 7:7), without a homeland and without freedom, serving as slaves in Egypt. At the

time, Egypt was the dominant world power. However, because of a promise God made to a man named Abraham, his son Isaac, and his grandson Jacob centuries earlier, God rescued the Israelites from their bondage "with a mighty hand, and with an outstretched arm, and with great terribleness, and with signs, and with wonders" (Deuteronomy 26:8). God gave the Israelites a homeland of their own, made a covenant with them, and entrusted them with the Bible. Israel was a nation set apart for God -- God's testimony to a world that turned its back on the One who created them. Sadly, Israel's history, like that of the world's, was one of constant rebellion against God. Over and over, the Jewish people would rebel, suffer God's wrath, humble themselves, regret their rebellion and turn back to God, and receive God's blessing again - then start the process all over again... Finally, God sent nations upon them (like He did with ancient Tyre) and drove the Jews from their homeland. In 70 AD, Roman legions decimated Israel, dispersed the Jews throughout the world, and banned them from ever reentering their homeland. The Jews were without a homeland for 1,900 years! Nevertheless, God promised the Jews that though He would remove them from the land, they would remain an identifiable people and would return to their land again. (see, for example, Leviticus 26:13-16; Nehemiah 1:8-9; Deuteronomy 30:1-5). It is a miracle in itself that the Jews have survived and remained an identifiable people without a homeland for 1,900 years. All other nations who have ever lost their homeland became assimilated into the surrounding nations and lost their identity within a few hundred years. Yet the Jews have remained and miraculously returned to Israel as their official homeland in 1948.

Is the Bible True? - Archaeology

Is the Bible true? Not only does the Bible miraculously foretell the future, it also recounts the distant past with great accuracy. As such, [archaeology](#) has been a source of great vindication for the Bible. In Josh McDowell's classic treatise on the historical evidences supporting the Bible's veracity, renowned archaeologist Nelson Glueck is quoted as saying, "It may be stated categorically that no archaeological discovery has ever controverted a biblical reference." (McDowell, *Evidence that Demands a Verdict*, Here's Life Publishers Inc., 1979, p. 65.)

Consider, for example, the biblical account of Israel's exodus from Egypt. Pharaoh, Egypt's monarch, chased the Israelites with an army of chariots, cornering Israel at the Gulf of Aqaba (the Red Sea). God miraculously parted the Red Sea allowing Israel to pass through over a land bridge. The Egyptians followed in close pursuit, but after the last Israelite made it across, God released the parted water and drowned the Egyptian army. Archaeologists have discovered a number of evidences vindicating the Bible's exodus account, including chariot wheels embedded in coral along the land bridge at the bottom of the Red Sea. (*Exodus Revealed*, video documentary by Discovery Media Productions.)

Is the Bible True? - The Authors

Is the Bible true? Consider the integrity of the Bible's authors -- men who claimed to be inspired by God. Take for example Luke, who authored approximately one-quarter of the entire New Testament. Luke is regarded as an authoritative historian -- one of the greatest of antiquity. Dr. John McRay, Professor of New Testament and Archaeology at Wheaton University in Illinois, explains, "The general consensus of both liberal and conservative scholars is that Luke is very accurate as a historian. He's erudite, he's eloquent, his Greek approaches classical quality, he writes as an educated man, and archaeological discoveries are showing over and over again that Luke is accurate in what he has to say." (John McRay, quoted by Lee Strobel, *The Case For*

Christ, Zondervan, 1998, p. 129.)

Sir William Ramsey, one of the greatest archaeologists of modern times, declared, "Luke is a historian of the first rank." (Sir William Ramsey, *The Bearing of Recent Discovery on the Trustworthiness of the New Testament*, 1915, p. 222.)

Now, let's consider [the martyrdom](#) of many of these authors. According to sources and traditions outside the Bible, many of the Bible's writers died brutal and horrible deaths in defense of their written testimony. In fact, all but one of the New Testament's authors were executed for proclaiming and defending their testimonies (John was spared, but forced into exile by Roman Emperor Titus). Of course, martyrdom in itself is not unique -- many people throughout history have died willingly for their beliefs. What makes the New Testament authors' martyrdom special is that these men were in a position to know the truth of their written accounts.

Think about it -- no one knowingly dies for a lie! For example, the September 11th suicide hijackers may have sincerely believed in what they died for, but they weren't in a position to know whether their beliefs were absolutely true. The hijackers put their faith in religious traditions passed down over many generations. In contrast, the Bible's martyrs were in a position to know the truth. They were eyewitnesses to the historical events they recorded. Either they saw what they claimed to see or they didn't -- plain and simple. Nevertheless, these men clung to their testimonies, even to their brutal deaths at the hands of their persecutors, and despite being given every chance to recant their stories. Why would so many men knowingly die for a lie? They had nothing to gain for lying... and everything to lose.

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Is the Bible True? - Judge For Yourself...

Is the Bible true? For those of us who don't believe that God inspired the Bible, how do we explain it? What compelling reason do we have to reject the Bible as God's divine revelation to man? We should lay aside our philosophical disposition, examine the evidence objectively, and weigh the facts for ourselves... And then ask: Is the Bible true?