

Can You Trust the Bible?

The Bible is very unique:

- _____ Books
- _____ Authors
- _____ Years
- _____ Different Languages
- _____ MESSAGE

External Evidence:

Author	Original	Earliest copy	# of copies
Plato	427-327 BC	900 AD	7
Aristotle	384-322 BC	1100 AD	49
Homer (Iliad)	900 BC	400 BC	643
New Testament	50-100 AD	130 AD	24,633

Mathew 24:35

“Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.”

Eyewitness Accounts

2 Peter 1:16

We did not follow cleverly invented stories when we told you about the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty.

1 John 1:1

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched—this we proclaim concerning the Word of life.

2 Peter 1:20-21

Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

Internal Evidence

2 Timothy 3:16

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness,

Mathew 5:18

I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished.

Scientific Evidence

Job 26:7

He stretches out the north over empty space;
He hangs the earth on nothing.

- The Bible described the shape of the earth centuries before people thought that the earth was spherical.

Isaiah 40:22

It is He who sits above the circle of the earth,

The book of Isaiah was written sometime between 740 and 680 BC. This is at least 300 years before Aristotle suggested that the earth might be a sphere in his book *On the Heavens*.

Jeremiah 33:22

“As the host of heaven cannot be numbered, nor the sand of the sea measured, so will I multiply the descendants of David My servant and the Levites who minister to Me.”

- Scientists now think that there are 100 billion stars in our galaxy, and that there are 100 billion galaxies.

Yet, Psalm 147:4

“He determines the number of the stars and calls them each by name.”

- The Bible also says that each star is unique.

Archeological Accuracy – Joshua 6:12-16, 20

Throughout the years skeptics have claimed that many of the stories in the Bible had no historical foundation. One after another of these accusations are being abandoned.

A favorite target was the Old Testament account of the city of Jericho. The Bible recounts that Joshua and the Israelites marched around the city of Jericho once each day for six days. On the seventh day they walked around the city seven times. The priests then blew their trumpets, the walls of Jericho collapsed and the city was invaded. Those who deny the existence of the supernatural have dismissed this account as fanciful. Their skepticism was strengthened by the fact that there was no city where the Bible claims Jericho to have existed-only desert.

However, in the 1930's archaeologists made an incredible find. Going to the Bible location of Jericho, they began to dig and discovered an ancient city buried beneath the sand. Finding a vase with the name of the city on it, they learned that it was, in fact, Jericho. Furthermore, during the excavations, an archaeologist concluded that “the walls fell outward so completely that the attackers would be able to clamor up and over the ruins into the city.” One would expect the walls of the city to fall inward during an invasion, and yet the walls of Jericho fell outward in accordance with the biblical account.

Commenting on the historical accuracy of the Bible, archaeologist William E. Albright states, "Discovery after discovery has established the accuracy of the innumerable details and has brought increased recognition to the value of the Bible as a source of history."

The Bible's Fulfilled Prophecies

The Bible contains countless prophecies about future events. If the Bible were not inspired, the odds of these prophecies being fulfilled would be no better than chance. Yet, we find an incredible accuracy in the Bible's foretelling of the future. For example, over 300 prophecies in the Old Testament, written hundreds of years before the birth of Christ, refer to the coming Messiah, Christ. All 300 came true. The following are examples of these prophecies, their Old Testament references and their New Testament fulfillment in Jesus Christ.

Prophecy	Prophesied	Fulfilled
Jesus to be born in Bethlehem	Micah 5:2 (700BC)	Matthew 2:1-6
Jesus to enter Jerusalem on a donkey	Zechariah 9:9 (520BC)	Matthew 21:1-9
Jesus to be betrayed by a friend	Psalms 41:9 (1000BC)	Matthew 26:47-50)
Jesus to be a descendant of David	Jeremiah 23:5(600BC)	Luke 3:31

The Bible's Miraculous Preservation

It would be reasonable to expect errors in the transmission of the Bible in the last 3500 years, especially since copies were duplicated by hand. How do we know the Bible we have today is the same as the original?

Until 1947, the oldest known Hebrew manuscripts of the Old Testament were dated from the ninth and tenth centuries A.D. They were copies of only the first five books of the Bible.

Then, in 1947 came the remarkable discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls. These were early manuscripts from the library of the Jewish religious groups, which flourished at Qumran about the time of Jesus. These manuscripts were written about a thousand years earlier than the ninth century documents. Among the Dead Sea Scrolls are copies of every Old Testament book except Esther. Upon this discovery, the question was raised whether the ninth and tenth century manuscripts would match up to these ancient manuscripts. Would errors have been made in transmission over those 1,000 years?

The impact of this discovery is vividly illustrated in the virtual duplication of the Isaiah scroll (dated 125 B.C.) in the text of Isaiah (A.D. 916) written 1000 years later. This demonstrates the unusual accuracy of the copyists of the scripture over a thousand year period. Of the 166 words in Isaiah 53, only seventeen letters have been questioned. Ten of these letters are a matter of spelling, which does not affect the sense. Four more letters are minor stylistic changes, such as a conjunction. The remaining three letters comprise the word "light", which is added in verse 11 and does not greatly affect the meaning. Thus, in one chapter of 166 words, there is only one word (three letters) in question after a thousand years of transmission-and this word does not significantly change the meaning of the passage. Comparisons of other Bible passages show even closer duplications. This incredible preservation of the Bible over time can best be explained by God's doing. Desiring to keep the Scriptures in accord with His original revelation, God ensured that the Bible would be accurately copied over the centuries.