

## APPENDIX

### How We Know the Bible Is God's Word

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There are many religions competing for adherents and most of them claim to have divine sanction for their teachings. Often the authority cited for their beliefs is God Himself, and Christianity is no different. Or is it? The Bible is the number one bestselling book of all time. It was the first writing to be printed on the printing press, and it has been translated into well over two thousand different languages worldwide. However, none of these facts lead inexorably to the conclusion that it is anything other than a well-received collection of religious writings. If the Bible is only a man-made book reflecting the thoughts of limited human beings, then it cannot command ultimate respect.

This will be a short summary of evidences that the Bible is what it claims to be – the very word of God (2 Tim. 3:16). There are basically only two issues that must be dealt with in this discussion: (1) That a God exists who can communicate, and (2) that this God has communicated, and has authenticated His communication in a recognizable way. Now, if God exists and has not spoken then we would have little to discuss here. This might be a larger concern if no evidence existed to the contrary, but there is in fact good evidence for the second question, and it would be unreasonable to base our conclusion on evidence we do *not* have.

#### **Question 1: Does God Exist?**

If God does not exist, we are merely cosmic aberrations, of no true value, who lack any significant purpose. Many do not see this as the logical outcome of atheism, but they are only riding the coattails of a Christian worldview. Children are taught in school only naturalistic views of the world, that they are just higher animals, that all cultures are morally equal, that truth itself may change with the sincere beliefs of any person or group... and then we are surprised when they act upon the only logical conclusion to be found from these teachings. Where there is no creator, there is only chance. Where there is no purposer, there is no purpose. Where there is no lawgiver, there is only anarchy and the will to power –survival of the fittest. If we are only self-actualizing, self-sustaining beings, then all that makes sense is selfishness.

That a creator exists is evident from the creation itself (Rom. 1:19-20). Creation implies a creator, and the design in creation implies a designer. It is also evident from the moral law inside us (Rom. 2:14-15). Laws imply a lawgiver, and the law that all people are under must have been given by a lawgiver who is above all people. Let's look at these arguments more closely.

## Creation Shows That There is a God

If it is the case that the visible creation makes God's invisible attributes known to us, it must not do so by direct observation. This makes many people who have bought into the idea that we should only believe what we see uncomfortable. But of course most of what we believe to be true we have not verified with our own observation, and many things are simply not objects of sight (imagine someone claiming that they will not believe in music until they see it!). How, then, does one reason from the existence of a tree to the existence of God?

Now we see things around us (like trees) and we also see that each tree was caused by something else. In fact, anything with a beginning had to have a cause - a beginner. Trees (effects) are "begun" by nuts (cause). But what caused the nut? Another tree. Now this series of cause and effect cannot go on forever - it has to stop somewhere, and where it stops is with a cause that is not the effect of a previous cause. This causer cannot be an effect or you just push the series back one more step. We know that nothing cannot cause something because "nothing," by definition, has no potential whatsoever and so cannot be the cause of anything.

Further, an existing thing cannot cause itself, for it would first have to be an existing thing in order to create itself. So we can see from this that if anything exists at all, *something* had to always exist. Thus, at the very beginning of the cause-and-effect series that all of creation is in is an uncaused cause that has always existed. That's the philosophical way of seeing God from creation, but although it was denied for centuries by scientists who lacked the ability to gather the necessary evidence, it is today verified by science. According to the second law of thermodynamics, which states that useful energy is running down, shows that the universe had to have had a beginning. Universal expansion, verified by Hubble, does as well. The predicted radiation leftover from the Big Bang discovered by Penzias and Wilson in 1965, Hubble's red shift measurements of star travel from the 1920's, the great mass of matter (also a prediction of Big Bang theorists) discovered in 1992, and a host of other scientifically verified finds have led to the conclusion that the universe did indeed have a beginning.

This led agnostic Robert Jastrow, founder and former director of NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies, to conclude that, "For the scientist who has lived by his faith in the power of reason, the story ends like a bad dream. He has scaled the mountains of ignorance; he is about to conquer the highest peak; as he pulls himself over the final rock, he is greeted by a band of theologians who have been sitting there for centuries." (*God and the Astronomers*, 105-106).

Further, we see amazing design in the universe. Astrophysicist Hugh Ross lists hundreds of perfectly tuned features of our universe (from the average distance between galaxies to the decay rate of the proton), and of our solar system (from our galaxy size to soil mineralization) that are necessary for life to exist. Science and common sense have shown us that complex design implies a designer. The fact that we can tell the difference between a sand dune and a sand castle shows that we have the ability to distinguish intelligent causes from natural ones. What science has also now discovered is that every life form in earth's history has been highly complex. Even the smallest life is made up of incredibly complexity - such that no one piece

can be missing or else the organism would never live. If design implies a designer in every other area of science we can expect it to hold true here as well. If all life requires design then it had to have a designer above and beyond it.

## **Conscience Shows That There is a God**

What about morality? Every time we argue over right and wrong we appeal to a higher law that we assume everyone is aware of and holds. In even the most remote tribes who have been cut off from the rest of civilization we observe a moral code similar to everyone else's. If man was responsible for that code, it would differ as much as every other endeavor man has tried. No one has ever lived up to their own moral code, so we cannot simply look to any person's example. Where then do we get these ideas of what should be done? If true conscience came from an ultimate lawgiver, we would expect to find exactly what we observe. All people recognize some moral code (some things are right, some things are wrong). But right and wrong imply a higher standard or law. Law requires a lawgiver. Ultimate law requires an ultimate lawgiver.

Atheism, at its root, is merely an attempt to deny what humans know instinctively. It provides no basis for morality, no hope, and no meaning for life. And while that does not disprove atheism by itself, it is the logical outworking of such a belief system (of course, most atheists are not consistent with this conclusion; instead they ride along on Christianity's coattails when it comes to morality, etc). Atheism has done nothing to enhance the existence of mankind; in fact it has led to some of history's most horrible events. Without God there would be no basis for morality, no life and no reason to live it. Yet all these things do exist, and so does God.

## **First Conclusion: God Exists**

What can we know about this "first cause," this "designer," this "lawgiver"? It is supernatural - for all natural things have a beginning. It is eternal and omnipresent - for time and space were created together and so the creator cannot be bound by either. It is omnipotent - for to call creation into existence required the greatest of power. It is omniscient - for to create all is to know all. It is personal - for to create rather than not create requires will. It is also infinite and therefore singular - for all finite things require a cause. Clearly this is what we call God.

## **Question 2: Has God Verified His Communication**

This first question can narrow down the potential religious writings to three. If God exists then only religions that affirm that fact can be true, and only these three states that this creator God exists:

Islam, Judaism, and Christianity (I am not including various cults and other offshoot religions for they only twist what the major religions teach). The next question we need to deal with is how to tell which of these is actually from the God that we know exists. What will be shown below is that there is a *chasm* between the Bible and all other religious writings. I use the acronym CHASM as a way to remember the evidence for the Bible. It stands for Copies History,

Archeology, Science, and Miracles. The first four establish that the Bible we have today is trustworthy, the last that it is divine in origin and not merely a human book.

## **The Bible is Trustworthy**

Many liberal theologians believe that the Bible can be full of myths and scientific or historical inaccuracies but still be useful for religion. While it is true that most religions do not have, or even claim to have, a foundation based on real events, which is not the case with Christianity. Jesus said in John 3:12, “I have spoken to you of earthly things and you do not believe; how then will you believe if I speak of heavenly things?” In other words, if we cannot trust Jesus with things we can check out on our own, how can we expect to trust Him for things we cannot? So it is important that the Bible be trustworthy in all it says, not just the “religious” parts.

## **Copies**

There is a common objection that the Bible we have today is a translation of a translation of a translation and we do not really know what the original said. This is simply false. The copy evidence for the Bible is, in a word, astounding. We have more manuscripts, better manuscripts, and earlier manuscripts than any other ancient writing. Concerning the Old Testament, we used to have only manuscripts that dated to about the fourteenth century A.D. For centuries, these were the oldest copies translators had to work with.

In 1948 that all changed. The Dead Sea Scrolls found in the Qumran caves dated back to the third century B.C. (including the entire book of Isaiah and thousands of fragments from every Old Testament book except Esther). This gave scholars access to copies 1,000 years older than the current manuscripts, and verified the accuracy of scribal copying.

Geisler describes the reason for this accuracy: “There are very few variants in the texts available because the Masoretes systematically destroyed old manuscripts once they were carefully copied. With respect to the Jewish Scriptures, however, it was not scribal accuracy alone that guaranteed their product. Rather, it was their almost superstitious reverence for the Bible. According to the *Talmud*, there were specifications not only for the kind of skins to be used and the size of the columns, but there was even a religious ritual necessary for the scribe to perform before writing the name of God. Rules governed the kind of ink used, dictated the spacing of words, and prohibited writing anything from memory. The lines, and even the letters, were counted methodically. If a manuscript was found to contain even one mistake, it was discarded and destroyed. This scribal formalism was responsible, at least in part, for the extreme care exercised in copying the Scriptures. It was also the reason there were only a few manuscripts (as the rules demanded the destruction of defective copies); (Norman Geisler, *The Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics* 550-554).

In many cases we have only a small handful of copies of ancient texts (for example we have only nine or ten good copies of Julius Caesar’s *Gallic War*). In fact, the best non-biblical ancient writing we have is Homer’s *Iliad*, which only has 643 copies. Now get this - the New

Testament that we have today is based on 5,686 manuscripts! Further, there are over 9,000 ancient copies in other languages. As if that were not enough, even if all of these copies were lost we could reconstruct the entire New Testament (minus 11 verses) from ancient quotations of the Bible.

We also have much earlier copies than most ancient writings. While some of the best we have are 1,000's of years later than their originals (Homer's *Odyssey* is unusually good – only 500 years separate the copies from the original), we have fragments of the New Testament that go back to within decades of the events – not enough time for distortion or myth making. Most of the New Testament is based on copies that date to within only a few centuries. Finally, we have more accurate copies. With over 36,000 verses in the New Testament, the variant readings between the thousands of copies could easily be expected to reach hundreds of thousands. Instead there is actually a total difference of only about 2%. Few of these variants affect the meaning of the passage (such as the difference between “Christ” “Jesus Christ” and “Jesus”) - and none of these affect any area of doctrine. Obviously, God has preserved His word.

## History

Although the Bible is itself a collection of historical documents it would be right to call it into question if no other sources verified what it said. What we will see is that many historians of the day reported what the New Testament reported and in fact the gospel itself can be reconstructed from non-Christian sources. Tacitus, writing in the first century, makes references to Christians, who suffered the “extreme penalty” under Pontius Pilate during the reign of Tiberius. He also records a “superstition” relating to the resurrection of Jesus. Suetonius recorded that there was a man named *Chrestus* (or Christ) who lived during the first century.

Certain Jews caused disturbances relating to this man. Flavius Josephus refers to James, “the brother of Jesus, who was called Christ.” He also wrote that “there was a wise man named Jesus. His conduct was good and [he] was known to be virtuous. And many people from among the Jews and the other nations became his disciples.

Pilate condemned him to be crucified and to die. But those who became his disciples did not abandon his discipleship. They reported that he had appeared to them three days after his crucifixion, and that he was alive; accordingly he was perhaps the Messiah, concerning whom the prophets have recounted wonders.” Julius Africanus in a discussion of the darkness which followed the crucifixion of Christ identifies the darkness which Thallus explained as a solar eclipse with the darkness at the crucifixion described in Luke 23:44–45. Pliny the Younger describes the early Christian worship practices. The most notable is that early Christians worshiped Jesus as God. Talmudic writings of most value concerning the historical Jesus are those compiled between 70 and 200. The most significant text confirms the crucifixion, the timing of the event on the eve of Passover, and the accusation of sorcery and apostasy (see Geisler, *BECA*, 381-385).

So from these and many other historical sources we know that Jesus was from Nazareth, that he lived a virtuous and miraculous life, that he was crucified in Palestine under Pontius

Pilate during the reign of Tiberius Caesar at Passover time, that he was believed by his disciples to have been miraculously resurrected, and that they worshiped Him as God. Well, that's pretty much the whole gospel isn't it?

## **Archeology**

History is replete with archeological evidence for the veracity of the Old Testament, and many stories of overturned theories that attacked it. The following is only a small sample of the finds that have confirmed the Bible's accuracy (see Josh McDowell, *A Ready Defense*, 92-107, and *Evidence That Demands a Verdict*, 369-388, Norman Geisler, *BECA*, 46-52, and *When Skeptics Ask*, 179-208).

The Hittite civilization (Genesis 15:20) was discovered in 1906.

The walls of Jericho (Joshua 6) were found in 1950. They were burned and fallen from the inside out. Despite centuries of scoffing, it was discovered that Daniel accurately recorded Belshazzar's position (5:16) as co-regent – something only an eyewitness would have known. The method of destruction of the city of Tyre by Alexander the Great is 100% accurate (Ezekiel 26). In 1977 an inscription mentioning Dan was found near the high place (1 Kg. 12:28-29). The Mesha Inscription found in Jordan mentions the tribe of Gad (Joshua 13:24-28). The Babylonians recorded the fall of the "city of JUDAH" to Nebuchadnezzar in 597 B.C. The east gate of Shechem where the forces of Abimelech approached the city has been found. The water tunnel beneath Jerusalem dug by King Hezekiah during the Assyrian siege has been uncovered. The graves of Cyrus the Great (Isaiah 45), and Darius-I the Great (Ezra 6) have been found.

For the New Testament the same is true. In fact, the evidence is so strong that it converted a skeptic named Sir William Ramsay who had originally set out to disprove Luke's account in Acts. Yet he found that Luke's abilities as an historian were unsurpassed. No less an authority than William Albright wrote the following: "There can be no doubt that archaeology has confirmed the substantial historicity of the Old Testament tradition," and, "Thanks to the Qumran discoveries, the New Testament proves to be in fact what it was formerly believed to be: the teaching of Christ and his immediate followers . . ." He concludes that "Biblical historical data are accurate to an extent far surpassing the ideas of any modern critical students, who have consistently tended to err on the side of hypercriticism" (see Geisler, *BECA*, 46-48).

## **Science**

Science has long been a friend of the Bible. That statement is hard to believe today isn't it? Many people in the past have become confused as to the Bible's certainty due to claims that science has "disproved" what it says. A little "tract" was made up a hundred years ago or so called "Ten Scientific facts that prove the Bible is false". Guess how many of these "facts" are held by the scientific community today? The answer is Zero. In fact, the Bible has never been proven to be incorrect from a scientific basis. In fact, many of the greatest scientists of all time have been Bible-believing Christians who, because of their belief in a God of order, began their

study of the world and how it worked. Until the advent of the Darwin's evolutionary theory there was not a great animosity between the Bible and the scientific community.

The Bible's scientific accuracy is really astonishing considering when it was written. The oldest book in the Bible had already proclaimed the earth to be round (Job 26:10). As early as the writings of Isaiah (around 800 B.C.) we see the same thing (40:22). Those who believed the Bible would not have been surprised when Christopher Columbus proved a spherical earth.

This not only shows the Bible's trustworthiness, but implies a divine rather than human origin. Here are some more scientific facts known to biblical writers long before they could have been known by science:

Man is made up of the basic elements of the earth. - Genesis 2:7

Life is found in the blood. - Genesis 9:4 & Lev. 17:14

The earth is round. - Job 26:10; Isaiah 40:22

The earth is suspended in space by nothing. - Job 26:7

The waters go up into the wind. - Job 28:25

The winds movements are circular. - Eccles. 1:6

Water returns to its place of origin (evaporation-condensation). Eccles. 1:7

The almost infinite extent of the universe - Isaiah 55:9

The law of increasing entropy - Psalm 102:25-27

The big issue in science today is, of course, the theory of evolution. Space does not permit even a cursory look at all the arguments and counter-arguments and counter-counter-arguments that exist today over this theory, but it is important to see that the issue is far from being settled. In fact, the current Intelligent Design movement has basically demonstrated that Darwinian Evolution is simply impossible. But because mankind is moving further away from God every year, an explanation of where life came from *without* God is required to justify the *belief* in a naturalistic world. Low-grade theories of men are not facts. God's word is true though every man be proven false. Here is a brief summary of just a few of the problems involved with the theory of evolution:

First, we have the so-called "Missing Link"? A title like that makes it sound as though if we could just find *one more* link between apes and men we'd know it all. Not true. The truth is - *they're all missing!* Astounding as it may seem, these so-called ape men have largely been the product of overactive imaginations. Consider the following famous cases of mistaken identity and hoaxes.

"Neanderthal Man" (1850) turned out to be Homo-Sapiens (human) with calcium accumulation, lack of iodine, and a vitamin D deficiency due to the harsh inland environment. "Piltdown Man" (1912) sparked over *500 doctoral dissertations* before it was revealed as a

deliberate hoax in 1950. It was a stained ape's jaw attached to a human skull. But for 40 years it was the leading evidence for evolution!

"Nebraska Man" (1925) came into existence when someone found a tooth. From that tooth they imagined a jaw. From the jaw they conjured up a skull. The skull led to a skeleton. Flesh was superimposed onto the skeleton to make an ape-man (male *and* female!). It was this tooth that was used as evidence at the Scopes trial. There was only one problem - the tooth was actually from an extinct pig!

"Peking Man" (1940's) was put together from a bunch of bashed-in monkey skulls. But these were discovered with tools. Actually the tool-bearing humans ate the brains.

"Java Man" (1980's) was formerly one of the "5 Facts of Evolution." He started off as a collection of unrelated bones (some human, some unknown). The human parts were thrown out, as they obviously did not belong there (millions of years too early of course). Well, Java "Man" turned out to be a giant gibbon.

"Lucy" (Today) was the latest find in the quest to substantiate this theory is *Australopithecus*. While it goes without saying that evolutionists are already 100% sure that this is "it", what does the evidence show? First of all, many other African animals have been found among the remains of Lucy . . . but no apes. Why? Perhaps it is because this is just another extinct animal previously undiscovered and mistaken for some sort of half man/half ape. It is also interesting to note that human tools have been found *under* those remains, and under those tools... HUMANS! To the evolutionist who interprets the geologic column as forming over millions of years with the lower level animals at the bottom and higher level organisms at the top this would seem to imply that humans are the missing link between apes and "Lucy"! Only time will tell, again. Second, we have the evidence of the fossils. Darwin hoped the fossil record would someday justify his ideas. To say that it did not is an understatement. In fact, there is less "evidence" today for evolution than there was 120 years ago! What we see is extinction, not evolution. We see more groupings of animals, not less. We see sudden appearances of new species in the Cambrian explosion, not gradual overlapping speciation. We see no transitional forms between the species; we see variation within the species, just like we do today.

Evolutionists attribute fossil layering to large epochs of time passing. They must, for evolution requires huge amounts of time. Yet we have found whole trees growing up through fossil layers supposedly tens of millions of years old! We have found layers out of order. We have found mixed layers, missing layers, and layers doubled. Evolutionists point to the geologic column to "prove" the vast amount of time it took for these creatures to move from one era to another. But perhaps there is another explanation. What is really there are layers of creatures that all died *at the same time*. What is required for fossilization? Dirt, water, creatures, rapid mixing and burial! Creatures that are fossilized do not have time to decompose. If there was a huge flood and all life on the planet was killed instantly in mud and water, what would we expect to see in the fossil record? Well, the lowest layer would be immobile one celled creatures that could not move. Above those would be sea creatures that could not escape to land. After them, slower



forms on land that could not escape quickly. At the top we would see the larger animals, ones that could get to high ground. And of course, that is exactly what we see.

When we add in the problem of Biogenesis (life from non-life), chance (the unbelievable odds against anything like evolution occurring), the design arguments that have recently dismantled the idea of slow progressive stages even in a single cell, and genetics (the fact that no macro-evolutionary step has ever been witnessed and every occurrence of genetic change has been within a species), the case for evolution weakens beyond repair. In fact, many top evolutionary scientists like Harvard paleontologist Stephen Jay Gould have given up on Darwinian evolution – exchanging that idea for the even more bizarre theory of “punctuated equilibria” where evolution is said to take place in giant single steps. Of course this has never been observed either, and cannot explain how massively mutated, yet reproductively successful, mates could be produced at the same time and without the problems of inbreeding, etc. This just goes to show what people will accept once they take God out of the equation.

## **The Bible is Inspired by God**

### **Miracles**

Beyond the evidence for the Bible’s correctness (manuscript evidence) and its historicity (historical and archeological evidence), the most important evidence is that of its inspiration. The fact of the Bible’s inspiration is perhaps the most crucial to understand. Why? Because *any* book can claim truth, and simply because it is historically correct and copied accurately does not mean it is *true*. There are many books that could pass the tests so far, but whether or not the Bible is actually ultimate in its truth does not hinge on these prior proofs.

If God wanted to authenticate a message to us through humans he would have to do so using something that humans could not counterfeit. Blaise Pascal, the brilliant 17<sup>th</sup> century mathematician, wrote in *Pensee* 11: “I see many contradictory religions, and consequently all false save one. Each wants to be believed on its own authority, and threatens unbelievers. I do not therefore believe them. Every one can say this; every one can call himself a prophet. But I see that Christian religion wherein prophecies are fulfilled; and that is what every one cannot do.” The real determination of the Bible’s claim to truth is in its miracles.

### **Prophecy**

God used prophets to speak and write down His Word. To show them to be true, God gave this test: “You may say to yourselves, ‘How can we know when a message has not been spoken by the LORD?’ If what a prophet proclaims in the name of the LORD does not take place or come true, that is a message the LORD has not spoken. That prophet has spoken presumptuously. Do not be afraid of him” (Dt.18:21-22).

So God uses fulfilled prophecy to authenticate His messengers.

They must also not run after false gods, but that is another story. The question before us now is, “Does the Bible contain predictive prophecy to authenticate its message?” Let’s take a look at just a few examples.

In Genesis 12:7, God promised that the land of Israel was to be for Abraham and his descendants. In 1948, Israel was given back to the Jewish people . . . for the second time in history. This may not seem so astonishing until you realize that no nation in the history of the world has been completely scattered from its homeland and later returned - yet Israel has done it *twice!* God has kept His promise to Abraham’s descendants.

The book of Daniel predicted with perfect accuracy the coming of the four great kingdoms from Babylon to Rome, with details concerning how they would rule and be broken centuries before all of those events took place. He also listed the movements of the kings of Greece long before the events took place. So precise are these prophecies that even critics agree that Daniel wrote accurately, but they try to avoid the supernatural implications by claiming these words are actually evidence that Daniel wrote after the fact! But there is no good evidence for this claim. In Ezekiel 26 you can see in astonishing detail how the city of Tyre was to be destroyed, how it would be torn down, and how its debris would be thrown into the sea. When Alexander the Great marched on that area he encountered a group of people holed up in a tower on an island off the coast near there. He could not cross the sea, so he could not fight those in the tower. Rather than wait them out, the proud conqueror had his army throw stones into the sea to build a land bridge to the tower. It worked. His army crossed the sea and overthrew the occupants of the stronghold. But where did he get so much stone? The rocks that were used for the land bridge were the leftover rubble from the city of Tyre . . . its stones cast into the sea exactly as Ezekiel had prophesied!

Here are a few others that came to pass:

## **Old Testament References**

Nineveh’s destruction - Isaiah 10:5-34; 14:24-27 (fulfilled 612 B.C.)

Babylon’s destruction - Isa. 21:1-10; 47:1-15; Daniel 2-5 (fulfilled 539 B.C.)

Edom’s destruction - Isaiah 21:11-12; Jeremiah 49:7-22 (fulfilled 550 B.C.)

Arabia’s destruction - Isaiah 21:13-17 (fulfilled 715 B.C.) Prophecy against Jerusalem - Isaiah 22:1-14 (fulfilled 701 B.C.)

The destruction of Tyre - Isaiah 23:1-18; Ezekiel 26 & 27 fulfilled (332 B.C.)

Jerusalem would be rebuilt - Jeremiah 31:38-40 (currently fulfilled)

Judah’s return from 70 years of captivity - Jer. 29:24-32:40 (fulfilled 444 B.C.)

Babylon to invade Egypt - Jeremiah 43:1-13, 44, 46 (fulfilled 605 B.C.)

The fall of Babylon - Daniel 5:25-28 (fulfilled 539 B.C.) The fall of Medo-Persia - Daniel 8:1-8, 20-22 (fulfilled 334 B.C.)

The rise of Antiochus Epiphanies - Daniel 8:9-14 (fulfilled 175 B.C.)

The kings following Darius - Daniel 11:2-20 (fulfilled 539-1 B.C.)

## **New Testament References**

(All fulfilled in the first century):

Jesus would die for His sheep - John 10:11

Jesus predicts His resurrection - John 2:13-22

Jesus predicts His crucifixion - John 3:14-16

The disciples would be rejected - Matthew 10:24-25

False Christs will come and deceive many - John 5:41

Fate of Korazin, Bethsaida, Tyre, Sidon, Capernaum - Matt. 11:20-24

The outpouring of the Holy Spirit - John 7:37-39

The Kingdom of God will grow rapidly - Matthew 13:31-32

Judas' betrayal of Christ - Matthew 26:21

The disciples would desert Christ - Matthew 26:30

Peter to disown the Lord - Matthew 26:33-34

Peter's martyrdom foretold - John 21:15-19

Jerusalem's desolation - Luke 13:34-35

Jerusalem's temple destroyed by A.D. 70 - Matthew 24:2; Luke 13:2; 21:32

Signs that would precede this destruction - Matthew 24:4-14

Some saved by fleeing Jerusalem - Luke 21:20-24 (cf. Rev. 7:3-4)

Destruction would begin within one generation (40 years) - Luke 21:32

The future unity of the disciples - John 17

Apostasy in the last days - 2 Timothy 3:9 (cf. Hebrews 1:1)

Unfaithful churches will be brought down - Revelation 2-3

Finally, there are so many prophecies concerning Christ (over 270!) that it would take more than a few pages worth of space to list them all. Just a few include: the time of His birth (Dan. 9:25), the place of His birth (Mic. 5:2), and His ancestry (Gen. 49:10). These alone narrow it down to only a few possibilities in all of human history. Christ Himself would have had no control over many of them (had He not been God!).

Prophecies concerning His death were also made centuries in advance and before crucifixions were known about. These include the piercing of his hands and feet (Ps. 22:16; cf.

Luke 23:33); the piercing of his side (Zech. 12:10; cf. John 19:34); and the casting of lots for his garments (Ps. 22:18; cf. John 19:23–24).

The odds of one man accidentally fulfilling even sixteen of these are 1 in 10,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000!

Christ demonstrated His authority and deity with the miracle of His resurrection and He claimed that the Bible was true (Jn. 10:35; Mt. 15:3-6). Now lots of alternate theories have been put forth to explain away the historical fact of the resurrection (such as: “Jesus only fainted,” “Someone stole the body,” “His appearance were hallucinations,” etc.), but none can account for all the data: (1) He really died (we know this from medical science and the facts surrounding the crucifixion – thus the idea that He only fainted is false). (2) His tomb is empty (thus, hallucinations are ruled out). (3) He appeared to many people – even His enemies and perhaps the most significant, (4) the disciples went from hiding in fright to boldly proclaiming the truth of Christianity because of what they knew was true. They also died horrible deaths because they would not recant their message. Now, many people will die for a lie – but no one will die for what they *know* is a lie.

## **Second Conclusion: the Bible Alone is the Word of God**

Since the New Testament and the Old Testament have the same miraculous evidence, we can conclude that both are from God. If this is the case then modern Judaism which denies the further revelation of God in Christianity is false. What about Islam and the Koran? When Muhammad was asked to produce a miracle to verify his prophetic authority like Moses and the biblical prophets did, he simply refused and said that the Koran was his miracle (Sura 17:91-95). Not until long after his death did the mythical accounts of his miracles (such as slicing the moon in half!) appear. So the Bible, and the Bible alone, has supernatural confirmation of its divine source.

## **What about All Those Contradictions?**

A popular, but uninformed, objection to the Bible’s trustworthiness is the claim that there are contradictions in the text (that this objection is usually uninformed is easily demonstrated by asking the objector to name one!). However, if God is the author of Scripture, and God is perfect, then the Bible cannot contain any errors – especially contradictions.

First, we need to realize that we only ascribe infallibility and inerrancy (that is, the Bible’s unfailing ability to be accurate) to the original writings. The copies can (and do) contain some errors. But as was said above, very few of these affect any passages’ known meaning and of these not one affects any area of doctrine. In fact, if we threw out every questionable addition or error to the Bible it would be barely noticeable.

Second, we need an accurate definition of a contradiction. For a thing to be contradictory, it must directly negate another thing. So for example, blue is not the contradictory of yellow. Blue is the contradictory of not-blue. So if someone were to say that a couch is yellow and blue that would not be a contradiction unless by “yellow and blue” they meant “yellow and non-

yellow” in the very same sense (i.e. it could be a mixture of the two colors). Now, whole books have been written showing that there are no actual contradictions in the Bible and space does not allow anything more than a brief summary here. What you will find when you look into these alleged contradictions is that most fall into certain general categories that reflect the mistaken notions of the objectors and not problems in the text itself. Norman Geisler and Thomas Howe list seventeen of these errors in their book *When Critics Ask*. Several are summarized below.

### **Assuming that the Unexplained Is Not Explainable.**

Many difficulties in history, science, medicine, and other disciplines for which scholars once had no answer have been overturned with time and study – the same thing has been true of the Bible –especially thanks to the recent science of archeology and astrophysics. Enough problems have been eradicated that the benefit of the doubt should be extended to the Bible just as it is in every other area of human study.

### ***Confusing Our Fallible Interpretations with God’s Infallible Revelation.***

Both the Bible (special revelation) and the creation (general revelation) have been subject to faulty interpretations over the years by theologians and scientists – yet these do not call into question the truth of those revelations. While the Bible is infallible, human interpretations are not.

### **Failing to Understand the Context of the Passage.**

Did you know that the Bible says “there is no God” in Psalm 14:1? Of course, the full verse says that it is the fool who thinks this! Failure to pay attention to context is one of the biggest errors of those who find fault with the Bible.

### ***Neglecting to Interpret Difficult Passages in the Light of Clear Ones.***

We need to understand obscure verses in the light of clear verses, not take a contradictory interpretation of an obscure passage and claim it as an error.

### **Forgetting that the Bible is also a Human Book Using Everyday Language.**

Because the Bible is both a divine and human book (much like Christ is both a divine and a human person), it uses different human literary styles, human perspectives, human thought patterns, human emotions, and human interests. Ignoring these facts can lead to unreasonable expectations (such as claiming that the use of observational language (“sunset”) is somehow false because God would know the sun doesn’t really set). The Bible uses human language to communicate truth, and this includes metaphors and figurative language.

### **Assuming that a Divergent or Partial Report is a False Report.**

The most famous example of this is the claim that because the number of angels seen at Christ’s tomb differs between two accounts it must be a contradiction. It is not. Where there are two angels there has to also be one angel and the fact that one writer only mentioned one is not a contradiction. Further, one scene can be described in different ways, in fact that is expected in

eyewitness testimony unless there is collusion. So when the Bible describes Judas' death both as a hanging (Mt. 27:5), and as his guts bursting out (Acts 1:18) it is not contradictory for he was probably left hanging until his body fell and burst open.

### **Confusing General Statements with Universal Ones.**

We need to be careful not to confuse general statements with absolute universal statements. The book of Proverbs, for example, contains much general wisdom. But wisdom is not generally required for universal truths. In fact, because general truths are not absolute they differ from circumstance to circumstance and it requires wisdom to know the difference. Hence, the writer of Proverbs can say both: "Do not answer a fool according to his folly, or you will be like him yourself," and in the very next verse, "Answer a fool according to his folly, or he will be wise in his own eyes" (Prov. 26:4-5) without contradiction because both are true in different circumstances that the wise will recognize.

### **Forgetting that Later Revelation Supersedes Previous Revelation.**

Although the Bible is God's word to specific people, it was written for the benefit of all mankind. This means that specific commands or situations can change over time. So for example, it is not a contradiction to find laws against eating certain animals in the Old Testament superseded by laws allowing their eating in the New.

### **Final Conclusion**

The Bible we have today is trustworthy in all it affirms, for we have accurate copies that agree with known history (as archeology has confirmed), and it is not at odds with scientific facts. Most importantly, it is the only religious writing that has the divine seal of authority: supernatural miracles and prophecy. Therefore, if the Bible is not the word of God, we have nowhere else to turn (Jn. 6:68).

For more on these and other evidences and arguments see:

### **Reference Books**

William Lane Craig: *The Kalam Cosmological Argument*

William Dembski: *Signs of Intelligence*

Norman Geisler: *The Baker Encyclopedia of*

*Christian Apologetics*

N. Geisler/Thomas Howe: *When Critics Ask*

N. Geisler/Peter Bocchino: *Unshakable Foundations*

C. S. Lewis: *Mere Christianity*

Josh McDowell: *The New Evidence That*

*Demands a Verdict*

Hugh Ross: The Fingerprint of God

John Walvoord: Every Prophecy of the Bible

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