



Sunday October 19, 2014
Reasons (Part-2)
The Bible - It's Authenticity And Accuracy

The Bible is one of the most revered and yet the most hated book ever written.

For centuries, men have treated this book with reverence, awe and respect while at the same time other men have gone to great lengths to discredit it and if possible, even destroy it.

In AD 303, The Roman Emperor, Diocletian (AD 245-312), sought to wipe out any trace of Christianity from the face of the earth. He ordered churches to be burned, Christians to be executed, and the Scriptures to be confiscated and burned.

Voltaire (1694-1778), a French writer, essayist and philosopher, boasted in the 1700s that within 100 years, Christianity and the Bible would disappear - implying that his works would remain much longer. Ironically, shortly after Voltaire's death, the Geneva Bible Society bought his house and used it for printing Bibles.

"For eighteen centuries every engine of destruction that human science, philosophy, wit, reasoning or brutality could bring to bear against a book has been brought to bear against that book to stamp it out of the world, but it has a mightier hold on the world today than ever before. If that were man's book it would have been annihilated and forgotten hundreds of years ago..."(R.A. Torrey, 1856-1928)

What The Bible Claims for Itself

2 Timothy 3:16,17

16 All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,
17 that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

2 Peter 1:20,21

20 knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation,
21 for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.

The Bible claims divine inspiration. It is the Word of God.
Men of God spoke/wrote as they were moved (borne along) by the Holy Spirit.
The Bible therefore is not just another piece of literature, not just another religious book - but it is the Word of God.



General Information

When was the Bible written and in what languages?

Old Testament: The Old Testament books were written in the Hebrew and Aramaic languages between about 1400 BC and 400 BC, a period of 1000 years! (Aramaic, related to Hebrew, was used in portions of Daniel and Ezra.)

New Testament: All the New Testament books were written in Greek between about 50 A.D. and 95 A.D., a period of only 45 years.

Genesis to Revelation spans a time of about 1500 years. The Bible consists of a total of 66 books, 39 OT books, 27 NT books, with about 40 different authors, many of whom who never met each other.

How has the Bible been transmitted down to us over thousands of years?

The books of the Old Testament and the earliest copies of the New Testament books were laboriously copied by hand from one **papyrus or leather scroll** to another by scribes who were carefully trained in copying methods to ensure that there were no additions or omissions. About the 2nd century A.D., they began folding sheets of papyrus (made from a plant) **or vellum** (made from animal skins) in half and stitching them into a book called a **codex** (codex means book).

So zealous for accuracy were the Jewish scribes that any scroll that contained errors was destroyed, rather than just corrected. Also, any scroll that became heavily worn or damaged from use was destroyed and replaced with a new copy.

As the Hebrew people (and later the Christians) became scattered throughout the Middle East and Mediterranean basin, families of manuscript copies developed. **The text of particular books were copied for hundreds of years by people who had little or no contact with one another.** Comparison of manuscripts produced over many centuries from different geographical areas shows that the manuscripts are remarkably identical, with only very minor variations.

Ancient Manuscript Credentials

Ancient manuscripts discovered are usually in the form of scrolls, parchments of skin and papyri. By examining the style of handwriting, an expert papyrologist can date a writing sample accurately to within 25 to 50 years of when the text was written.



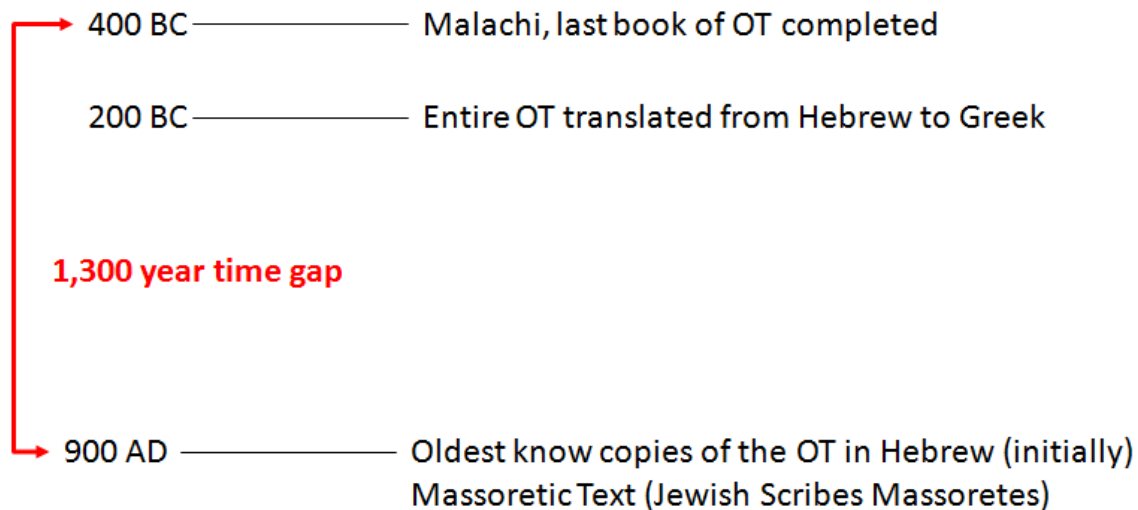
Many ancient writings have been accepted and classified as "**unquestionably authentic**" by historians. For example consider some of the following ancient manuscripts that are universally accepted:

Record	Number of Manuscripts	Time Gap
Plato (424 BC - 347 BC)	250 manuscripts known to exist	1,300 to 1,600 years (medieval manuscripts mainly from 9th-13th century AD)
The History of Thucydides (460-400 B.C.) (Greek historian)	8 manuscripts known to exist	1,300 years
Herodotus (Greek historian)	8 manuscripts known to exist	1,300 years
Aristotle (384 BC - 322 BC) Greek philosopher		1450 years
The Roman History by Livy (59 B.C.-17 A.D.)	Only 35 of the 142 volumes in this history still exist, in a total of 20 manuscripts.	From 4 AD
Caesar's Gallic War's (written 58 to 50 B.C.)	10 manuscripts known to exist	900 years
The Histories of Tacitus (100 A.D.)	Of the 14 volumes, only four and a half have survived. Of the 16 volumes of his Annals, only 10 survive. These come down to us in only one manuscript each, one from the 9th century A.D. and the other from the 11th century A.D.	700 to 900 years
Homer (approx 8BC)	643 know pieces of his work <i>Iliad</i>	500 years
Pliny the Younger (61 AD - 113 AD)	3 known manuscripts	800 years
The Plays of William Shakespeare (1518-1614)	In every one of Shakespeare's 37 plays, there are possibly a hundred passages still in dispute as to their original text, a large portion of which materially affect the meaning of the passages in which they occur.	



Time gap, is the time between the actual events recorded and the date when the earliest know manuscripts regarding that event were discovered.

The Bible : Number of Manuscripts And Time Gap



From the completion of the Old Testament (400 BC) in the time of Ezra until the time of the Jewish Scholars known as Massorettes (500 AD), the transmission and care of the Old Testament was in the hands of a group of scribes. This group was called the Sopherim (meaning "counters". The scribes got this name because of the manner in which they checked the accuracy of their copying texts. The Sopherim counted the number of letters and words in each copy and compared them to the texts from which they copied. The Sopherims were entrusted with the preservation and interpretation of the Scriptures. Later around 500 AD a group of specialists emerged who were known as the Massorettes meaning "tradition". The Massorettes did their work in both Palestine and Babylon from 500 AD to about 900 AD.

The Discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls

Until the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls in 1947 in caves near Qumran, Palestine, the copies of Old Testament books were from 900 AD, which was about 1,300 years from the completion of the last book of the OT. This led to many questioning the accuracy of the text.

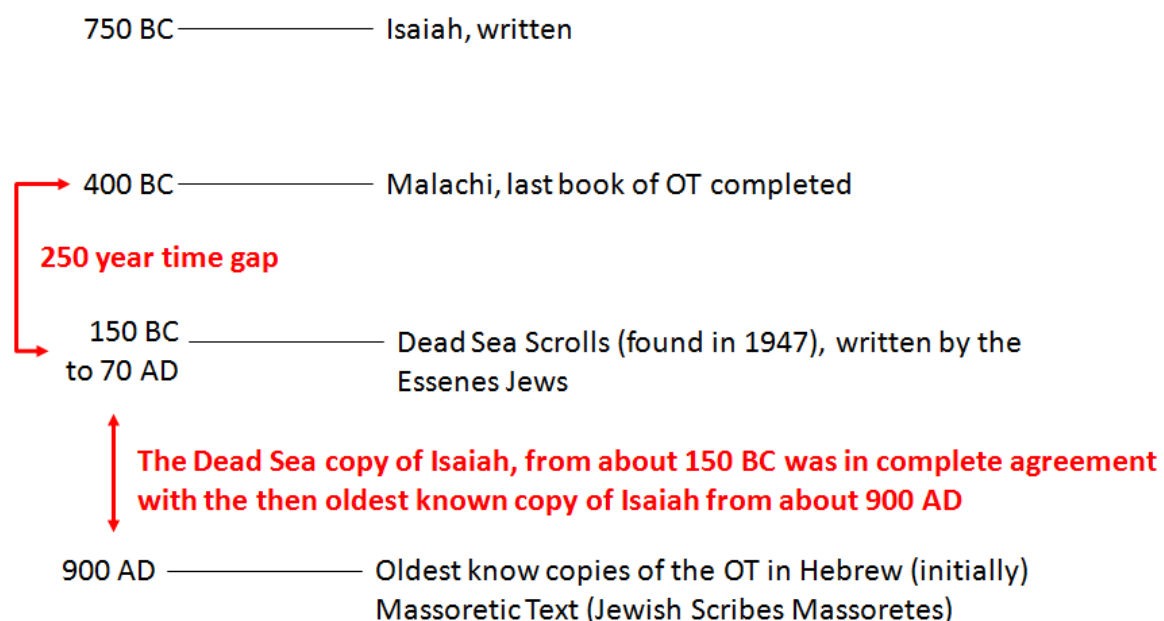


In 1947, a dramatic event took place, which laid to rest doubts about the reliability of the Old Testament text. A young Bedouin goatherd was looking for his lost goat in the caves in the cliffs above Wadi Qumran, near the Dead Sea. In one cave he found several clay jars over two feet high and approximately ten inches wide. Those jars contained leather scrolls wrapped in linen cloth. One of the first scholars to examine the scrolls was E.L. Sukenik of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem who immediately recognized their antiquity and value. Further investigations revealed hundreds of scrolls or fragments of scrolls in different caves.

The Dead Sea Scrolls included scrolls of every book of the Old Testament except Esther, all copied prior to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D., many of them dating from the first and second centuries B.C. The most important of these scrolls was a leather scroll of the complete book of Isaiah which has been dated 100 to 200 B.C., hundreds of years older than any copy of Isaiah previously found! It had rested in the cave undisturbed for more than 2000 years. This copy varied from the generally accepted text of Isaiah only insignificantly. In other words, the book of Isaiah remains essentially unchanged after more than 2000 years!!

The Dead Sea Scrolls found in the eleven caves, are perhaps the greatest archaeological find of our time. Produced by Jewish monastic *Essenes*, the scrolls number about 800; 230 of which are of biblical material.

The evidence of the Dead Sea Scrolls alone basically certifies the perfect transmission of O.T. texts from ancient times to today.





Compared to the amount of other ancient writings in existence, the Bible has more manuscript evidence supporting its reliability and accuracy of translation than all other classical writings combined. In particular, the New Testament manuscripts also stand apart from other ancient literature in regard to their close proximity to the time of original composition.

The manuscript evidence supporting the Bible's accuracy is overwhelming. There are:

Old Testament:

The oldest known Hebrew manuscripts of the Old Testament were among the Dead Sea Scrolls and dated 100 to 200 B.C.

The oldest Greek version of the Old Testament is the Septuagint, translated into Greek by Jewish scholars in Alexandria, Egypt about 250 B.C.

The oldest nearly complete copies of the Old Testament in Greek are:

- a. Codex Vaticanus (325 A.D.)-This manuscript has been in the Vatican Library since it was established in 1448.
- b. Codex Sinaiticus (350 A.D.)-This manuscript was discovered in 1844 in a monastery at the foot of Mt. Sinai and is now in the British Museum.
- c. Codex Alexandrinus (400 A.D.)-This manuscript was given to England's King Charles I in 1628 by the Patriarch of Constantinople who had obtained it from Alexandria, Egypt. It is now in the British Museum.

New Testament:

1. Over 5,500 Greek manuscripts of all or part of the New Testament.
2. Over 10,000 Latin manuscripts of all or part of the New Testament.
3. Over 9,300 early versions (manuscripts in other languages).

Thus, there is a total of about 25,000 manuscript copies of all or part of the New Testament available to us today.

The earliest known manuscript fragment of the New Testament (from the Gospel of John) dates from about 120 A.D., no more than 25 years after the death of the Apostle John. About 50 other fragments are dated less than 200 years from the date of their original writing.

The oldest nearly complete version of the Bible in Latin is the Latin Vulgate (400 A.D.)- The scholar Jerome translated the Bible into Latin about 400 A.D. and it became the Bible of the Roman Catholic Church for more than 1000 years.



In comparison to other works of antiquity, our first manuscript copy of the Old Testament (dates from 250 B.C.) comes about 150 years after the original book was written (i.e. Malachi about 400 B.C.). Also, we actually have over 10,000 Old Testament manuscripts!

There are over 6,000 early manuscript copies or portions of the Greek New Testament in existence today. When we include the Latin Vulgate and other early versions, we have over 24,000 early copies or portions of the New Testament (twice that many when including quotes by early church fathers). Some of these date only twenty to thirty years from the original autographs.

Record	Number of Manuscripts	Time Gap
Old Testament	Over 10,000	150 years
New Testament	Over 24,000	50 years

By comparison, of works by Plato and Aristotle very few copies exist at all, and those were written 1,200 to 1,400 years after the autographs. If these ancient works are considered "unquestionably authentic" how much more should the Bible!

Scholars have pinpointed the copyist errors in the New Testament and have found them to be insignificant, not affecting a single important fact, doctrine, or rule of faith. Eminent Greek scholar F. J. A. Hort wrote, "*Apart from insignificant variations of grammar or spelling, not more than one thousandth part of the whole New Testament is affected by differences of reading.*"

Jesus on the Authority of the Old Testament

Jesus affirmed the general authority (Mt. 4:4,7,10), doctrinal authority (Mt. 22:29), imperishability (Mt. 5:18), historical reliability (Mt. 12:40), scientific reliability (Mk. 13:19), truthfulness (Jn. 17:17), and the exact number of books that belonged in the Old Testament (Mt. 23:35; Lk. 24:44). Essentially Jesus affirmed the truthfulness and accuracy of the Old Testament in every way possible. Since we have a good idea of what the Old Testament was at the time of Jesus, Jesus affirmed the truthfulness of our Old Testament text that we have today.

(Pastors, no need to reference all the verses above due to lack of time. Sufficient to state what Jesus said about the OT).



Accuracy (Inerrancy) of the Bible

The span of time over which the Old Testament was written and the large number of human authors involved in writing it are strong evidence for its validity. About 40 authors wrote the Old Testament over a period of about 1,500 years. Were these writers not guided by the Holy Spirit, it would have been impossible for them to produce a work the size of the Old Testament with a single common theme which did not contradict itself and which did not contain provable historical or other factual errors.

Some people point to seeming contradictions and difficult to understand passages, as indicative of error in the text. There are two points to consider here:

First, The law of non-contradiction in logical thinking, states that a thing cannot be both A and Non-A at the same time. A difference is not a contradiction unless it satisfies this law. For example, if John and Jim met with me in my office at 9am today. Later in the day, when in a conversation with someone, I tell them that I met John at 9am. Then when I meet someone else, I tell them, I met with John and Jim at 9am. Both these statements differ, but both are right. They are not a contradiction.

Secondly, sufficient background information and research helps clear up difficult passages. An apparent contradiction or error, can be clearly understood and explained when the text is examined closely and when additional information is researched. In some cases, because of our lack of knowledge of the background (cultural, historical) we may find things difficult to understand. But this does not imply that the text is in error.

The Canon of Scripture

By the Canon of Scripture, we refer to the 66 books that make up the Bible. The word "canon" simply means "standard". Canonicity is determined by God. A book is canonical, because God inspired it and man discovered it. The 39 books that make up the Old Testament Canon of Scripture, were recognized as such by the Jews. The 27 books that make up the New Testament Canon of Scripture, were recognized by the Early Church as such.

The Bible - Not Just Another Book

Here are some amazing "wonders" of the Bible.

#1, Its Unity

Genesis to Revelation spans a time of about 1500 years. The Bible consists of a total of 66 books, 39 OT books, 27 NT books, with about 40 different authors, many of whom who never met each other. The Bible was written across different cultures, in three



different continents Africa, Asia and Europe. We would expect that the result of such diversity would be a text that is chaotic, contradictions, and distortions. But the Bible is consistent and coherent. The Bible deals consistently with subjects as the origin of the universe, the existence and nature of God, the nature and purpose of humankind, and the origin and extent of evil.

Its amazing unity points to one Source - God as its author!

#2, Its Historical and Archeological Accuracy

Within the pages of the Bible are countless references to events, people and places. Archeology and secular historical records have repeatedly confirmed the precision of the references in the various Biblical books.

Archeologist Dr. Nelson Glueck, probably the greatest modern authority on Israeli archeology, commented, *"No archeological discovery has ever controverted a biblical reference. Scores of archeological findings have been made which confirm in clear outline or in exact detail historical statements in the Bible"*.

#3, Its fulfilled Prophecy

Hundreds of Bible prophecies have been fulfilled, specifically and meticulously long after the writer had passed away.

More than 300 prophecies were fulfilled by Christ's first coming.

Mathematics and astronomy professor Peter Stoner was a skeptic of the Bible, and to test its prophetic accuracy, he observed 48 major Old Testament prophecies concerning the Messiah that would come. Out of the 48, he considered just 8 of these (dealing with the Messiah being born in Bethlehem, His persecution, attempts on his life, etc), that established strict parameters to govern who this Messiah would be. Using the principles of probability he concluded the following: *The chance that any man might have lived and fulfilled all 8 prophecies is 1 in 10¹⁷; yet the chance that any one man fulfilled all 48 prophecies is an astounding 1 in 10¹⁵⁷*. The fact is that Jesus the Messiah fulfilled them all. This ended up changing Stoner's life and convicting him of the reality of both God and the Bible.

#4, Its Indestructibility

As we have mentioned at the very beginning men have tried to destroy the Bible, but this one book has stood the test of time and every attempt against it.

#5, It's Christ-centeredness

All of Scripture point to Jesus Christ. From Genesis to Revelation, Jesus Christ the Messiah is at the center.



John 5:39 You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me.

#6, It's Teachings

Its teachings are powerful, timeless and at contrary to popular opinion.

It applies to all matters of life:

2 Timothy 3:16,17

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

17 that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

#7, It's Life Transforming Power

This one Book has transformed the lives of millions who have read it, shaped the course of history, and altered nations. Lives of murderers and evil men have been powerfully transformed.

Conclusion

The Bible is not just another book. It is God's voice to us. It is God, our Creator speaking to us, people, created in His image. What will you do with the Word of God?

The Bible contains the mind of God, the state of man, the way of salvation, the doom of sinners, and the happiness of believers. Its doctrines are holy, its precepts are binding, its histories are true, and its decisions are immutable.

Read it to be wise, believe it to be safe, and practice it to be holy. It contains light to direct you, food to support you, and comfort to cheer you.

It is the traveler's map, the pilgrim's staff, the pilot's compass, the soldier's sword and the Christian's charter. Here too, Heaven is opened and the gates of Hell disclosed.

Christ is its grand subject, our good its design, and the glory of God its end. It should fill the memory, rule the heart and guide the feet. Read it slowly, frequently and prayerfully. It is a mine of wealth, a paradise of glory, and a river of pleasure.

It is given you in life, will be opened at the judgment, and be remembered forever. It involves the highest responsibility, rewards the greatest labor, and will



condemn all who trifle with its sacred contents. - (found on most New Testaments distributed by The Gideons International. Author Unconfirmed)

Prayer Time

Salvation call . Prayer for healing and deliverance. Minister by the gifts of the Spirit as the Spirit leads.

References:

- 1, Alex McFarland, The 10 Most Common Objections to Christianity
- 2, Fred Ragland, The Origin and History of the Bible
- 3, www.carm.org
- 4, www.provethetbible.net
- 5, Josh McDowell, Answers Five Tough Questions
- 6, www.deadseascrolls.org.il



USEFUL RESOURCES



Watch our online Sunday Church service live stream every Sunday at 10:30am (Indian Time, GMT+5:30). Spirit filled, anointed worship, Word and ministry for healing, miracles, and deliverance.

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WEBSITE: <https://apcwo.org/live>

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CHURCH: <https://apcwo.org>

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DAILY DEVOTIONALS: <https://apcwo.org/resources/daily-devotional>

JESUS CHRIST: <https://examiningjesus.com>

BIBLE COLLEGE: <https://apcbiblecollege.org>

E-LEARNING: <https://apcbiblecollege.org/elearn>

WEEKEND SCHOOLS: <https://apcwo.org/ministries/weekend-schools>

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