

There is no other way to account for the tremendous accuracy of fulfilment than to state that this is yet another evidence of the divine inspiration of the Bible.

#### [4] THE TESTIMONY OF SCIENCE.

Many Christians have been brow-beaten into believing the Bible is full of scientific error. The truth is, the Bible has frequently spoken of scientific facts thousands of years before the 'experts' have discovered them. "Science Catches Up With Scripture" is a headline that could be written time and time again.

- It is generally regarded that Columbus (1451-1506) was among the first to establish the fact that the earth is round - yet over 2200 years before Columbus' discovery ... **Isaiah 40:22**.
- Sir Isaac Newton (1642-1727) added to our understanding of the earth when he defined the law of gravity in the C17th - but more than 3000 years before Newton was born ... **Job 26:7**.
- It was quite recently discovered that the moon has an effect on plant life - yet the Bible shows that almost 3500 years ago this fact was known ... **Deuteronomy 33:13&14**.
- Dr. William Harvey (1578-1657) was the first scientist to discover that the life of the flesh is in the blood - but Moses was able to tell us that some 3000 years before ... **Leviticus 17:11**.

Little wonder Sir John F.W. Herschel, a famous English astronomer, said, "*All human discoveries seem to be made only for the purpose of confirming more and more strongly the truth contained in the sacred Scriptures!*"

#### [5] THE TESTIMONY OF CHANGED LIVES.

The Word of God has, for generations, proved itself to be effective to the conversion and comfort of the heart of man (**Psalms 119:9&50; Romans 10:17; 15:4**) - further proof of the inspiration and authority of Scripture.

**Can we believe the Bible?** The testimony of Scripture, History, Fulfilled Prophecy, Science, and Changed Lives all argue that we most certainly can - and should! Without it, you have no foundation for life - and no hope beyond the grave (cf. **Matthew 7:24-27**).



## #1... WHY TRUST THE BIBLE?

What is so special about the Bible? Is it any different to any other book? Is the Bible full of myth or is it a message from God? **Can we believe the Bible?** To answer that question, we need to call several witnesses to the stand. First:

#### [1] THE TESTIMONY OF SCRIPTURE.

It may be thought that Scripture is an odd evidence to cite as proof that we can trust Scripture, but it is a common practice in a court of law to allow the accused to testify on their behalf. Of course their testimony must be corroborated by other evidence - and we will do that with the Scripture's testimony to itself.

The Bible repeatedly claims that it is the Word of God. Words like "And God said" (cf. **Genesis 1**), "Thus saith the Lord" (or equivalents) appear virtually everywhere. For instance, Hugh D. Brown claims that within the 187 chapters of the Pentateuch (**Genesis - Deuteronomy**), there are "501 distinct assertions of supernatural authority" - an average of 3 claims per chapter.

I like to think of two texts of Scripture which explain how the Bible came to be - often called 'Gibraltar Texts on Biblical Inspiration.'

(1) **2 Peter 1:21**: "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

The word "moved" in **2 Peter 1:21** is translated "driven" when it is used to describe how a ship was carried along in a storm (**Acts 27:17**). Dr Martyn Lloyd-Jones explains: "*The great claim that is made is this, that these men were taken hold of by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit came upon them and took hold of them and gave them a message, carried them along, drove them along as they wrote and put it down on record.*" Therefore, when these men laid down their ink quills, on those pieces of papyrus were the words of Moses, David, Isaiah, John, Paul and Peter as **the result of** their having been driven (or borne) along by God the Holy Ghost (cf. **2 Samuel 23:2**). God is the real Author of scripture.

(2) **2 Timothy 3:16**: “All scripture is given by inspiration of God ...” More literally, that statement reads, “*Every part of the sacred writings is breathed out by God.*” We therefore believe that every book in the Bible is inspired of God, every chapter of every book, every line and every word.

Significantly, Christ Himself considered the Scripture to be the Word of God (**Matthew 5:18; 4:4, 7&10, John 10:35**). The testimony of Scripture is clear - it testifies that it is the very Word of God. Other evidence includes:

### [2] THE TESTIMONY OF HISTORY.

The testimony of history is that the Bible is a unique and supernaturally enduring book. There have always been sceptics - people like the French infidel Voltaire, who have predicted the demise of Christianity and the Bible. He boasted around 1750 that in 100 years Christianity would be swept from existence and that the only places you would be able to find a copy of the Bible then would be in museums or second-hand bookstores. In fact, within 50 years of Voltaire's death the Geneva Bible Society purchased his house for printing the Bible; it later became the Paris headquarters for the British and Foreign Bible Society! The Bible remains the world's best-selling book.

#### (a) Consider THE CONTINUITY (or UNITY) of the Bible.

Though it was written over a 1500-year span, in many different places, by over 40 authors from every walk of life, in three languages - in spite of its diversity in every respect - there is a harmony and continuity from the beginning to the end. The Bible agrees with itself! From **Genesis** to **Revelation** there is one main subject throughout - God's redemption of sinful man. This unity cannot be explained except by a supernatural superintendence.

(b) **The Bible is also unique in that it is the best attested document in terms of its RELIABILITY.** There is massive evidence that the Bible has been reliably and accurately transmitted over the years. Second place to the Bible in terms of the number of ancient copies which supports the accuracy of its text is Homer's 'Iliad' (643 manuscripts). However, there are more than 24,000 manuscript copies of various portions of the New Testament in existence. No other ancient document even begins to approach such numbers and attestation. And as for the Old Testament, the Jews are famous for their extreme care in transcribing it. The fact that the text of both the Old Testament and the New has been transmitted so accurately is nothing short of miraculous. God has preserved His Word.

#### (c) History also shows that the Bible is unique in its factual ACCURACY.

The Bible has come under attack from many over the years who thought that it was full of errors. So-called 'intellectual' Bible scholars have criticised and dissected it. For example:

- They claimed that the first five books of the Bible could not have been written by Moses because the “assured results of higher criticism” had proved that **writing did not exist in his time**. Then an ancient tablet was discovered with some wedge-shaped characters on it - a well developed written language detailing laws known as 'The Code of Hammurabi.' It was found that it predated Moses by at least 300 years!
- Again the “assured results of higher criticism” declared that there were **no Hittites at the time of Abraham**, since there were no records of them apart from the Old Testament. Today, due to the results of archeology, there are hundreds of references indicating more than 1200 years of Hittite civilisation.

### [3] THE TESTIMONY OF FULFILLED PROPHECY.

- (1) An example of a dramatic prophecy centres on **King Cyrus (Isaiah 44:28; 45:11)**. More than 100 years before Cyrus was born, and at a time when Jerusalem was fully built and its entire temple was standing (it would be more than 100 years later when that the city and temple would be destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar in 586 B.C., thus necessitating its rebuilding), the prophet Isaiah (writing around 700 B.C.), predicted Cyrus by name as the king who would say that Jerusalem shall be built and the temple foundation shall be laid.
- (2) Even more amazing are the Bible's prophecies regarding a greater king than Cyrus - **Christ** Himself. It has been calculated that there are more than 300 prophecies in the Old Testament that refer to Christ, and that 29 of them were fulfilled in the final 24 hours of His life. Take some examples:

<u>OT Reference</u>	<u>Prophecy</u>	<u>NT Reference</u>
<b>Zechariah 13:7</b>	Deserted by His disciples	<b>Mark 14:50</b>
<b>Psalms 35:11</b>	Falsely accused	<b>Matthew 26:60</b>
<b>Isaiah 50:6</b>	Brutally beaten	<b>Matthew 26:67</b>
<b>Isaiah 53:7</b>	No retaliation from Christ	<b>Matthew 27:14</b>
<b>Isaiah 53:12</b>	Executed with criminals	<b>Mt. 27:38; Lk. 23:32</b>
<b>Ps. 22:16; Zec. 12:10</b>	Hands and feet pierced	<b>John 19:34</b>
<b>Psalms 34:20</b>	Bones unbroken	<b>John 19:33</b>
<b>Psalms 22:18</b>	Clothes gambled for	<b>John 19:23&amp;24</b>