

IS THE BIBLE RELIABLE?

Workshop Notes: Rev. Jeremy McKeen

The Bible is by far the world's "best seller." It's the most bought and sold book in the entire world. And it's been read, quoted, and recommended by some of the greatest minds to ever live: Bacon, Descartes, Newton, Galileo, Shakespeare, Locke, Pascal, Da Vinci, Bach, Edwards; the list could go on. However, the Bible is not significant because of any human testimony, but only because of its inherent excellencies as the very Word of God.

1.THE NECESSITY OF SCRIPTURE (Why do we need the Bible?)

- General Revelation: What can we know from physical nature and human nature?
- Special Revelation: The Bible helps us to make sense of God, the world, and humanity.
- Personal Relationship: There needs to be two-way communication for all personal relationships.
- Saving Relationship: The Spirit works through the word to bring us to faith (Acts 4:12, Rom.10:14-17; Js. 1:18).

2.THE INSPIRATION OF SCRIPTURE (Why do we think the Bible is from God?)

- What inspiration doesn't mean: Not a profound emotional experience or emotionally stirring material
- What inspiration does mean: A verbal and organic unity created between God and the particular human writer.
- The Testimony of Scripture (2 Tim.3:16; 2 Pt.1:21; Heb.1:1, 3:7)
- The Testimony of the Spirit (Jn.10:27; 1 Cor.2:12-14; 1 Thess.2:13)

3.THE AUTHORITY OF SCRIPTURE (Why should the Bible dictate my life?)

- Design Argument
- GPS Argument
- Faith Argument

4.THE CANON OF SCRIPTURE (How do we know what books in the Bible are 'legit'?)

The person and testimony of Jesus is the best place for us to start because the Old Testament was Jesus' Bible. The only books that have been consistently and severely questioned are the Apocrypha (meaning 'hidden').

Internal Evidence

- Jesus affirmed the inspiration (Matt.19:4-5,Mk.12:36), authority (Mk.7:9;Lk:24:25), infallibility (Jn.10:35), inerrancy (Matt.5:17-18), and historicity (Matt.12:40, Lk17:27-29) of the Hebrew Bible.
- Jesus directly quoted from 24-27¹ books in the Hebrew Bible (OT).
- Jesus affirmed the inspiration of his Apostles (John 14:26, 16:13-15).
- Peter affirmed the "Scriptural authority" of Paul's letters (2 Pet.3:16).
- The NT never once quotes or alludes to the Apocrypha but quotes the Hebrew Bible 855 times.²

¹ Some scholars disagree on which of Jesus' words should be seen as a direct quotation of, or an allusion to, an OT text. Therefore, the exact amount of times that Jesus is said to have quoted the OT differs slightly.

² Retrieved from: <https://www.blueletterbible.org/study/pnt/pnt08.cfm>

External Evidence

- 68AD to 95AD - Most scholars date the completion of all NT books sometime between these years.
- 160 AD - Irenaeus of Lyons confirms only 4 gospels.
- 185 AD - Origen described the entire Bible as we have it (without Apocrypha).
- 325 AD Codex Sinaiticus – first collection of whole Bible (including Apocrypha).
- 382 AD - Jerome (translator of Latin Vulgate) considered only the 39 books of the Hebrew Bible to be Scripture.

5.THE SUFFICIENCY OF SCRIPTURE (Does the Bible give us all we need to know?)

- All the knowledge in the world vs. a knowledgeable view of the world
- Essentials vs. Non-Essentials (2. Tim.3:16-17, 2 Pet.1:3)

6.THE ACCURACY OF SCRIPTURE (Can the Bible stand up against historic and scientific scrutiny?)

- The Bible accords with the reality that we experience (Isaiah 40:22; Job 26:7; Rom.1:24-28,7:15-25)
- Any apparent contradictions are just discrepancies that have an answer (Ex. Detective on a case)
- The details in the Bible involve several areas of study that all align with what we know from each time period. Examples include (but not limited to): Geography, Botany, Architecture, Cultural Practices, Economics, Language, Law, Names (Persons and Places), etc.
- Nelson Glueck, a leading Jewish archaeologist said, "It can be categorically stated that no archaeological discovery has ever been able to refute a single biblical reference."
- There are approximately 400 prophecies that have been accurately predicted and fulfilled.
- 1947 AD – The Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered which included 157 parallel biblical texts, reconfirming the accuracy of the Scriptures.

7.THE INTERPRETATION OF SCRIPTURE (What are some keys in determining the meaning of the Bible?)

- Christ and Jesus
- Law and Gospel
- Promise and Fulfillment
- Context and Comparison