Is The Bible Credible?

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Imagine a book written by more than forty authors, each with different levels of education, social position, and age. Then imagine that these authors used three different languages to write this book. Assume that at the time they wrote it, some of them were in a situation of war, some were at peace, some were imprisoned, some were living in splendor, others in poverty. In addition, imagine that the authors of this book lived at different times during a 1,500 year time span. What do you suppose the result of this writing would be?

The Bible was written under these conditions. Its contents describe hundreds of controversial topics and are of a variety of literary types, yet there is a unity in the writing that binds it together: the theme of God's redemption of man. The Bible is philosophically consistent. The conditions of its writing and the resulting unity of the text speak of a supernatural direction, the Holy Spirit, directing chosen men who authored the Bible. *All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.* -- 2 Timothy 3:16.

The Following is a concise list of the credibility of God's Word, the Bible, based on internal and external evidence.

1. **Internal evidence**

a. The Bible claims to be the inspired Words of God.

2 Timothy 3:16-17 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

2 Peter 1:21 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.

Deuteronomy 32:46-47...He said to them, "Take to heart all the words I have solemnly declared to you this day, so that you may command your children to obey carefully all the words of this law. They are not just idle words for you--they are your life.

Proverbs 30:5 Every word of God is flawless; he is a shield to those who take refuge in him.

b. Jesus accepted the Old Testament to be scripture

Matthew 4:1-10 Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil. After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. The tempter came to him and said, "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread." Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'" Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. "If you are the Son of God," he said, "throw yourself down. For it is written: "'He will command his angels concerning you, and they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.'" Jesus answered him, "It is also written: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'" Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and

their splendor. "All this I will give you," he said, "if you will bow down and worship me." Jesus said to him, "Away from me, Satan! For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.'"

Luke 24:27And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.

John 10:35-38 If he called them 'gods,' to whom the word of God came--and the Scripture cannot be broken--what about the one whom the Father set apart as his very own and sent into the world? Why then do you accuse me of blasphemy because I said, 'I am God's Son'? Do not believe me unless I do what my Father does. But if I do it, even though you do not believe me, believe the miracles, that you may know and understand that the Father is in me, and I in the Father.

c. It has incredible accuracy.

UNMATCHED FULFILLMENT OF PROPHECIES

The Bible stands alone among literature. Prophecies written hundreds of years before an event have been fulfilled with 100% accuracy. There are approximately 2500 prophecies in the Bible, 2000 of which already have been completely fulfilled -- the remaining 500 speak of future events.

The chance of any one man fulfilling just eight prophecies has been calculated by Peter W. Stoner in Science Speaks at 1 in 100,000,000,000,000,000 -- yet 60 major Old Testament prophecies, having 270 ramifications were fulfilled by Jesus during his lifetime.

An example of the precisely fulfilled prophecies include the place of His birth, Bethlehem

(prophesied in *Micah 5:2*, fulfilled in *Luke 2:4-7*); that He would be born of a virgin (prophesied in *Isaiah 4:17*, fulfilled in *Luke 1:26-31*); that He would be despised and rejected by Jews (prophesied in *Isaiah 53:3*, fulfilled in *John 1:1, Luke 23:18*); that He would be betrayed by a friend (Judas) for thirty pieces of silver cast on the floor of the Temple and used to buy a potter's field (prophesied in *Zechariah 11:11-13*, fulfilled in *Matthew 27:3-10).*

Fulfilled prophecy extends to the present day. Consider the people of Israel. In *Genesis 12:2,3* and *13:13-15*, God promised Abraham a great nation, a great name and a land that will belong to his descendants forever and through Abraham, that all families of the earth will be blessed. At the time, Abraham was 75 years old and his wife was barren. The prophecy was fulfilled when Abraham was 90 years old (*Genesis 21:2*) when his wife Sarah miraculously bore him a son. Over the next several

hundred years, the nation's promise to Abraham appeared (*Exodus 1:7*).

Later, through Moses (*Deut. 28-33*), God warned Israel that He would use other nations to remove them from their land if they are unfaithful to Him. He predicted that they would eventually be scattered across the whole earth and would find no rest. He also promised to bring them back to their land. Israel was unfaithful. King Nebuchadnezzar took people captive to Babylon, and then burned the city and the Temple. God then allowed the Israelites to return to the land (*Ezra 1*). Later, in AD 70, Titus the Roman also destroyed the city of Jerusalem, scattering the people. In AD 1948, Israel became a nation and the people began to return to their homeland. They have since survived several conflicts. We think of the United States as having a long history, yet it has been in existence for only 200 years. Israel has been a people for more than 4,000 years.

2 Peter 1:20-21 describes how Bible prophesy can be so accurate:

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.

2. External evidence

a. Survived destruction

For 2,600 years all the powers of this world have combined to destroy the Bible and yet it still remains. Kings such as Manassah of Judah born in 697 B.C. and Antiochus Epiphanies who conquered Israel murdered all of those who owned a copy of Scripture. Emperor Diocletian ordered the destruction and burning of all Scriptures. In the

Middle Ages, The Synod of Toulouse forbade anyone to possess a copy of scripture. Mary Queen of England (known as Bloody Mary) ordered that anyone possessing a copy of scripture would be burned.

The Anvil? God's Word.

Last eve I passed beside a blacksmith's door
And heard the anvil ring the vesper chime:
Then looking in, I saw upon the floor
Old hammers, worn with beating years of time.

"How many anvils have you had," said I,
"To wear and batter all these hammers so?"
"Just one," said he, and then, with twinkling eye,
"The anvil wears the hammers out, you know."

And so, thought I, the anvil of God's word,

For ages skeptic blows have beat upon;
Yet though the noise of falling blows was heard,
The anvil is unharmed . . . the hammer's gone.
Author unknown

b. Scientific proof

SCIENTIFIC ACCURACY UNEQUALED IN ANCIENT WRITINGS

The Bible, although not detailed in its scientific explanations, is in agreement with what we know today about life and our universe. It is far more accurate than any other ancient books and even many recent ones. For example, Hindu sacred writings say the following about creation:

- the moon is 50,000 leagues higher than the sun and shines by its own light

- the earth is flat, triangular, composed of seven layers (including honey, sugar, butter, wine) and is held up by elephants, whose stumbling produces earthquakes.

In contrast, the Bible is so accurate that the Science Research Bureau has for years publicly offered a reward to any person who can prove the existence of a scientific blunder in the Bible. **The offer was made in 27 countries and still remains uncollected.**

Long before the time of Jesus, the Bible reported that the earth was round and was suspended in space. It accurately described the second law of thermodynamics (c. 1000 BC) in *Psalms 102:26* "They[the earth and the heavens] will perish, but you[God] remain; they will all wear out like a

garment." Table 2 shows examples of Scripture and the associated scientific discovery which supports its accuracy.

SUMMARY OF TABLE 2 - BIBLE IN SCIENTIFIC AGREEMENT WITH WHAT WE KNOW TODAY:
(The following is a summary of Table 2; graphic not included here):

Job 26:7 He stretcheth out north over the empty place and hangeth the earth upon nothing. c. 2000 BC. Scientific interpretation: the earth is suspended in space. Until this century, space "ether" was believed to hold up the earth.

Isaiah 40:22 It is He that sitteth upon the circle ("sphericity" or "roundness") of the earth... c. 680 BC. Scientific interpretation: The earth is round. In 680 BC earth was thought to be flat. Many believed

earth was flat until Magellan's circumnavigation in 1522AD.

Ecclesiastes 1:6 The wind blows to the south and turns to the north; round and round it goes, ever returning on its course. c.1000 BC. Scientific interpretation: Description of wind circulation, modeled in 1735AD by George Hadley.

Ecclesiastes 1:7 All streams flow into the sea, yet the sea is never full. To the place the streams come from there they return again. c.1000 BC. Scientific interpretation: Accurate description of the water cycle, depicted in 1931 AD by R. Horton.

Isaiah 40:31 They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint. c. 680 BC. Scientific interpretation: 1971 AD - discovery that aerodynamics of eagle's wings make them able to fly without becoming weary.

Jeremiah 33:22 As countless as the stars of the sky... c. 600 BC. Scientific interpretation: Scientists in the past regarded the number of stars as countable. Ptolemy said there were 1056, Kepler 1005, and Tycho Brahe 777. Modern science has shown there are "billions and billions" of stars - uncountable.

Leviticus 17:11 For the life of a creature is in the blood. c. 1440 BC. Scientific interpretation: Life depends on the supply of oxygen, water and food to the cells of the body by the blood. Circulation discovered by W. Harvey in 1616 AD.

Psalm 102:25,26 In the beginning you laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands. They will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like a garment... c. 1000 BC. Scientific interpretation: Second law of thermodynamics (law of entrophy - c 1800AD). In

any energy conversion, although the total amount of energy remains unchanged, the usefulness and availability of the energy is always decreased. Since all activities of nature involve such energy transfer, the energy supply for the universe as a whole must be decreasing the sun and stars will burn out eventually, the universe is growing old, wearing out, running down.

c. **Archaeological proof**

Nelson Glueck, reformed Jewish scholar notes: "It is worth emphasizing that in all this work no archaeological discovery has ever controverted a single, properly understood Biblical statement."

Bible critics also believed that the circumstances of Jesus' birth were concocted to fulfill the prophecy in Micah that states the Messiah was to be born in Bethlehem. They doubted that there had been a census *(Luke 2:1-3)*, which caused Joseph and Mary to travel to Bethlehem. A Roman edict was later

discovered in Egypt, which stated: "The enrollment by household being at hand, it is necessary to notify all who for any cause so ever are outside of their administrative districts that they return at once to their homes to carry out the customary enrollment..." Other discovered documents confirmed that this census was taken every fourteen years.

Pontius Pilate's historical authenticity was in doubt until 1961, when an inscription was found "Pontius Pilate, Prefect of Judea, has presented the Tiberium to the Caesareans", thus proving his existence.

An interesting archaeological discovery appears to document a Roman governor's reaction to the resurrection of the dead. *Matthew 28:11-15* describes the reaction of the chief priests and elders when the guards around Jesus' tomb told them about the resurrection: "When the chief priests had met with the elders and devised a plan, they gave the

soldiers a large sum of money, telling them, "You are to say, 'His disciples came during the night and stole him away while we were asleep.' If this report gets to the governor, we will satisfy him and keep you out of trouble." The governor must have heard the report and it must have upset him, because he issued a decree instituting capital punishment for the crime of violation of sepulcher, a crime which had never previously had such a severe penalty. A white marble slab inscribed with this decree was found in Nazareth in 1878.

Old Testament:

Joshua followed the Lord's instructions and the walls of Jericho collapsed with a shout from the people, allowing Joshua to take the city c.1400 BC, *(Joshua 6:5, 6:20))*. Archaeological evidence: found walls of Jericho fallen outward, even though they were 15 ft. high and 10 ft. thick. From pottery and ceramic evidence, the city was destroyed

c. 1400 BC

David refers to using the water shaft to reach the Jebusites *(2 Samuel 5:8, 1 Chronicles 11:16)* when conquering Jerusalem. Archaeological evidence: Water supply tunnel found; protective city walls found which the water tunnel went under.

d. Historical Biblical Statements Prove Positive

1. For years skeptics said the Bible was unreliable because it mentions the Hittite nation *(Deuteronomy 7:1)* and cities like Nineveh *(Jonah 1:1,2*) and Sodom *(Genesis 19:1)*, which they denied ever existed. But now modern archaeology has confirmed that all three did, indeed, exist.

2. Critics also said that Bible-mentioned kings Belshazzar *(Daniel 5:1)* and Sargon *(Isaiah 20:1)* never existed. Once again, it has now been confirmed that they did exist.

3. Skeptics also said the Bible record of Moses was not reliable because it mentions writing, *(Exodus 24:4)* and wheeled vehicles *(Exodus 14:25)*, neither of which they said existed at the time. They, of course, know better today.

4. At one time the 39 kings of ancient Israel and Judah who reigned during the divided kingdom were authenticated only from the Bible record, so critics charged fabrication. But then archaeologists found cuneiform records that mentioned many of these kings; and once again, the Bible record was proven accurate. Critics have repeatedly been proven wrong as new discoveries confirm biblical people, places, and events. It will always be so.

e. Living proof

The ultimate proof is the changed lives of those who encountered this living word. There is

undeniable power to comfort, strengthen, soothe, heal, change, convict, teach, train and equip those who put their trust in God's Holy Word, the Bible.

In a debate with a skeptic, Dennis Praegar, a Jewish talk show host, made a brilliant point about the transforming power of The Bible:

If you were stranded on a street alone at night, your car had broken down, say 2:00 a.m. on a lonely street on Los Angelos..pitch black darkness, and you get out of your car and suddenly, you see ten big burley men coming out of a house and walking toward you, would it or would it not be comforting for you if you knew they were just coming out of a Bible study?

So What? What does this mean for you and for me?

1. As we can see from the previous facts, the Bible, God's Word, is credible. Therefore its

message of our need for Him is credible and imperative.

2. And according to the Bible, the only way to a right relationship with God is through Jesus Christ. (*John 14:6 NIV) Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.*

3. The Apostle Paul outlines the steps by which we go through.

   Romans 10:9-11 That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved. As the Scripture says, "Anyone who trusts in him will never be put to

shame."

4. By praying a simple prayer you can be a part of the family of God.

Dear God,

I confess to you that I have done wrong things, and that I am a sinner. I am coming to you through Jesus Christ asking for complete forgiveness for all that I have done wrong. I make a confession and a commitment that Jesus Christ is Lord and I believe with all my heart He died and on the third day was raised from the dead. I ask you for your help and guidance to grow in my relationship with you.

In Jesus Name, Amen.

If you prayed this prayer the Bible teaches that you are now part of the great big family of God. You are also brand new. In other words you have a clean slate. All of your sins have been washed clean.

2 Corinthians 5:17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!

Here are some practical steps to help you grow in your faith.

1. Get plugged into a Bible-believing church.
2. Get a Bible you can easily understand and read on a daily basis.
3. Get involved in your new church.
4. Spend time in prayer daily.
5. Get baptized as soon as possible (see our booklet on baptism).

At Northside City Church we have several resources to help you grow in your faith. We have a resource entitled “How To Grow In Your Faith” written by Pastor Jerry that will give you the basic steps to grow as a Christian.

Sources

1. Return to God, P.O. Box 159, Carnation, WA 98014.
2. “What If The Bible Had Never Been Written; D. James Kennedy
3. Source: Paul Cohen; http://www.geocities.com/Heartland/Lane/5599/

Appendix

Did you know that the space program is busy proving that what has been called "myth" in the Bible is true? Mr. Harold Hill, President of the Curtis Engine Company in Baltimore Maryland and a consultant in the space program, relates the following development." I think one of the most amazing things that God has for us today happened recently to our astronauts and space scientists at Green Belt, Maryland. They were checking the position of the sun, moon, and planets out in space where they would be 100 years and 1000 years from now. We have to know this so we won't send a satellite, up and have it bump into something later on its orbits. We have to lay out the orbits in terms of the life of the satellite, and where the planets will be so the whole thing will not bog down. They ran the computer measurement back and forth over the centuries and it came to a halt. The computer stopped and put up a red signal, which meant that

there was something wrong either with the information fed into it or with the results as compared to the standards. They called in the service department to check it out and they said "What's wrong?" Well they found there is a day missing in space in elapsed time. They scratched their heads and tore their hair. There was no answer.

Finally, a Christian man on the team said, "You know, one time I was in Sunday school and they talked about the sun standing still." While they didn't believe him, they didn't have an answer either, so they said ,"Show us." He got a Bible and went back to the book of Joshua where they found a pretty ridiculous statement for anyone with "common sense." There they found the Lord saying to Joshua,"Fear them not, I have delivered them into thy hand; there shall not a man of them stand before thee." Joshua was concerned because the enemy surrounded him and if darkness fell they would overpower them. So Joshua asked the Lord to make

the sun stand still! That's right-"The sun stood still and the moon stayed---and hasted not to go down about a whole day!"The astronauts and scientists said, "There is the missing day!"

They checked the computers going back into the time it was written and found it was close but not close enough. The elapsed time that was missing back in Joshua's day was 23 hours and 20 minutes-not a whole day. They read the Bible and there it was "about (approximately) a day" These little words in the Bible are important, but they were still in trouble because if you cannot account for 40 minutes you'll still be in trouble 1,000 years from now. Forty minutes had to be found because it can be multiplied many times over in orbits. As the Christian employee thought about it, he remembered somewhere in the Bible where it said the sun went BACKWARDS.

The scientists told him he was out of his mind, but they got out the Book and read these words in 2 Kings: Hezekiah, on his death-bed, was visited by the prophet Isaiah who told him that he was not going to die. Hezekiah asked for a sign as proof. Isaiah said, "Do you want the sun to go ahead 10 degrees?" Hezekiah said, "It is nothing for the sun to go ahead 10 degrees, but let the shadow return backward 10 degrees." Isaiah spoke to the Lord and the Lord brought the shadow ten degrees BACKWARD! Ten degrees is exactly 40 minutes! Twenty-three hours and 20 minutes in Joshua, plus 40 minutes in Second Kings make the missing day in the universe! Isn't it amazing? Our God is rubbing their noses in His Truth! References: Joshua 10:8 and 12,13; 2 Kings 20:9-11.

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