

WHY WE BELIEVE: The Bible ¹ Pet 1:23–25; 2 Peter 1:20–21

The Word of God lives and abides forever

Introduction:

1. **We are studying the evidences of why you can trust the Bible: (1 Peter 1:23-25)**
 - a. The Internal Harmony of the Bible
(40 writers, 3 languages, 3 continents, over 1600 years, from one Divine Author)
 - b. The Scientific Accuracy and Foreknowledge of the Bible:
 - c. The Archeology verifying the people, places and events of the Bible
 - d. The Fulfilled Prophecies of the Bible (² Peter 1:20-21)
2. **Now we consider 5 more reasons you can trust the Bible as the Word of God.**

I. 5 MORE REASONS YOU CAN TRUST THE BIBLE

(1) THE EXTRA-BIBLICAL WITNESSES

1. **Many people are surprised to learn that there are dozens of ancient writings that verify the historical accuracy of the Bible...**
 - a) Writings of the Egyptians, Assyrians, Babylonian, Greek and Romans.
 - b) What I refer to as 'Hostile Witness Testimony' because these are writers who had nothing to gain for confirming the people, place and events of the Bible.
2. **For example: Who wrote the following?**
 - a) "John, that was called the baptist... was a good man, and commanded the Jews to exercise virtue, both as to righteousness towards one another, and piety towards God, and so to come to baptism... Herod, who feared the great influence John had over the people... sent [John] a prisoner, out of Herod's suspicious temper, to Machaerus, the castle I before mentioned, and was there put to death." (Josephus)¹
3. **Some critics claim that Jesus was only a mythical figure who never actually existed as a person in history.**
 - a) But there 39 sources outside the Bible, within 150 years of Jesus life, that confirm more than 100 facts about Jesus life, teachings, death and resurrection.
 - b) Written by men who had nothing to gain and much to lose for confirming the accuracy of the Biblical record.
 - c) **Jewish Historian Josephus:** "Now there was about this time, one Jesus, a wise man, if it be lawful to call him a man; for he was a doer of wonderful works, a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure. He drew over to him both many of the Jews and many of the Gentiles also:—he was the Christ. And when Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men among us, had condemned him to the cross, those that loved him at the first did not forsake him: for he appeared to them alive again the third day, as the divine prophets had foretold them... and still the tribe of Christians, so named from him, are not extinct at this day."²

¹ Flavius Josephus, Antiquities of Jews, Book 18, chapter 5:2

² Flavius Josephus, Antiquities, Book 18; 3:3

- d) **Roman Historian Tacitus:** “Christus, from whom the name [christian] had its origin, suffered the extreme penalty during the reign of Tiberius at the hands of one of our procurators, Pontius Pilate.” (Tacitus, Annals, 15:44)
- e) **Roman Historian Suetonius:** the Chief Secretary to Emperor Hadrian, recorded that Emperor Claudius expelled Jews from Rome. “Since the Jews constantly made disturbances at the instigation of Chrestus [latin for Christ], he [Claudius] expelled them from Rome.”
(Suetonius, The Deified Claudius 25.4, Book V of Lives of the Caesars)

(2) THE MANUSCRIPT EVIDENCE

1. Critics claim that the Bible is so old and has been copied so many times that it has become corrupted and cannot be trusted.

- a) Like a game of telephone – 1 person tells the next and eventually the story changes
- b) Atheists, Muslims, Mormons and Jehovah Witnesses claim the Bible was corrupted.

2. But this claim is false and we have the manuscript evidence to prove it.

- a) A Manuscript is any surviving handwritten copy of an ancient document that predates the invention of the printing press in 1455.
- b) Before the Printing Press, Bibles were meticulously copied by hand by scribes.
- c) But scribes were so meticulous they counted each row of letters.
- d) They washed themselves 7 times before writing the name of God.
- e) If any error in copying was found—they discard the scroll and started again.

3. In 1947 a young Beduin shepherd boy threw a rock into a cave searching for a lost goat in the cliffs above the Dead Sea.

- a) He heard the sound of shattering pottery and what he found shocked the world!
- b) The Dead Sea Scrolls is the greatest archeological manuscript find in history.
- c) Hundreds of ancient scrolls – complete manuscripts of every Old Testament book of the Bible except the book of Esther. [someone forgot to return it to the library!]
- d) Archeologists have been searching these caves for decades and have found around 220 copies of OT Books.
- e) These Ancient OT Scrolls were sealed in clay jars hidden in the caves of Qumran, 2 1/2 Centuries before the Birth of Jesus.
- f) **This was a big test—what would be found?** Were there discrepancies? Errors? They are word-for-word accurate to the OT you have in your Bible!

4. JW McGarvey illustration: Imagine a father has made a last will & testament:

- a) Without modern copy machines—7 copies are written by para-legal secretaries and given to each of the 7 kids. The original signed will is filed at the county courthouse.
- b) Years later the courthouse catches on fire and the original records are burned, and when the father passes, the adult children get out their copies of the will.
- c) A Lawyer for one of them says there are discrepancies between copies and this sends a panic among the family—so they call a meeting.
- d) They all bring their copies of the will and the lawyers begin examining them.
- e) Several copies have misspelled words; 1 missing line, another has a transposed #

- **POINT 1:** But these minor variations a few and the assembling of all the manuscripts gives more confirmation of the text of the original...
- **POINT 2:** The number of manuscripts verifies the text of the original—because if only one of the kids had the original then no one would know if it had been altered—>But all the manuscripts combined together confirms the original.
- **POINT 3:** If an original autograph was found it would be worshipped as a relic or it would be controlled by the Vatican or some European University. It could even be altered.

5. We have more than 25,000 ancient handwritten manuscript copies of the N.T.

- a) Representing more than 2 million pages of text!
- b) Far more manuscript evidence than any other book from the ancient world.
- c) The oldest Manuscripts dated from within 50-70 years of the life of Christ.
- d) Compare that to Homer's Odyssey—there is not a single complete manuscript and the oldest fragment is 1,000 older than the time Homer wrote about the Trojan Wars in ancient Greece. But no one questions the Odyssey or the Iliad.

6. The Early Church 'Fathers' Quotations of the Bible:

- a) Even if we lost all the surviving manuscripts of the New Testament, there would still be another way to verify the text of the NT.
- b) Early Church Writers: Ignatius, Papias, Polycarp, Ireneaus, Tertulian, Clement etc. who lived in the first 3 centuries—preserved the NT text by their massive amounts of quotations of the text.
- c) It has been estimated the early church fathers quoted the NT 86,000 times!
- d) Then Include quotations by writers through middle ages it's over a million quotations!

7. There are so many quotations of the NT by early christian writers that even if we lost every surviving manuscript—the entire NT could be reconstructed just from their quotations of the Bible!³

(3) THE BRUTAL HONESTY OF BIBLE WRITERS' OWN FAILURES & SINS

1. Another unique feature of the Bible is the fact that the writers of the Bible did not seek to elevate themselves or cast themselves in a good light.

- a) If the Bible had been written by men who wanted to deceive the world, then why do we see so many shameful facts about the writers, patriarchs and lawgivers?

2. Old Testament Examples:

- Noah got drunk (Gen. 9:21-22)
- Abraham Lied Twice about Sarah (Gen. 12:13; 20:2)
- Jacob deceived his father for the inheritance (Gen. 27)
- Moses murdered a man (Exodus 12:11-12)
- Moses misrepresented God's word (Num. 20:10-11)
and was banished from entering Promised Land
- The Nation of Israel repeatedly abandoned God for Pagan Idols (Judges).

³ Giesler and Nix, The Bible from God to Us, p.218

- Samson fell for a Philistine seductress and they gouged his eyes out.
- King David committed adultery with Bathsheba and then he had her husband murdered (2 Samuel 11).
- King Solomon—the man who built the Temple of God in Jerusalem—spiraled into polygamy and idolatry (1 Kings 11:1–8) and built pagan high places for his pagan wives, to worship the Ashtoreth, Baal and Molech.
- The OT Scriptures came through the Jewish prophets and people—so why would they ‘invent’ a history of idolatry that humiliates their own nation and people?

3. New Testament Examples:

- Jesus rebuked His disciples for there “little faith” (Mt 8:26).
- Jesus called Peter “Satan” for opposing Jesus going to the cross (Mark 8:33).
- The Disciples kept arguing among themselves who was greatest (Lk 9:46; 22:24).
- James & John asked to be 2nd and 3rd in command in the kingdom (Mk 10:35ff).
- Then they asked permission to call fire from heaven to destroy a village (Lk 9:54).
- They kept falling asleep when Jesus asked them to pray (Mk 14:32-41).
- When Jesus is arrested they all fled in fear (Mk 14:50).
- Peter swears he does not know Jesus—3 times in a row (Mt. 26:72).
- Thomas wouldn’t believe Jesus was alive from the dead (Jn 20:25).
- Paul calls himself “a wretched man” (Rom 7:24) and “chief of sinners” (1 Tim 1:15).

4. Does this sound like the words of men who were lying in order to to invent a religion to deceive the world?

- a) why would they include the incriminating facts that they were fearful hypocrites?
- b) And yet these men wrote down the highest moral ethics the world has ever known!
- c) This doesn’t sound like men lying—it is evidence they were telling the truth.

(4) THEIR PERSECUTION FOR THE TRUTH

1. The Persecution the writers of the Bible were willing to endure for the Truth

- a) First century historians like Josephus and Eusebius with many eyewitness accounts, record that Jesus disciples went to their graves suffering persecution & even painful deaths for their faith and testimony that they had seen Jesus alive from the dead.

2. These historical sources record the deaths of the Apostles and NT writers:

- a) That Mathew was slain with an axe in Ethiopia
- b) Mark died in Alexandria, Egypt, after being dragged through the streets
- c) Luke was killed by hanging from an olive tree in Greece.
- d) James was beheaded with a sword in Jerusalem
- e) Philip was tied to a pillar in Heiropolis and pelted to death with stones.
- f) Bartholomew flayed alive.
- g) Jude shot to death with arrows.
- h) Andrew bound to a cross in the shape of an X and left to die.
- i) Barnabas pelted to death with stones
- j) Paul was beheaded in Rome
- k) Thomas run through with a spear in SE India.
- l) Peter crucified upside down in Rome

3. Even Faithful Translators were killed for translating the Bible:

- a) William Tyndale was a member of the Bow Lane church of Christ, London England.
- b) He was the first to translate the Bible from the original languages of Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek—into English
- c) He was rewarded by being burned at the stake.

4. The Persecution of the Faithful in all ages (Hebrews 11:33–38)

5. But the Inspired writers and Faithful Translators knew of a greater punishment than death... (Revelation 22:18–19)

(5) THE TESTIMONY OF JESUS

1. Jesus said: the Word of God is without Error (John 17:17)

2. Jesus confirmed the historical accuracy of the Bible (Matt 19:4)

- a) Jesus never merged humanism and creation into a theistic evolution theory!
 - (1) There is no Millions of years of Darwinian Evolution in Genesis 1
 - (2) God made Adam and Eve “in the Beginning”!
- b) No Critical Gender theory either—“male and female He created them”.

3. Jesus said: the scriptures are indestructible (John 10:35)

4. Jesus said: the word of God is eternal (Matthew 24:35; 5:18)

CONCLUSION:⁴

1. You can trust the Bible!

2. It is the Word of God (Revelation 21:5-6)

3. Given to You (Revelation 22:16–17)

–Bill Turner 9/2026

⁴ Special appreciation for: Josh McDowell, ‘Evidence that Demands a Verdict’; Norman Geisler and Frank Turek, ‘I Don’t have Enough Faith to be an Atheist’, p.275ff; Charlie Campbell, ‘Evidence for the Bible.’