

“Deep Convictions about the Bible”
 (“On to Maturity” Series)
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 by
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1. The Bible claims to be inspired by God
 - a. 2 Timothy 3:16-17 = “All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, 17so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.”
 - i. “God-breathed” in the Greek = “theopneustos”, which is a combination of two Greek words:
 1. “theos” = “God”
 2. “pneo” = “breathe”
 - ii. So, the Bible claims to be the very spoken words of God.
2. Outline: a few reasons to believe that the Bible is inspired by God:
 - a. It’s internally consistent
 - i. It’s thematically continuous
 - ii. It contains hundreds of fulfilled prophecies
 - b. It’s externally verifiable
 - i. It’s archeologically confirmed
 - ii. It’s historically accurate
 - iii. It’s scientifically sound
 - c. It’s been reliably transmitted to us
 - d. It radically changes lives
3. The Bible is internally consistent
 - a. It’s thematically continuous
 - i. The Bible exhibits flawless continuity, in spite of the fact that:
 1. It was written over a 1500 year span
 2. By over 40 authors from every walk of life, including:
 - a. kings
 - b. peasants
 - c. philosophers
 - d. fishermen
 - e. poets
 - f. statesmen
 - g. and scholars.
 3. On three different continents:
 - a. Asia
 - b. Africa
 - c. and Europe
 4. In three different languages:

- a. Hebrew
 - b. Aramaic
 - c. and Greek
- ii. Main Point = Its subject matter includes hundreds of controversial topics. Yet, the biblical authors spoke with harmony and continuity from Genesis to Revelation. There is one unfolding story: God's redemption of man.
- iii. Compare this to the Qur'an:
 - 1. Quote by John Oakes: "The third category of errors in the Qur'an are internal inconsistencies. There are a great number of examples in which Muhammad or another author makes statements in one place in the Qur'an which are incontrovertibly in direct opposition to statements elsewhere. This fact is so well known, even to Islamic scholars, that they have developed a doctrine to explain away the contradictions. The means of explaining away the obvious errors in the Qur'an are called abrogations (Note: "to abrogate" is "to repeal or abolish something formally or publically"). Apparently, even those who put together the Qur'an in its final form were aware of the blatant inconsistencies in the Suras, as is clear from Sura 2:106, "If we abrogate (repeal or abolish) a verse or cause it to be forgotten, We will replace it by a better one or one similar." This is a striking statement! Can you imagine reading such an apology in the Bible? In this passage, Allah admits that some of his early statements need to be abrogated (repealed, abolished or corrected). Islamic scholar Jalalu'd Din says the number of required abrogations (ie corrections, mistakes) in the Qur'an is between five and five hundred. The passages which must be annulled (mansukh) are called nazikh. The idea is that more recent passages can annul (cancel, rescind or invalidate) older passages..."

"...divine scripture will not contain material culled from folklore and myth, obvious scientific errors, or mistakes that even its supporters admit are in the text."
- b. The Bible contains hundreds of fulfilled prophecies.
 - i. Someone counted 324 just about the Messiah. (www.Familybible.org; "Mathematical Probabilities of Fulfilled Prophecies")

1. Example: Micah 5:2 = "But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times."
 - a. Of course, fulfilled in Matthew 2:1, "...Jesus was born in Bethlehem..."
 - b. Quote NIV Bible Commentary on Micah 5:2, "[The words, 'old' and 'from ancient times' are] strong evidence that Micah expected a supernatural figure. Only in Christ does this prophecy find fulfillment."
- ii. Now, let's look more carefully at another one:
 1. Read John 19:23-24 = "When the soldiers crucified Jesus, they took his clothes, dividing them into four shares, one for each of them, with the undergarment remaining. This garment was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom. 24"Let's not tear it," they said to one another. "Let's decide by lot who will get it."

This happened that the scripture might be fulfilled which said,

"They divided my garments among them and cast lots for my clothing." So this is what the soldiers did."
 2. Footnote on verse 24, "clothing" = Psalm 22:18
 3. Let's read Psalm 22:18 = "They divide my garments among them and cast lots for my clothing."
 4. Now, let's look at the context of the Psalm David wrote in about 1000 B.C.:
 - a. Vs 1 = the words of Jesus on the cross (Matt 27:46)
 - b. Vs 7-8 = the insults of Jesus on the cross (Matt 27:39-43)
 - c. Vs 16 = the description of Jesus on the cross.
 - i. Q: Is there any other human activity that you are aware of, other than crucifixion, where one's hands and feet are pierced?
 - ii. And yet David is writing about 1000 B.C., five hundred years before crucifixion was introduced by the Romans!
 - iii. Q: What do we attribute this amazing foreknowledge on the part of David to? Luck? Chance? Alien intervention?

- iv. The most logical and plausible explanation comes from the Apostle Peter in 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."
 - iii. Two Teachers comment:
 - 1. Doug Jacoby: "Messianic Prophecies: The Odds"
 - a. "...the odds of Jesus fulfilling all the prophecies about his life are roughly one chance in four trillion".
 - i. Q: Luck? Chance? Alien Intervention?
 - 2. Dr. John Oakes: "Prophecy, the Bible and Jesus"
 - a. "How do you respond to someone's claim that the Bible is not inspired? Is there a way to prove inspiration or, at least, intelligently present evidence for its inspiration? The answer is "Yes!" One of the best ways to prove inspiration is by examining prophecy... Fulfilled prophecy is strong evidence that God is the author of the Bible because when you look at the mathematical odds of prophecy being fulfilled, you quickly see a design, a purpose, and a guiding hand behind the Bible."
4. The Bible is externally verifiable
 - a. The Bible is archaeologically confirmed
 - i. The Dead Sea Scrolls
 - 1. The earliest copies of the Bible ever discovered were found in 1947 in the caves of Qumran, by the Dead Sea.
 - 2. Paleographers (those who study ancient writings) have officially dated these scrolls to be from about 125 B.C
 - 3. Part of the scrolls included chapter 53 of Isaiah, one of the key Christ prophecies in the Old Testament. (Refer: Isaiah 53:4-12)
 - 4. Therefore this archeology confirms that there were prophecies of Christ written many years before the time of their occurrence! (At least 125 years, and probably more like 700 years in the case of Isaiah, and 1000 years in the case of David.)
 - ii. Many other archeological discoveries could be sited.
 - 1. Example: the Hittite nation
 - a. Excerpt from Doug Jacoby, "True and Reasonable" = "For years, critics laughed at the

- d. The Qur'an claims that Haman was pharaoh's prime minister even though Haman lived in Babylon one thousand years later [in the story of Esther].
- e. The Qur'an says that the one who picked Moses from the river was not his sister but his mother.
- f. The Qur'an says that a Samaritan was the one who molded the golden calf for the children of Israel and misguided them, though it is well-known that Samaria was not in existence at that time. The Samaritans came after the Babylonian exile. How could one of them have made the golden calf for the people of Israel?"
- 2. John Oakes says: "There are many rather obvious historical errors in the Qur'an."
- c. The Bible is scientifically sound
 - i. There is evidence of scientific foreknowledge in the Bible
 - 1. Example: Isaiah 40:22 = "He sits enthroned above the circle of the earth, and its people are like grasshoppers. He stretches out the heavens like a canopy, and spreads them out like a tent to live in."
 - a. Isaiah, writing around 700 B.C, confidently asserts that the earth is round – centuries before anyone else knew that!
 - b. The word translated "circle" in verse 22 is "kublos" in the original Hebrew which literally means: "spherical or ball-like".
 - c. Q: How did Isaiah know the earth was round – unless inspired by God?
 - 2. By contrast, the Qur'an (610 A.D.), mistakenly claims that the Sun revolves around the earth (Sura 21:33).
 - a. Quote by John Oakes: "Another clear scientific misconception in the Qur'an is found in Sura 21:33. "It is He who created the night and the day, and the sun and the moon: all (the celestial bodies) swim along, each in its rounded course." The idea that the sun goes in a circular course around the earth was discredited with the work of Copernicus and Galileo. Geocentrism was the false concept of the heavens common in the time of the writing of the Qur'an. Unfortunately for the claim of inerrancy of the Muslim scripture, this false

idea slipped into the Qur'an. When I read Sura 21:33, I see no other way to interpret this passage!"

3. Another Bible scripture: Job 26:7 = "He spreads out the northern skies over empty space; he suspends the earth over nothing."
 - a. Job is probably one of the oldest books of the Bible.
 - i. No one else knew this at that time!
 4. Another one (just refer) = about "the water cycle" (Refer: Job 36:26-29)
 - ii. Quote Dr. John Oakes:
 1. "Many have claimed that the Bible is loaded with blatant scientific errors, historical inaccuracies and obvious inconsistencies with itself. I have considered many dozens of these attacks and found all of them to be false (from evidenceforchristianity.com website, January 12, 2006)."
5. The Bible has been reliably transmitted to us
- a. Quote Eugene Ulrich, Editor of Oxford University's Dead Sea Scrolls series: "The scrolls have shown that our traditional Bible has been amazingly (and) accurately preserved for over 2,000 years."
 - b. Refer to handout: "Can we trust the New Testament as an historical document"
 - i. Reliability of ancient documents based on two factors:
 1. number of existing copies
 2. amount of time between existing copies and original document
 - ii. Josh McDowell quote: "Using the accepted standard for evaluating the textual reliability of ancient texts, the New Testament stands alone. It has no equal. No other book of the ancient world can even approach the reliability of the New Testament."
6. The Bible radically changes lives
- a. Look at the radically changed lives of so many Christians!
 - i. John 7:17 = "If anyone chooses to do God's will, he will find out whether my teaching comes from God or whether I speak on my own."
 1. Jesus promises that whoever puts his teachings into practice will see for himself that they are not from man, but from God!
 - ii. Doug Jacoby, "True and Reasonable", page 36 = "On the other hand, often atheists insist that there is no connection between their worldview and their life problems. In fact, if

we are to believe the numerous studies that the experts have done, atheists are depressed more, call in sick to work more, succumb to divorce and lack direction in life far more often than those who believe in God.”

7. Summary:

- a. The Bible claims to be inspired by God (literally: “God-breathed”)
- b. We looked at several reasons to believe that the Bible is inspired by God:
 - i. It’s internally consistent
 1. It’s thematically continuous
 2. It contains hundreds of fulfilled prophecies
 - ii. It’s externally verifiable
 1. It’s historically accurate
 2. It’s archeologically confirmed
 3. It’s scientifically sound
 - iii. It’s been reliably transmitted to us
 - iv. It radically changes lives
- c. The evidence clearly points to one fact: the Bible is inspired by God!
- d. Let’s have *deep convictions about the Bible!*