

“The Trustworthiness and Veracity of Scripture:
Is It Really the Word of God?”

1A. What do we mean by “Scripture?”

1B. In simplest terms, we are using the word “Scripture” to refer to the 66 books of the Bible (39 in the Old Testament books and 27 in the New).

1C. These books are known as the “canon” of Scripture. Canon means a written, God-given, authoritative rule.

2C. The thirty-nine books that comprise the Old Testament are equivalent to the 24 books of the Hebrew Bible (The Tanach) that Jesus and the apostles recognized as authoritative Scripture. (See Piper, *A Peculiar Glory*, p. 49.)

Example 1: Matthew 21:42

Jesus said to them, “Have you never read in the Scriptures: “‘The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; this was the Lord’s doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes’?” [Jesus quotes Psalm 116:22.]

Example 2: Luke 24:44

Then he said to them, “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.”

Content of the Hebrew Scriptures as Jesus Referred to Them

The Torah (the Law)	Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy
Nebiim (the Prophets)	Joshua, Judges, Samuel (1&2), Kings (1&2), Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the 12 Minor Prophets (treated as one book)
Chetuvim (the Writings)	Psalms, Job, Proverbs, Ruth, Song of Solomon, Ecclesiastes, Lamentations, Esther, Daniel, Ezra-Nehemiah (treated as one book), Chronicles (1&2)

2B. Jesus came into the world as the Word made flesh (John 1:1, 14) and opened the way for a new canon of authoritative writings or Scripture (i.e., the New Testament), having largely fulfilled the law and the prophets in His person and work.

1C. Jesus claimed to be the very incarnation of truth.

John 14:6 - Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

- 2C. Jesus was recognized by the early church as having authority equal to and even beyond that of the Old Testament Scriptures.

1D. See Matt. 5:38-39, 7:29; Mark 13:31.

2D. Hebrews 1:1-2

Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power.

- 3C. Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit (also called the Spirit of truth) would guide the apostles into truth. He would teach them what they were to do and say following Jesus' departure.

1D. John 14:16-18

"And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you."

2D. John 14:25-26

"These things I have spoken to you while I am still with you. But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you."

3D. John 15:26-27

"But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me. And you also will bear witness, because you have been with me from the beginning."

4D. John 16:12-15

"I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it

to you. All that the Father has is mine; therefore I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.

2A. Internal Evidences for the Trustworthiness and Veracity of Scripture

1B. Its Claim of Verbal Inspiration - 2 Tim. 3:16 and 2 Pet. 1:20-21

"All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness,"

1C. Inspiration is the Holy Spirit's activity in so directing the writers of Scripture as to produce the result He desired.

2C. Extent of inspiration

1D. To the very words—verbal

2D. To every part of Scripture—plenary

3D. To the original autographs or manuscripts (i.e., exactly what the Biblical writers wrote) which were without error¹

4D. To canonical Scripture—not to all writings or speeches of authors.

3C. Scripture in totality originated with God and bears the imprint of His mind and character upon them.

4C. 2 Peter 1:20-21 (below) declares that God's revelation to the prophets who wrote Scripture was guarded from human distortion because the Holy Spirit aided their efforts, so that what the prophets spoke or wrote was no mere human interpretation of the mind of God.

"knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. ²¹For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit."

5C. The aim of the process of inspiration was a sure "word" (2 Pet. 1:19), a Scripture (2 Pet. 1:20), and a holy writing (2 Tim. 3:15). (See Piper, *A Peculiar Glory*, p. 75).

¹ Our Greek and Hebrew versions and translations of the Scripture are inerrant to the degree that they faithfully capture the words and divine meaning carried by the inspired human words of the original manuscripts. See Paul Wegner's *Student's Guide to Textual Criticism of the Bible* for findings related to inerrancy.

3B. Jesus' High Regard for the Scriptures

1C. Jesus regarded the Scriptures, in whole and in part, as trustworthy and true and fully expected the fulfillment of every promise of God.

1D. Mark 12:24

"Jesus said to them, 'Is this not the reason you are wrong, because you know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God?'"

2D. Mark 14:49

"Day after day I was with you in the temple teaching, and you did not seize me. But let the Scriptures be fulfilled."

3D. Luke 24:44

"Then he said to them, 'These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.'"

4D. John 5:39

"You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me,"

2C. Jesus declared that human beings cannot survive on bread alone, but need every word that God speaks.

Matt. 4:4

"But he answered, 'It is written, "'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"

3B. Its Unity of Theme and Doctrine

1C. In spite of the centuries (about 1,600 years) spanned in its writing

2C. In spite of the 40 different authors, including kings, shepherds, fishermen

3C. In spite of the diverse locations where the writing occurred

4C. In spite of the different writing styles and genres of the human authors (narrative, poetry, prophecy, etc.)

4B. Its Prophetic Accuracy

1C. There are hundreds of prophecies in the Bible, some pertaining to the Messiah, the nation of Israel, the Gentiles, the kingdom of God, the devil,

the end times, the return of Christ, the final judgments, the future glory, etc.

2C. In many instances, the Scripture records the literal fulfillment of specific prophecies after either a short or long span of time. Examples, include the 70-year captivity in Babylon and subsequent return of the exiles to Judah (Jer. 25:11, 12, 29:10 with 2 Chron. 36:22-23 and Ezra 1:1; the virgin birth (Gen. 3:15, Isa. 7:14, and Matt. 1:20-23); Jesus suffering and substitutionary death (Isa. 53 and Luke 24:25-27 with Heb. 2:14-18).

3C. Fulfilled prophecy provides significant proof that the Bible is the Word of God and indicates that all unfulfilled prophecies will be fulfilled in the future.

6B. Its Historicity

Archaeologists, historians, and linguists have confirmed the existence of prominent people (such as Pharaoh Rameses II and King David), places (such as Jericho), and events (such as the Resurrection of Jesus) cited in the Bible.

5B. Its Morality

1C. As a practical, workable standard of morality, the Bible stands ethically and morally higher than writings of human origin, which often are based on human wisdom and/or whims.

2C. The commands to love God and one's neighbor (Matt. 22:37-40) are universally applicable and comprehensive as instruction for all human relationships.

6B. The Claims of Biblical Writers

1C. Eyewitness Accounts

1D. The writers of the New Testament either wrote as eyewitnesses of the events they described or they recorded eyewitness accounts of these events.

2D. 2 Pet. 1:16

"For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty."

- 3D. Luke 1:2-3
"just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word have delivered them to us, ³ it seemed good to me also, having followed all things closely for some time past, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus,"
- 2C. The Apostle Paul viewed Scripture to be trustworthy and true.
 - 1D. Romans 15:4
For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.
 - 2D. 1 Cor. 2:13
"And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual."
 - 3D. Gal. 1:11-12
For I would have you know, brothers, that the gospel that was preached by me is not man's gospel. For I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ.
- 3A. External Evidence that the Bible is the Word of God
 - 1B. Its Transforming Power in the Lives of People
 - 1C. The Bible shows itself most significantly to be the Word of God by transforming selfish people into God-centered, Christ exalting servants who live for the temporal and external good of others. (See John Piper, *A Peculiar Glory*, p. 254)
 - 2C. Through transformed lives, the Bible shows itself to be "is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart."
 - 3C. The Scriptures show themselves to be God's Word both by the glorious life that they exhibit (the life of Jesus Christ as the Lord of glory) and the new life they create in the believer.

2B. Its Preservation (indestructibility)

- 1C. In spite of political persecutions
- 2C. In spite of religious persecutions and efforts to “ban” the gospel (e.g., in countries that persecute Christians today)
- 3C. In spite of ideological and/or philosophical persecution
- 4C. If the Bible were of men and tradition, it would have soon passed off the scene as one of a vast array of good ideas by well-meaning men.

3B. Its Circulation

- 1C. The Bible has been translated into more languages than any other book in history, and that translation still goes on.
- 2C. It is estimated that more 850 million Bibles in over 237 languages have been distributed by the American Bible Society.

4B. Its universality

Although the biblical texts originated in a near eastern culture, the Bible meets the needs and interests of people in every locality, in every stage of life, and in every era of time.

Selected References for Consideration

- 1. McDowell, Josh. *The New Evidence That Demands a Verdict*. Thomas Nelson, 1999.
- 2. Evans, Tony. *The Wonder of the Word*. Moody Publishers, 2019.
- 3. Piper, John. *A Peculiar Glory*. Crossway Publishers, 2017.
- 4. Geisler, Norman. *Christian Apologetics*. Baker Book House, 1976.
- 5. Geisler, Norman, ed. *Inerrancy*. Zondervan Publishing House, 1980.
- 6. MacArthur, John. *Final Word: Why We Need the Bible*. Reformation Trust, 2019.