

Is the Bible The Word Of God?

Part I

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The Nature of the Bible:

1. It would have to be capable of being understood.
2. It would have to be self-consistent, not self-contradictory.
3. It would have to be (in its teaching) consistent with known facts from various disciplines such as History, Archaeology, Science, Philosophy, Prophecy, and the rest.
4. It would have to be consistent with its claim to be a divine revelation by giving irrefutable proof of its divine origin.
5. It would have to be adapted to man's spiritual and moral needs.
6. It would have to survive all attacks from its enemies.
7. It would have to promote a higher code of ethics.
8. It would have to obtain a supreme position among literary productions among all the nations of the earth.
9. It would have to have universal authority, power, jurisdiction, command, control, dominion, sway, supremacy, and ascendancy, and
10. It would have to be the largest selling book in the history of the world.

And how does The Bible look when it is examined in the light of these criteria? Let's put on some objective lenses and examine the historical evidence before us!

(1) It would have to be capable of being understood:

The Bible meets this reasonable requirement. But the Bible affirms that everything in it is not easily understood; the Apostle Peter wrote:

“And account that the long-suffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest (*or twist*) as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction” (2 Peter 3:15-16).

Yet, there is nothing in the Bible incapable of being understood. Its revelator, God, revealed Himself through the language therein, and man is aware of the revealed facts!

Consider for a moment, the strict code followed by the Talmudists¹ (A. D. 100-500) for translating Synagogue scrolls.

“[1] A synagogue scroll must be written on the skins of clean animals, [2] prepared for the particular use in the synagogue by a Jew. [3] These must be fastened together with strings taken from clean animals. [4] Every skin must contain a certain number of columns, equal throughout the entire codex. [5] The length of each column must not extend over less than 48 or more than 60 lines; and the breadth must consist of thirty letters. [6] The whole copy must be first-lined; and if the words were written without a line, it is worthless. [7] The ink should be black, neither should it be red, green, nor any other color, and it must be prepared according to a definite recipe. [8] An authentic copy must be the exemplar, from which the transcriber ought not in the least deviate. [9] No word or letter, not even a yod, must be written from memory, the scribe not having looked at the codex before him . . . [10] Between every consonant the space of a hair or thread must intervene; [11] between every new parashah, or section, must be the breath of nine consonants; [12] between every book, must be three lines. [13] The fifth book of Moses must terminate exactly with a line; but the rest need not do so. [14] Besides this, the copyist must sit in full Jewish dress, [15] wash his whole body, [16] now begin to write the name of God with a pen newly dipped in ink, [17] and should a king address him while writing that name he must take no notice of him.”²

(2) It would have to be self-consistent, and not self-contradictory:

¹The Talmud is that body of Hebrew laws, traditional and explanations; or the book that contains them. The Talmud contains the laws, and a compilation of expositions of duties imposed on the people, either in Scripture, by tradition, or by authority of their doctors, or by custom. It contains two parts, the *Mischna*, and the *Gemara*; the former being the *written* law, the latter a collection of traditions and comments of Jewish doctors.

Noah Webster, *American Dictionary Of The English Language*, Published by the Foundation for American Christian Education, (Chesapeake; Virginia), 1828.

²Josh McDowell, *Evidence That Demands A Verdict*, Published by, Campus Crusade for Christ, 1973, United States of America, p. 56-57.

There are many in the past who have come forward, as there are many today, with written literature saying the Bible contains contradictions, but they can't prove *any* of their claims. There are no reasonable sets of circumstances they can come up with for the stands they have taken. Jim McGuiggan wrote the following:

“There are those who do not believe that the Bible must be self-consistent in its teaching. They believe the Bible may be proved self-contradictory, and it yet holds its place as a revelation from God. But this is a strange position indeed, for it's hard to permit man to sit as judge over the mistakes of the Bible and then have the Bible to sit as judge over the mistakes of man.”³

(3) It would have to be consistent with known facts from various disciplines such as the physical Creation, Prophecies, Science, Archeology, History, and the rest. (There is nothing in the Bible to contradict itself these areas):

The geography of the Bible has never seriously been called into question; for many reasons Biblical maps can be used in many areas of Palestine and Israel and elsewhere today. When the archeologists excavate and unearth artifacts with hands, spades, and shovels, to what source do they go to check their findings? Surely not to the Qur'an, the Bhagavat-Geetar, or any other religious books, but the Bible. Why the Bible? Though some of them do not believe the Bible, they use the Bible as an authoritative source. Is there something to the Bible they are not acknowledging?

Scientist, Herbert Spencer (1820-1903), first announced that there were only five created categories in existence. They are: “Time, Force, Action, Space, and Matter; and all else is based on these fundamentals.” Long before Spencer came up with this idea Moses wrote by inspiration in Genesis 1:1: “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” “In the beginning” . . . Time. “God” equals Force and (is personal), who “Created”

³Jim McGuiggan, *If God Came, An Approach To Christian Evidences*, Published by, Montex Publishing Company, (Lubbock; Texas), 1980, p. 170.

equals Action. “The heavens” equals Space. “Earth” equals Matter. The Bible is not a scientific book, but it sure does have scientific implications.

The importance of Archeology concerning Biblical times as well as in subsequent eras cannot be minimized. Archeology renders a reliable understanding of the history of the Biblical text. One of the reasons why Archeology is reliable, is because archeologists have always used the Bible to date their artifacts.

Archeology confirms the Genesis *Flood* mentioned in Genesis chapter 6. Archeology has discovered over (25, 000) sites that pertain to the Bible. And over tens of thousands of artifacts have been found.

But, why use the Bible to measure the dates of Archeological findings? Archeologists go to the Bible, because the Bible is the *only* reliable and dependable source of true history, (with finality). Nothing in the Bible contradicts their findings.

In the area of the flow of history, the Bible tells us Jesus was born under Augustus Caesar; this Emperor lived from 27 B.C. - A.D. 14. Jesus died during the reign of Tiberius Caesar; this Emperor lived from A.D. 14- to 37.

The Jews through whom Jesus came were expelled from the City of Rome under Claudius Caesar; this Emperor lived from A.D. 41- to 54. Secular History verifies that among those expelled from Rome were Christians, followers of Jesus (see, Acts 18:2).

(4) It would have to be consistent with its claim to be a divine revelation by giving irrefutable evidence of its divine origin.

In the Bible’s own words, “All Scripture is given by the inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instructions in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect (or mature) and thoroughly furnished unto all good works” (2 Timothy 3:16-17, KJV). This is one of the clearest and best known statements in the Bible about the origin of the Scriptures.

The English word *inspiration*, with its prefix “in,” gives the impression that after the various books of the Bible were written, God breathed into them, so that they were inspired. But that is incorrect. The Greek word for *inspiration* is, God “breathed out,” and the result was the Scriptures. Metaphorically speaking, the Bible is *the breath of God*.

The claims of the Old and New Testaments: In the Old Testament the “mouth of God” was regarded as the source from which the divine message came. “By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, and by the breath of His mouth all their host” (Psalm 33:6). “That expression, “breath of His mouth,” is the Hebrew equivalent of “God’s breath.”⁴

Notice how the Old Testament’s writers declared their writings, and from whom they got it: “Then God spoke all these words saying, ‘I am the Lord your God You shall have no other gods before Me. You shall not make for yourself an idol. . . .’” (Exodus 20:1-4).

“Then the Lord said to Moses, ‘See, I make you as god to Pharaoh. . . .’” (Exodus 7:1). “. . .but man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the Lord” (Deuteronomy 8:3). “Listen, O heavens, and hear, O earth; for the Lord speaks . . .” (Isaiah 1:2). “The words of Jeremiah . . . to whom the word of the Lord came . . .” (Jeremiah 1:1-2).

There are hundreds of other instances in the Old Testament where God is described as speaking. He communicated with Adam and Eve, both before and after the Historic Fall (Genesis 1:28-30; 3:9-19). Then He spoke with Abraham (Genesis 12:1-3; 15:1-21; 17:1-21). Then God spoke with Moses at the burning bush (Exodus 3:1-4:23).

We also have God speaking to king David through the prophet Nathan (2 Samuel 7:10, 12). Other prophets claimed to speak God’s words in the first person (see, 1 Kings 20:13; 2 Kings 17:13; and 2 Chronicles 12:5).

This article is continued in Part II

⁴Erwin W. Lutzer, *Seven Reasons Why You Can Trust The Bible*, (Moody Press; Chicago), 1998, p. 38.