

IS THE BIBLE THE
WORD OF GOD?
Repeat January 1, 2007

INTRO: Welcome to the year, 2007! For a number of years, on New Years Day I would give a message on the Word of God and then I would challenge this congregation to read through the Bible. I have given out 24 certificates to those who have read through the Bible. I offer to you a certificate if at some time this past year you completed a reading of the entire Word of God, and to anyone who finishes reading through the Bible this coming year.

In June of 1994, I gave a message that many have requested on tape, and this morning I want to give that message again so that it can be put on CD for those who wish a copy. I also give this message to challenge you to read through the Bible. And if you started some time in the past and you stopped, then let me encourage you to start where you left off and keep going from there. You probably got lost somewhere in those lists of genealogies and you'll come to that place again anyway. So just start where you left off. That will throw the devil for a loop.

Most of the content of this message is taken from Harold Willmington's book *That Manuscript From Outer Space*. Minor changes have been made to the material, some figures have been updated, since this book was written in 1974 and much of it has been heavily edited.

In this message, *Is the Bible the Word of God?* I want to present to you evidence that demands a decision. If I respond negatively and say, "No I do not believe the Bible is the Word of God" that will not change the facts at all. Some day I must still stand before God Almighty and face the facts. If I respond positively and say, "Yes the Bible is the Word of God" then I know I am obligated to live according to its precepts.

And so, let us begin by asking this question: What evidence is there that the Bible is the Word of God? Well, let us begin by giving...

I. THE EVIDENCE OF THE AMAZING UNITY OF THE BIBLE

A. This unity is achieved in spite of the long period of time involved in its writing.

1. Over 1500 years elapsed between the writing of the book of Genesis and the book of Revelation. Yet they complement each other rather than contradict one another.

Here is an example in comparing just some of the elements of the first book and the last book:

Genesis 1:1 "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."

Revelation 21:1 "I saw a new heaven and a new earth."

Genesis 1:27-28 The first Adam and his wife reign over the earth.

Revelation 21:9 The last Adam and His wife reign over the universe.

Genesis 1:10 "and the gathering of the waters called the seas."

Revelation 21:1 "and there was no more sea."

Genesis 1:5 God created the day and the night.

Revelation 22:5 "there shall be no more night there

Genesis 5:16 God created the Sun and the Moon.

Revelation 21:23 No need for the Sun and Moon because the Lamb is the light thereof.

Genesis 3:22 The tree of life is denied to sinful man.

Revelation 22:2 The tree of life, "yields her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations."

Genesis 3 Satan appears.

Revelation 20:10 Satan disappears.

Genesis 3:17 "Cursed is the ground for your sake."

Revelation 22:3 "and there shall be no more curse."

2. Between the close of the OT and the beginning of the NT there are approximately 400 years in which no Scripture was given yet there is unity between the OT and the NT.

B. This unity is achieved in spite of the many different human authors and their various occupations.

1. Moses was an Egyptian prince
2. Joshua was a soldier
3. Samuel was a priest
4. David was a king
5. Esther was a queen
6. Ruth was a housewife
7. Job was a rich farmer
8. Amos was a poor farmer

9. Isaiah was a prophet
10. Daniel was a Prime Minister
11. Nehemiah was a Cup Bearer
12. Matthew was a Tax Collector
13. Mark was an Evangelist
14. Luke was a physician
15. John was a wealthy fisherman
16. Peter was a poor fisherman
17. Paul was a tentmaker

C. This unity is achieved in spite of the different geographical places where the Bible was written.

1. Some was written in the desert (Ex. 17)
2. Some was written on MT. Sainai (Ex. 20)
3. Some was written in Palestine (Most)
4. Some was written in Egypt (Jeremiah?)
5. Some was written on the Isle of Patmos (Rev)
6. Some was written in Babylon (Daniel)
7. Some was written in Persia (Esther)
8. Some was written in Corinth (1&2 Thess)
9. Some was written in Ceasarea (Luke?)
10. Some was written in a Rome (2 Timothy)

D. This unity is achieved in spite of the many different styles of writing.

1. Some was written as history
2. Some was written as prophecy
3. Some was written as biography
4. Some was written as autobiography
5. Some was written as poetry
6. Some was written as law
7. Some was written in letter form
8. Some was written in symbolic form
9. Some was written in proverb form
10. Some was written in doctrinal form

Do you know of any other book with this kind of diversity and yet this kind of unity? The odds of a book of this kind being written by man are of such astronomical proportion that only a fool would say it could be done.

So let us consider a second evidence that the Bible is in fact the Word of God. It is...

II. THE EVIDENCE OF THE BIBLE'S INDESTRUCTABILITY

A visitor to a blacksmith shop asked the blacksmith, "How often do you replace the anvil." "Never" replied the blacksmith, "It is the anvil that wears out the hammers." So it is with the Word of God. All those who have beat on the Bible are worn out yet the anvil of the Bible is sold more and used by more than ever before.

A. In 303 A.D. after many years of tireless, ruthless slaughter and destruction Emperor Diocletian thought he had destroyed every hated Bible. He erected a column over the emblems of a burned Bible which read, "Extinct is the Name of Christian."

Twenty years later Emperor Constantine offered a reward for any remaining Bibles and within 24 hours no less than 50 copies were brought out of hiding.

B. In 1199 Pope Innocent the III ordered the burning of all Bibles.

C. Time fails us to tell of those who gave their lives for translating the Bible:]

John Huss & Jerome of Prague 1415
William Tyndale, Friday, Oct. 6, 1536

D. Voltaire once said, "Another century and there will no be a Bible on earth."

On December 24, 1933, the British Government bought the valuable Codex Sinaiticus from the Russians for one half million dollars. On that same day, a first edition of Voltaire's work sold for 11 cents in a Paris bookshops!

Ironically, after Voltaire died his old printing press and the very house where he lived was purchased by the Geneva Bible Society and was made a depot for Bibles.

E. Thomas Paine, one of the greatest political pamphleteers in history, once said, "I have gone through the Bible as a man would go through a forest with an axe to fell trees. I have cut down every tree; here they lie. They will never grow again." In 1809 Thomas Paine crawled into a drunkard's grave and today the Bible sells many, many times more than the world's best-seller. In a recent year Guinness' book of records sold 23 million copies. In that same year only one version, the Good News Bible sold 58 million copies.

F. Joseph Stalin, who was originally trained as a priest but later became dictator of Russia, instituted the "ban on the Bible" purge in Russia and they went on a purge such as has never been witnessed before. He was another hammer that wore out on the anvil for today Russia is requesting from one Canadian Bible Society alone that they produce in the next few years 40 million Bible for Russia. Where is Voltaire? Where is Thomas Paine? Where is Joseph Stalin? Where is the Bible? The hammers have worn out and the anvil stands as though never been touched by a hammer. Praise God!

Do you know any other book that has faced that kind of opposition? And do you know any other book that has faced that kind of opposition and survived?

There is a third evidence that the Bible is the Word of God. It is...

III. THE EVIDENCE OF THE HISTORICAL ACCURACY OF THE BIBLE

Harold Willmington says, "Less than a century ago the agnostic took great glee in sneeringly referring to the 'hundreds of historical mistakes' in the Bible! But then came the science of archaeology and with each shovel full of dirt the sneers became less visible, until today they scarcely can be seen. Only a bigot or an ignoramus would deny the historical merits of the Bible.

A. Sir William Ramsey who was for many years the professor of Humanity at the University of Aberdeen, Scotland and the world's most eminent authority on the geography and history of ancient Asia Minor, studied every available early document concerning that period and area. He wrote of the book of Acts that it was "A highly imaginative and carefully colored account of primitive Christianity." But after many years of intensive study the absolute historical accuracy of Luke's writings, even in minute details captured both his brain and then his heart. He now wrote this of the book of Acts, "I take the view that Luke's history is unsurpassed in regard to its trustworthiness...you may press the words of Luke in a degree beyond any other historians' and they stand the keenest scrutiny and the hardest treatment."

B. Robert Dick Wilson, who was perfectly at home in over 40 ancient Semitic languages, who at 25 years of age said, if he should happen to live to 70 years of age as many of his ancestors he would devote the next 15 years to a study of the languages necessary to study the OT; the next 15

years he would give to a study of the text of the OT; and the last 15 years he would write down his findings. This plan the Lord enabled him to carry out almost to the year.

One day after a dissertation on the complete trustworthiness of Scripture he told his students this, "Young men, there are many mysteries in this life I do not pretend to understand, many things hard to explain. But I can tell you this morning with the fullest assurance that-
'Jesus loves me this I know
For the Bible tells me so.'"

To appreciate this topic properly you must do a study of the archeology of the Bible. Do you know any other religious book that has such historical accuracy? Do you even know any other religious book this old?

So let us consider a fourth evidence that the Bible is the Word of God and that is...

IV. THE EVIDENCE OF THE SCIENTIFIC ACCURACY OF THE BIBLE

The Bible does not seek to be, nor claim to be a textbook on science. Those are studies left by God to man because the information is available by general revelation. However, where the Bible does touch on scientific issues it is accurate.

A. The fact that the earth is spherical (Is. 40:22)

"It is he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth..."

Although some Greek scholars postulated this as early as 540 B.C., generally man held that the world to be flat until the introduction of the compass in the 15th. century A.D.

B. The fact that the earth is suspended in space

Job, which may be the oldest book in the Bible says, "He stretcheth out the north over the empty place, and hangeth the earth upon nothing." (26:7)

This was not known by the scientists of the world until the writings of Sir Isaac Newton in 1687 A.D.

C. The fact that the stars are innumerable

Nearly 2000 years B.C. God said to Abraham, "Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, so shall thy seed be."

As late as 150 A.D., the famous astronomer Ptolemy dogmatically declared the number of the stars to be exactly 1056!

D. The fact of the watery paths (ocean currents)

Matthew Fountaine Maury, who is called "The Pathfinder of the Seas" and whose statue stands in Richmond, Virginia with charts of the sea in one hand and the Bible in the other was ill one day. His oldest son was reading to him from Psalm 8:8 which speaks of the paths of the seas. Maury stopped him and said, "read that again." After hearing it again, he exclaimed, "It is enough -- if the Word of God says there are paths in the sea, they must be there, and I am going to find them." Within a few years he had charted the sea lanes and currents.

Well there are many other examples but we might well conclude this section with these words from Dr. James Dwight Dana of Yale University, probably the most eminent geologist in American history, who once addressed a graduating class with these words: "Young men! As you go out into the world to face scientific problems, remember that I, an old man who has known only science all his life long, say to you, that there is nothing truer in all the Universe than the scientific statements contained in the Word of God!"

Do you know any other book that has scientific information given 3500 years ago that is accurate like the Bible? The science textbooks of our great Canadian schools are out of date in a few short years!

The fifth evidence that the Bible is the Word of God is...

V. THE EVIDENCE OF THE PROPHETIC ACCURACY OF THE BIBLE

Here examples abound to such an extent that one hardly knows where to begin.

A. Isaiah wrote during Israel's good time and prophesied the captivity of Jerusalem and her subsequent restoration. In approximately 712 B.C. Isaiah speaks of a man by name who will allow Jerusalem to be built again and this name is Cyrus. Then 176 years later we read these words penned by Ezra, another prophet, "...that the Word of the

Lord...might be fulfilled, the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus...that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying, Thus saith Cyrus...The Lord God of heaven hath...charged me to build an house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah." (Ezra 1:1-2)

B. Sir Isaac Newton is said to have said of Daniel 12:4 "Personally I cannot help but believe that these words refer to the end of the times. Men will travel from country to country in an unprecedented manner. There may be some inventions which will enable people to travel much more quickly than they do now." Newton went on to speculate that this speed might exceed 50 miles per hour. This was around 1680 A.D. Some 80 years later, the famous French atheist, Voltaire read Newton's words and retorted, "See what a fool Christianity makes of an otherwise brilliant man! Here a scientist like Newton actually writes that men may travel at the rate of 30 or 40 m.p.h. Has he forgotten that if man would travel at this rate he would be suffocated? His heart would stand still!"

Who is the fool today, Newton or Voltaire? And in the field of prophetic literature, do you know any book comparable to the Bible, the Word of God. Of course you don't because there is none!

But there is a sixth evidence that the Bible is the Word of God. It is...

VI. THE EVIDENCE OF THE UNIVERSAL INFLUENCE OF THE BIBLE

I should give a whole message to this point. I settle for one illustration. Russia with its past strict "ban the Bible" program is being influenced by the Bible today as if making up for lost years. At the time I wrote this message, 1994, Christian schools were being set up daily in Russia at the request and expense of the Russians themselves. Bibles were being requested by Russia and the government officials are often the first to get their hands on them. Why do they request Christian schools and Bibles? No, no, no, it is not because they want the Christian God, they want the kind of people produced by Bible believers.

The seventh evidence that we give this morning that the Bible is the Word of God is...

VII. THE EVIDENCE OF THE CARE AND COPY OF THE BIBLE

A. The Old Testament

We consider first the OT. The Talmud (a record of Jewish oral tradition) lists the following rules for copying the OT text:

1. The parchment had to be made from the skin of a clean animal, prepared by a Jew only, and must be fastened by strings from clean animals.
2. Each column must have no less than 48 or more than 60 lines.
3. The ink must be of no other color than black, and had to be prepared according to a special recipe.
4. No word nor letter could be written from memory; the scribe must have an authentic copy before him, and he had to read and pronounce aloud each word before writing it.
5. He had to reverently wipe his pen each time before writing the Word for God, and had to wash his whole body before writing the sacred name Jehovah!
6. One mistake on a sheet condemned the sheet; if three mistakes were found on any page, the entire manuscript was condemned.
7. Every word and every letter was counted, and if a letter were omitted, an extra letter inserted, or if one letter touched another, the manuscript was condemned and destroyed at once.

The old Rabbi gave the solemn warning to each young scribe: "Take heed how thou dost do thy work, for thy work is the work of heaven; lest thou drop or add a letter of a manuscript and so become a destroyer of the world!" The scribe was also told that while he was writing if even a king would enter the room and speak with him, the scribe was to ignore him until he finished the page he was working on, lest he make a mistake! In fact, some texts were actually annotated - that is, each letter was individually counted! Thus in copying the Old Testament they would note the letter aleph (first letter in the Hebrew alphabet) occurred 42,377 times, the letter beth 38,218 times, and so on.

B. The New Testament

While the integrity of the OT text is maintained in its careful copying the integrity of the NT rests more on the number of MSS. Today there are between 5200 and 5400 NT mss. This may not seem like a great thing until one considers that:

1. 1500 years after Herodotus wrote his history there was only one copy in the entire world.
2. 1200 years after Plato wrote his classic, there was only one manuscript.
3. Today there exist but few manuscripts of Sophocles, Euripedes, Virgil, and Cicero.

Do you know any other book that has received such care in copying or has so many manuscripts so many years later? Of course not. Ask your teachers. Go to your university professors who have walked the halls of great libraries. Ask if they know of any other such book!

But there is still more evidence that the Bible is the Word of God. There is...

VIII. THE EVIDENCE OF THE AMAZING CIRCULATION OF THE BIBLE

Willmington writes, "When David Hume said, 'I see the twilight of Christianity and the Bible,' he was much confused, for he could not tell the sunrise from the sunset!"

A. The American Bible Society has distributed 850 million Bibles from 1816-1974.

B. At least one book of the Bible is now in 1250 languages.

C. The complete Bible is now in over 300 languages.

D. At present there are more than 3000 translators working in 150 countries translating the Word of God.

E. Facts of books published:

-Only 1/2 of one percent of all books published survive 7 years.

-80% of all books are forgotten in one year.

For example, let us imagine that during this year 200 new books are published in America. Statistics show that by next year only 40 of these 200 will remain. At the end of the 7th year, of the original 200, only one lonely book will survive!

Today more and more Bibles are being printed every day and the demand exceeds the supply! Praise God. Let me tell you with no fear of contradiction that there is no other book that has had 1/10th the circulation of this grand old book, the Bible! Of course it is the Word of God!

There is yet another outstanding feature of the Bible that gives evidence that it is the Word of God. That is...

IX. THE EVIDENCE OF THE ABSOLUTE HONESTY OF THE BIBLE

One of Dr. Willmington's sayings which he often repeated was, "The Bible is not a Book that man could write if he would, or would write if he could."

No man has had access to all the historical, scientific, and prophetic data which we find in the Bible; so man could not write the Scripture if he would.

Nor would man write the Bible in the way it is written if he could because who would include all the weaknesses and sins and crimes of God's people the way the Bible does? Who would teach the doctrine of man's helplessness to gain salvation; who would include the doctrine of hell or of judgement upon saved and unsaved?

We have come to the final point we are going to give that the Bible is the Word of God, and that is...

X. THE EVIDENCE OF THE LIFE TRANSFORMING POWER OF THE BIBLE

This morning we would be able to take testimony right from this congregation and show the life transforming power of the Word of God.

The story is often told of Augustine, who shortly after his conversion met a prostitute on the street. He attempted to pass by acting as though he had not seen her but she called, "Augustine, it is I." He turned to her and said, "Yes, but it is no longer I."

Billy Graham tells the account of two strangers who sat in conversation criticizing his crusade. During the message one, a doctor, said to the other, "I don't know about you,

but I'm going forward to receive Christ." The other hesitated a moment, then reached for his pocket and replied, 'I'm going too, and here's your wallet. I'm a pickpocket.'

I wonder if you know any book you would recommend for sinful people to read, a book in which you might trust to change their lives? Perhaps some psychology book filled with man's wisdom? No, there is no other book that can do what this book can do for it is the Word of God!

CONCLUSION: And so, as I conclude this message this morning let me give this challenge:

-Find me another book that has the diversity and unity found in the Bible.

-Find me another book that man has sought to destroy more than he has the Bible.

-Find me another book as old as the Bible with the historical and scientific accuracy of the Bible.

-Find me another book with the prophetic accuracy of the Bible.

-Find me another book with such universal influence as the Bible.

-Find me another book with such care and copy with so many old manuscripts as the Bible.

-Find me another book with such amazing circulation as the Bible.

-Find me another book that has brought the changes the Bible has, a book that can change the sinful and deceitful heart of man the way the Bible can:

Then and only then would you and I need to reconsider the validity of our faith.

My conclusion to all of this is: The B-I-B-L-E yes that's the book for me, I stand alone on the Word of God the B-I-B-L-E.