

The Evidence for the Reliability of the Bible

to them also He showed Himself alive after His passion (suffering in the garden and on the cross) by [a series of] many convincing demonstrations [unquestionable evidences and credible proofs], appearing to them during forty days and talking [to them] about the things of the kingdom of God.”

Acts 1:3 (Amplified Bible)

Biblical Christianity refuses to separate historical fact from spiritual meaning. Its core claim is the living God has acted in history, especially in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus.

Nancy Pearcey

The Evidence for the Reliability of the Bible

John Stott

“Remember that God is a rational God, who has made us in His own image. God invites and expects us to explore His double revelation, in nature and Scripture, with the minds He has given us, and to continue in the development of a Christian mind to apply His marvelous revealed truth to every aspect of the modern and post-modern world.”

Common Misunderstandings About God and Spirituality

Misunderstanding Number One: People are free to believe whatever they want about God.

The Manhattan Declaration: “No one should be compelled to embrace any religion against his will, nor should persons of faith be forbidden to worship God according to the dictates of conscience or to express freely and publicly their deeply held

Misunderstandings about GOD and Spirituality

The Issue of Tolerance

TRUE TOLERANCE is where we extend to each other the right to be wrong with respect.

False Tolerance naively asserts that all ideas are created equal.

False Tolerance is false and unlivable.

Some people believe that true tolerance means

Misunderstandings about God and Spirituality

There is a “bottom-line” and profound reality to grasp: just because you believe something does not make it true.

People are entitled to their own beliefs, but not their own truth.

Misunderstandings about God and Spirituality

What you and I believe is not what ultimately matters - TRUTH IS!

Our believing something is true doesn't make it true.

Truth is what corresponds to reality.

The Bible isn't true because I have faith.

misunderstandings about God

and Spirituality

Misunderstanding Number Two: All religions basically teach the same thing.

The differences between religions are worth debating. Theology has consequences: It shapes lives, families, nations, cultures, wars; it can change people, save them from themselves, and sometimes warp or even destroy them. If we tiptoe politely around this reality, then we betray every teacher, guru, and philosopher - including Jesus...and the Buddha both-who ever sought to resolve the mo

Misunderstandings about God and Spirituality

No one argues that different economic systems and political regimes are one and the same. Capitalism and socialism are so obviously at odds that their differences hardly bear mentioning. The same goes for democracy and monarchy. Yet scholars continue to claim that religious rivals such as Hinduism and Islam, Judaism and Christianity are, by some miracle of the imagination, essentially the same. This view resounds in the echo chamber of popu-

Misunderstandings about God and Spirituality

All religions of the world make exclusive mutually contradictory claims which demonstrate that they are not the same. Jesus of Nazareth is an example: either Jesus was not the Messiah (Judaism), was the Messiah (Christianity), or was a great prophet (Islam) but not all three.

Misunderstandings about God

Misunderstanding and Spiritually

God is a psychological crutch humans invent to feel better.

New York University psychologist Paul Vitz claims this misunderstanding: "Since both believers and nonbelievers in God have psychological reasons for their positions, one important conclusion is that the debate as to the truth of the existence of God, as a matter of psychology should be irrelevant. A genuine search for evidence supporting or opposing the existence of God should be based on the evidence and circumstances."

Three Key Issues about Christianity

Issue Number One: Christianity deals with Truth
Claims which can be tested and verified.

Our culture declares that everyone has his own truth
and that truth is private and personal.

We must introduce (or reintroduce) Christianity
to our culture with its very public truth claims and
the best ideas win!

Three Key Issues about Christianity

Issue Number Two:

Biblical Faith is Not Blind Faith!

Our culture defines faith as wishful thinking or
opposed to reason and evidence.

Reason defines one kind of reality (what we know)
Faith defines another (what we don't know)," stated
religion editor Lisa Miller with Newsweek.

Christianity does not encourage blind faith!

Three Key Issues

Biblical Faith is Evidence - Based (Hebrews 11)

Note the biblical pattern:

Evidence - Knowledge - Trust

Note God speaking to Moses (Exodus 4:4,5; 14:1)

Note Jesus and the paralyzed man (Mark 2).

Three Key Issues

Issue Number Two:

Biblical Faith is not Blind Faith!

Jesus did not demand “blind faith” but shares evidence that would be helpful.

Note Matthew 11:2-5 - “...Jesus answered them

God and tell John what you hear and see: the b

receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are

cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are rais

up, and the poor have good news preached to th

Three Key Issues

Issue Number Two:

Biblical Faith is not Blind Faith!

Paul exhibited the historical nature of Christianity in his letters; Note I Corinthians 15:17-19 - "If Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins...If we have hoped in Christ in this life only, we are of all men most to be pitied."

Christianity demonstrates this significant aspect from every other world religion: testable truth-

Three Key Issues

Issue Number Two:

Biblical Faith is not Blind Faith!

Faith is active Trust.

Gordon Lewis: "Spirituality without understanding is not faith; it is superstition."

Biblical Faith is active trust that God is who He is and will do all that He has promised to do

Note Psalm 9:10 - "...those who know Your name will put their trust in You, For You, O Lord, have not forsaken those who seek You")

Three Key Issues

Issue Number Two:

Biblical Faith is not Blind Faith!

God's faithfulness in our past and our present forms the foundation for our faith (trust) in Him in our unseen future.

Faith (trust) acts on knowledge; faith is not a substitute for knowledge (Note Hebrews 11:6).

Three Key Issues

Issue Number Three:

Christians are commanded to Defend the Faith.

I Peter 3:15- “In your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense [apologia] to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you.”

Apologetics involves:

i) responding to objections;

ii) making a case;

iii) giving hope (Christ centered)

Three Key Truths

Three Objections to the use of Apologetics:

Two: You should just preach the simple gospel and not worry about the intellectual stuff.

Nancy Pearcey's comment is critical: "The ultimate goal is to preach the gospel. But the gospel is not so simple to those whose background prevents them from understanding it. Today's global secular culture has erected a maze of mental barriers against even considering the biblical message."

THREE KEY POINTS

Objection Number Three:

Too much knowledge leads to arrogance.

The remedy for arrogance is not ignorance but humility.

John Stott: "I am not pleading for a dry, humorless academic Christianity, but for a warm devotion that kindles fire by truth."

Dallas Willard: "Bluntly, to serve God well, we must think straight; and crooked thinking, unintentionally or not, always favors evil. And when crooked thinking gets elevated into group orthodoxy, whether

Three Key Truths

Issue Number Three:

We are Commanded to Defend the Faith.

When Christians love God with their whole heart and minds, they are worshipping God.

What does it say to us that Jesus, the Son of God practiced Apologetics with Teaching, as His post-resurrection and pre-Pentecostal ministry?

Apologetics prepares and serves evangelism,

Reason and Faith

What is the relationship between Apologetics, Reason, and Faith?

Reason in the form of rational arguments and evidence plays an essential role in our showing Christianity to be true, whereas reason in this form plays a contingent and secondary role in our personally knowing Christianity to be true. The proper ground of our knowing Christianity to be true is the inner work of the Holy Spirit in our individuals; and in our showing Christianity to be true is His role to open hearts of unbelievers to assent and respond to the reasons we present.”

Challenges to the Bible

Challenge Number One:

The Growing Secularization of American Culture

Our culture has divorced the spiritual from the rational.

Our culture has moved from a THINKING culture to a FEELING culture.

The secular mindset regards belief in God as nonsense and the rational equivalent of fairy tale for grown-ups.

Challenges to the Bible

The Attack of the New Atheists on Christianity:

“When one person suffers from a delusion, it is called insanity. When many people suffer from delusion, it is called a religion. If this book were intended, religious readers who open it will be laughed at by atheists when they put it down.”

Richard Dawkins

“I think that religion should be treated with ridicule, hatred, and contempt, and I claim that right.”

Christopher Hitchens

Challenges to the Bible

Challenge Number Two:

The Strong Anti-Institutional Attitude among Those Under Age Thirty-five.

Three reasons for this attitude:

Thom and Jess Rainer (The Millennials: Connections to America's Largest Generation)

- i) Never-ending moral failure of pastors and priests;
- ii) Churches are too inward focused;
- iii) Churches are perceived as judgmental, exclusive, and negative.

Challenges to the Bible

Challenge Number Three:

The Sophisticated Attacks on the Bible's Origin
Credibility, and Reliability

Multiple fronts in three major avenues:

Traditional Media

The New Media

The Classroom

Study by Harvard University and George Mason

University: 52% of college professors regard the

Bible as "an ancient book of fables, legends,

Challenges to the Bible

"They will see me as just another liberal professor trying to cajole them out of their convictions and they are dead right about that - that's what I am, and that's exactly what I am trying to do."

Daniel Dennett (Tufts University)

"We try to arrange things so that students who enter as bigoted, homophobic, fundamentalists will leave college with views more like our own...so we are going to respond to you on trying to discredit you in the eyes of your children by trying to strip your fundamentalist community of dignity by trying to make your views seem silly rather than discussable." Ri

Historical Reliability of the Bible

Fact One:

The Bibliographical Test:

Seeks to determine whether we can reconstruct the original from the earliest copies at hand.

Dr. Daniel Wallace: “The wealth of material that is available for determining the wording of the original New Testament is staggering. There are more than fifty-seven hundred Greek New Testament manuscripts, many as twenty thousand versions, and more than one million quotations by patristic writers (early Church Fathers). In comparison with the average ancient Greek author, the New Testament copies are well over a thousand times more plentiful. If the average-sized manuscript were one and one-half inches thick, all the copies of the works of an average author would stack up four feet high while the copies of the New

the Historical Reliability of the bible

act One (continued):

the earliest Manuscripts:

Scholar Norman Geisler: "The earliest undisputed manuscript fragment of John 18:31-33,37-38 known as the John Rylands fragment between A.D. 117-138...Even earlier than the John Rylands fragment are disputed fragments that date from A.D. 50 -70, found with the Dead Sea Scrolls. Some scholars believe these fragments are parts of six New Testament books including Mark, Acts, Romans, 1 Timothy, II Peter and James...The fragments were found in a cave that had previously been identified as containing material from 50 B.C. to A.D.50." Dr. Jose Callahan, a noted Spanish paleographer identified those early fragments.

act Two:

the Internal Test: Are the writers truthful in their

the Case for the Historical Reliability of the Bible

Fact Three:

The External Evidence Test:

Are there other documents that corroborate or confirm the biblical documents? Even if all the biblical manuscripts were destroyed, we would still have the ability to reconstruct the New Testament. The Early Church Fathers (Church leaders like Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Tertillian and others) quoted the New Testament so much (more than a billion quotations) that all but eleven verses of the

The Historical Reliability of the Bible

Fact Four: The Evidence from non-Christian Sources: Dr. Gary Habermas from his *Ancient Evidence for the Life of Jesus* cites 17 non-Christian writings that provide specific evidence about Jesus and Christianity.

the Case for the Historical Reliability of the Bible

Fact Five:

The Evidence of Archaeology:

Dr. Clifford Wilson, noted Australian archaeologist, states from his 17 volume set on the archaeological confirmation of the Bible, "Those who know the law now recognize that the New Testament must be accepted as a remarkably accurate source book."

the Case for the Historical Reliability of the Bible

Fact Six:

The Silence of Christianity's Critics:

The complete inability of the enemies of Jesus and the early Church to discredit early Christian claims when they had the motive and ability to do so are strongly for the truthfulness of those claims.

Fact Seven:

The Numerous Eyewitness Accounts:

The Historical Reliability of the Bible

Fact Ten:

The Overwhelming Confirmation from Legal Testimonies and Skeptics

Men like St. Augustine, C.S. Lewis, Josh McDowell, Sir William Ramsay, John Warwick Montgomery, Alister McGrath, Simon Greenleaf, and so many more affirm the reliability of the Bible.

Discrepancies

The Reliability of the Bible has been questioned by critics seeking to discredit the Scripture. There are problematic passages, but scholars have been aware of these issues for centuries.

David Limbaugh states that the critics have not discovered new, sophisticated techniques that would have caused waves of unbelief had they been discovered long ago. The early Church Fathers addressed these very issues.”

Augustine wrote a fifth-century commentary, *Harmony of the Gospels*, dealt with these kind of

Contradictions and Discrepancies
predecessors did not that now makes belief in the
historical reliability of the Scripture untenable..t
claim is simply false.”

Dr. Kenneth Kanzer: “...the faith of...troubled so
hindered by misunderstanding the Scripture. They
are confused by what seems to them to be false
statements or self-contradiction. We need, therefore,
to clear away such false obstacles to faith. If there
remains any obstacle to faith, it should be the
tumbling block of the cross or the cost of
discipleship rather an imaginary obstacle that

Contradictions and Discrepancies
Bible Scholar Dr. Gleason Archer has studied the issues of contradictions and discrepancies in his International Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties. He stated in the encyclopedia, "...it was apparent that the chief objection to inerrancy was the extant copies of Scripture contain substantial errors, some of which defy even the most ingenious use of textual criticism. This charge can be refuted and its falsity exposed by an objective study done in a consistent, evangelical perspective. Nothing less than the full inerrancy of the original manuscripts of Scripture can serve as the

Dr. Gleason Archer. As I have dealt with one
apparent discrepancy after another and have studied
Contradictions and Discrepancies
the alleged contradictions between the biblical records
and the evidence of linguistics, archaeology, or
science, my confidence in the trustworthiness of
Scripture has been repeatedly verified and
strengthened by the discovery that almost every
problem in Scripture that has ever been discovered
man, from ancient times until now, has been dealt
with in a completely satisfactory manner by the
biblical text itself - or else by objective
archaeological information. The deductions that
are validly drawn from Egyptian, Sumerian, or

Contradictions and Discrepancies

Dr. Gleason Archer continued: "from the most hostile arguments and challenges of human rationalists or detractors of any and every persuasion... There is good and sufficient answer in Scripture itself to refute every charge that has ever been leveled against it. But that is only to be expected from the kind of book the Bible asserts to be, the inscripturation of the

Contradictions and Discrepancies

Dr. Douglas Huffman: “It is easy to claim that the Bible contains inconsistencies and contradictions. Such claims are made on media talk shows, on Internet blogs and web sites, in conversations among friends, and in best-selling books. But making such claims is not the same as proving them. In fact, many such claims stem solely from the reader’s misunderstanding of a writer’s purposes; there is no error in what the author is saying. To avoid such claims, readers should attend to the purposes of biblical authors.”

Contradictions and Discrepancies

Dr. John Haley, author of *An Examination of the Alleged Discrepancies of the Bible*, stated that the origin of apparent discrepancies was based on differences in dates, authorship, timing, reference arrangement, modes of computation, customs, definitions, and manuscript traditions.

Dr. R.A. Torrey, author of *Difficulties and Alleged Errors and Contradictions in the Bible*, classified alleged errors based on manuscript errors, inaccuracies in translations, false interpretations, wrong concepts of the Bible, use of language, defective history, and