

2 Tim. 3:16-17

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The Bible is Unique

In order to demonstrate that uniqueness I want to ask several questions

I. WHY DID GOD GIVE US THE BIBLE?

1. TO REVEAL HIMSELF TO US

God has revealed himself in the pages of the Bible.

In his dealing with humanity we come to know certain things about his identity.

He's loving
merciful.

righteous
judge of all creation.

He is the God who is near –
close enough to touch and heal the eyes of a blind man.

He is the God who is holy –
Yet distinct and separate from humanity.

The invisible God chose to reveal himself to humanity because he wants to restore the relationship with us that he originally had. In revealing who he is the Bible tells us how he accomplished that through the sacrifice, death and resurrection of his Son, Jesus Christ.

The Bible goes further.

The Creator of all things knows how life works.
He reveals to us what it's all about.

2. TO TEACH US HOW TO LIVE

Through the Bible we learn our purpose.

We find the meaning of ultimate issues like life and death.

God reveals where humanity came from and where we're going.

That's what our text is saying....

All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It straightens us out and teaches us to do what is right. It is God's way of preparing us in every way, fully equipped for every good thing God wants us to do. 2 Timothy 3:16-17 (NLT)

II. WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO SAY THAT THE WORDS OF THE BIBLE ARE INSPIRED?

Literally, it means "God-breathed."

God moved ordinary people to write this extraordinary book.

Inspired means more than you get goose bumps or warm fuzzys when you read it.

There are implications for every single human being

The Implications Of Inspiration: The Bible is both **INERRANT** and **AUTHORITATIVE**.

Don't worry, I'll define these terms shortly.

First, let's look at another verse that speaks of God's method in giving us the Bible.

2 Peter 1:20-21 (NIV)

... you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. 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. The Bible is not a collection of human wisdom or cleverly devised stories.

It is God's truth for us written down by human messengers.

If we believe in the inspiration of the scripture then we must conclude that the inerrancy and authority of the Bible are both true.

Now what exactly does this mean?

Inerrancy means: that the Bible is free from errors.

Not necessarily copying errors from over the years, but any kind of falsehood.

The Bible is true in all it affirms. If the Bible doesn't affirm it, but it's mentioned in its pages it doesn't have to be true.

For example, many of the Old Testament heroes had more than one wife. Does this mean God and the Bible he inspired endorses their arrangement? Absolutely not.

The Bible affirms monogamy between husband and wife. Instances of polygamy are just a reporting of facts, not an endorsement.

In fact, if you read about the lives of men who had more than one wife you'll find that there was always trouble within those families. The Bible reports about the lifestyles of many individuals, but unless it affirms what they do we're not called to pattern our lives after them.

If inspiration is true, then inerrancy must also be true.

Why? There are two main reasons.

First, a perfect God would not inspire something that was imperfect.

His revelation of himself would have to reflect his character which is free of error.

A second reason for subscribing to a view of inerrancy is distinctively Christian.

As Christ's followers we are to follow his example. We're even called to view life from his perspective.

Jesus considered the Scriptures to be inerrant.

In Matthew 22:43 Jesus referred to Psalm 110, written by King David who he said was "speaking under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit ...". Jesus quoted Scripture when he faced temptation. He told the people of his day that the Law and the Prophets, the entire Old Testament, pointed to him as the Messiah. He also made this strong statement concerning Scripture: "I assure you, until heaven and earth disappear, even the smallest detail of God's law will remain until its purpose is achieved." Jesus viewed the most minor stroke of a prophet's pen to be inspired and therefore, inerrant.

IF THE BIBLE IS INERRANT THEN IT IS ALSO AUTHORITATIVE.

What does this mean?

Authority: The Bible is the final word concerning right and wrong.

That's hard to swallow in an age where everything is relative and one person's truth is just as valid as another's.

But if the Bible, as it asserts about itself, is inspired then it is true in all it affirms and reveals absolute truth.

unfortunalty to the skeptic. I can't prove to you that the Bible is true without a shadow of doubt, but I can present some supporting evidence.

You can use this test on any piece of literature to determine it's genuineness.

III. How Can You Know The Bible Is True?

1. The Bible corresponds to history.

Does the Bible make assertions that conflict with historical fact or does it line up with past events?

In it's 2,000 year history, no one has ever been able to demonstrate that the Bible is inconsistent with history.

Don't think they haven't tried.

Try as they may skeptics are disproven by the advances of archaeology.

"What archaeology has done," says Josh [McDowell], "is to verify some of the history contained in the Bible. For instance, two of the cities mentioned in the Bible, Sodom and Gomorrah, have been for many years considered mythological by the intellectual community. However, recent excavations at Tell Mardikh, now known to be the site of Ebla, uncovered about 15,000 tablets. Some of these have been translated, and mention is made of Sodom and Gomorrah."

Greg Johnson and Michael Ross, *How To Geek Proof Your Faith*, 50.

Archaeology has substantiated numerous customs, places, names, and events mentioned in the New Testament. For example, archaeology has verified the existence of the city of Nazareth, where Jesus was raised, as well as most of the ancient cities mentioned in Acts. Archaeology has documented the accuracy of Luke's account of Paul's missionary journeys and has confirmed the periodic Roman censuses that caused Joseph and Mary to be in Bethlehem at the time of Jesus' birth. Archaeology has also authenticated the historicity of Pontius Pilate, who sentenced Jesus to die by crucifixion.

Dan Story, *Defend Your Faith: How to Answer Tough Questions*, 47.

If you'd like to get up to speed on all the findings of archaeology related to the Bible, I'd recommend you read, *Evidence That Demands A Verdict* by Josh McDowell. This guy was a skeptic who investigated the claims of Christianity, found them to be historically accurate, and became a believer himself.

"In addition, no prophecy has ever been disproved, and many have been proved true by history. Jesus fulfilled at least thirty, perhaps as many as three hundred, specific and distinct Old Testament messianic prophecies.

This was by chance?"

Peter Kreeft and Ronald K. Tacelli, *Handbook of Christian Apologetics*, 217

2. The Bible is internally consistent.

Does the Bible contradict itself?

A buddy of mine once made the assertion that there were contradictions in the Bible.

When I pressed him to name a few, he couldn't do it. He'd never read it. I suspect the same of those who say the Bible is not internally consistent.

In fact, it's amazingly consistent.

It features sixty-six books by forty authors (from every walk of life, including kings, peasants, philosophers, fishermen, poets, statesmen, scholars)

yet it is totally consistent.

Greg Johnson and Michael Ross, *How To Geek Proof Your Faith*, 44.

Here are five diverse but typical examples of supposed self-contradictions, or internal contradictions, in the Bible:

1. In the Old Testament, the populations of people and armies are often estimated differently in different accounts of the same events.
2. One passage in Exodus says God parted the waters of the Red Sea, but another passage says a strong east wind did it by blowing all night.
3. The chronological order of events in the life of Jesus is not the same in any two of the four Gospels.
4. One account of the first Easter morning says the women who went to Jesus' empty tomb saw two angels, while another account says they saw one.
5. One account of Judas's death says he hanged himself; another says he fell down and his guts burst out.

... even these minor contradictions can all be explained as only apparent. For instance:

1. Ancient histories rarely claimed exact numbers. Inexact estimates were common and expected. So were the use of symbolic numbers instead of literal numbers to describe real events.
2. First and second causes do not exclude each other: God parted the Red Sea using the wind.
3. Only Luke, who was a Greek scientist (a doctor) claimed anything like exact chronological order (1:3).
4. Perhaps one woman saw one angel and the other saw two. "I saw two angels" is not contradicted by "I saw only one."
5. Perhaps Judas's noose broke!

Peter Kreeft and Ronald K. Tacelli, *Handbook of Christian Apologetics*, 215-216.

3. The Bible is practical in application.

You can apply the teachings of the Bible to your life and see the benefits.

For example, Jesus said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." Psychology bears this out. People who are givers are happier and have better mental health than those whose focus is acquiring more.

The Bible informs us that forgiveness is the path to freedom. Hold a grudge for a while and see if you're free or bound. The teachings of the Bible work because they are absolutely true.

One more question ...

IS THE PRESENT FORM OF THE BIBLE RELIABLE?

How do we know that what we've got today is what God handed down?

Let's start with the Old Testament.

FIRST you've got to understand how seriously the Jewish people took the word of God.

The designated special people called scribes to copy the sacred scrolls of the Old Testament. These men took painstaking detail to make sure that each copy was accurate. They understood their souls to be in danger if they made errors in God's holy word. It was incredible how well they knew their Bible. Some of them knew how many times a certain word or phrase appeared in the Scriptures. The scribes were rigorous in detail.

Here's an example of how reliable the Old Testament we have today is compared to the earliest manuscripts.

In 1947 a shepherd boy found the first of a series of ancient documents called the Dead Sea Scrolls. Within that collection of manuscripts, scholars found a parchment of Isaiah. It was dated to about 125 B.C. When compared with a copy found in 916 A.D., the two were nearly the same, WORD FOR WORD.

"Even though the two copies of Isaiah discovered in Qumran Cave 1 near the Dead Sea in 1947 were a thousand years earlier than the oldest dated manuscript previously known (A.D. 980), they proved to be word for word identical with out standard Hebrew Bible in more than 95 percent of the text.

The 5 percent variation consisted chiefly of obvious slips of the pen and variations in spelling."

- Gleason Archer

Dan Story, *Defend Your Faith: How to Answer Tough Questions*, 35.

When it comes to the New Testament the evidence is even more compelling. There are more than 24,000 partial and complete copies of ancient New Testament manuscripts in existence today.

The earliest ones are dated to within a generation after the apostles. Look at this chart by way of comparison

Person; Lived (Wrote); Earliest Copy; Number of Copies in Existence

Caesar (The Gallic Wars) - 100-44 B.C.; A.D. 900; 10
 Homer (The Odyssey, The Iliad) - 900 B.C.; A.D. 1400; 643
 Sophocles (Greek dramatist) - 496-406 B.C.; A.D. 950; 193
 Euripides (Greek dramatist and poet) - 480-406 B.C.; A.D. 1180; 9
 Plato (Greek philosopher) - 427-347 B.C.; A.D. 940; 7
 Aristotle (Greek philosopher) - 384-322 B.C.; A.D. 1100; 5
 Demosthenes (orator) - 384-322 B.C.; A.D. 860; 200
 Lucretius (Roman poet and philosopher) - 96-55 B.C.; A.D. 930; 2
 Livy (Roman historian)- 59 B.C.-A.D. 17; A.D. 500; 20
 New Testament- A.D. 40-100; A.D. 130; 14,000

Greg Johnson and Michael Ross, How To Geek Proof Your Faith, 47

How could we doubt the validity of the New Testament with all that evidence when we trust the accuracy of all the others with so little evidence?

The claims of the Bible concerning itself are true:

The Law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul. The decrees of the LORD are trustworthy, making wise the simple. The commandments of the LORD are right, bringing joy to the heart. The commands of the LORD are clear, giving insight to life. Reverence for the LORD is pure, lasting forever. The laws of the LORD are true; each one is fair. They are more desirable than gold, even the finest gold. They are sweeter than honey, even honey dripping from the comb. They are a warning to those who hear them; there is great reward for those who obey them. Psalm 19:7-11 (NLT)

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3. TO REVEAL HIMSELF TO US

4. TO TEACH US HOW TO LIVE

II. WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO SAY THAT THE WORDS OF THE BIBLE ARE INSPIRED?

1. THE QUESTION OF INERRANCY

2. THE QUESTION OF AUTHORITY

III. How Can You Know The Bible Is True?

1. THE BIBLE CORRESPONDS TO HISTORY

2. THE BIBLE IS INTERNALLY CONSISTENT.

3. THE BIBLE IS PRACTICAL IN APPLICATION.

IV. IS THE PRESENT FORM OF THE BIBLE RELIABLE?

1. OLD TESTAMENT

2. NEW TESTAMENT

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