

Is The Bible From God?

2 TIMOTHY 3.10-17

“One of the proofs of the divinity of our gospel is the preaching it has survived.”

(Woodrow Wilson [1856-1924]; 28th US President [1913-1921]; son of a Presbyterian minister)

In a more serious vein he said, “When you have read the Bible, you know it is the word of God, because it is the key to your heart, your own happiness, and your own duty.” Wilson was a deeply religious man and openly acknowledged his belief that the Bible came from God.

For many people however, that’s NOT a given.

- **Robert Ingersoll** (American statesman, orator, atheist; 1833-1899) – “Read it as you would any other book; think of it as you would of any other; get the bandage of reverence from your eyes; drive from your heart the phantom of fear; push from the throne of your brain the cowled form of superstition - then read the Holy Bible, and you will be amazed that you ever, for one moment, supposed a being of infinite wisdom, goodness, and purity to be the author of such ignorance and of such atrocity.”
- **Mark Twain** (American writer; 1835-1910) – “The Bible is a mass of fables and traditions, mere mythology”
- **Richard Dawkins** (Oxford biologist, atheist) – “The Bible is a terrible moral compass...”
- **Sam Harris** (American neuroscientist, philosopher) – “Why not admit the Bible is merely a collection of imperfect books written by highly fallible human beings?”
- **Christopher Hitchens** (English-born American journalist, atheist) – “The Bible may, indeed does, contain a warrant for trafficking in humans, for ethnic cleansing, for slavery, for bride-price, and for indiscriminate massacre, but we are not bound by any of it because it was put together by crude, uncultured human mammals.”

Your children and grandchildren will be exposed to this kind of thinking in schools. How do you answer? This sermon looks at proofs of the divine origin of the Bible. As a starting point note 2 Tm. 3.10-17, where Paul tells Timothy that Scripture creates conviction that sustains us against persecution (v. 10-14); it instructs us in the way of salvation (v. 15), it helps us mature (v. 16-17), because its God-breathed (v. 16).

Evidence of Inspiration

1. THE CLAIMS OF THE BIBLE

- a. The Bible claims to be from God.
 - i. In the OT >3800x – “The Lord said...” (cf. Jeremiah with > 400 such references)
 - ii. In the NT consider:
 1. Jesus’ view of Scripture– Mt. 5.17ff; Lk. 16.17, 29ff; Jn. 10.34f.
 2. The Apostles’ view – 1 Co. 14.37; Jn. 20.30f; 21.24f; 2 Pe. 3.2, 15f.

2. THE UNITY OF THE BIBLE

- a. Unity in diversity
 - i. At least 36 authors with different backgrounds, skills, styles.
 - ii. Written in 3 different languages – Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek
 - iii. Written in a range of styles – narrative, history, gospel, parable, poetry, prayer, songs, prophecy, letters.
 - iv. Geographically, the story spans 3 continents.
 - v. Chronologically, it took 1500 years to write it.

- b. Unity of theme –
 - i. Redemption, Redeemer, Redeemed
 - ii. Every part of Bible contributes to the theme:
 - 1. OT Law – need for redemption; election of redeemed; OT History – preparation, preservation, punishment, restoration of redeemed; OT Poetry – inner lives of redeemed; OT Prophecy – exhortation & warning to redeemed
 - 2. NT Gospels – continued need for redemption & arrival of Redeemer; Acts – spread of message of redemption; NT Epistles – exhortations & warnings redeemed; NT Prophecy – triumph of redeemed
 - iii. Unity of style – brevity, simplicity, impartiality, restraint

Consider the powerful unity between Revelation & Genesis (cf. *Halley's Bible Handbook*, p. 618)

The Bible is all one story. The last part of the last book in the Bible reads like the close of the story begun in the first part of the first book in the Bible.

*The first word in Genesis: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." (Gn. 1.1)
– Almost the last word in Revelation: "I saw a new heaven and a new earth." (Rv. 21.1)*

"The gathering together of waters he called the sea." (Gn. 1.10) – "And the sea is no more." (Rv. 21.1)

"The darkness he called night." (Gn. 1.5) – "There shall be no night there." (Rv. 21.25)

*"God made the two great lights (Sun & moon)." (Gn. 1.16)
– "The city has no need of the sun nor the moon." (Rv. 21.23)*

"In the day you eat thereof you shall surely die." (Gn. 2.17) – "Death shall be no more." (Rv. 21.4)

"Cursed is the ground for your sake." (Gn. 3.17) – "There shall be no more curse." (Rv. 22.3)

Satan appears as deceiver of mankind. (Gn. 3.1, 4) – Satan disappears forever. (Rv. 20.10)

They were driven from the tree of life. (Gn. 3.22-24) – The tree of life reappears. (Rv. 22.2)

They were driven from God's presence. (Gn. 3.24) – "They shall see his face." (Rv. 22.4)

Man's primeval home was by a river. (Gn. 2.10) – Man's eternal home will be beside a river. (Rv. 22.1)

3. THE PROPHECIES OF THE BIBLE

- a. Prophets were God's spokesmen (cf. Dt. 18.15-22) who exhorted, rebuked, and predicted.
- b. Criteria – fidelity to Lord (Dt. 13.1ff); accuracy of prediction (Dt. 18.15-22).
- c. Examples:
 - i. Curse for rebuilding Jericho – Jos. 6.26; cf. 1 Ki. 16.33f (500 yrs. later).
 - ii. Bethelhem as Messiah's birthplace – Mic. 5.6; cf. Mt. 2.1-6 (700 yrs. later).
 - iii. Jesus' betrayal for 30 pieces of silver – Zch. 11.12f; cf. Mt. 27.3-10 (500 years later).
 - iv. Cyrus as conqueror of Babylon – Is. 44.28; 45.1; 45.13 (180 yrs. before Cyrus' reign).

4. THE HISTORICITY OF THE BIBLE

- a. The Bible is full of historical references:
 - i. Hos. 1.1; Am. 1.1; Hag. 1.1; Zch. 1.1; Is. 1.1; Jer. 1.1ff; Ezk. 1.1f; Da. 1.1ff; etc.
 - ii. They provide context, verification, etc.
- b. Archaeological confirmation
 - i. Bullae of Jeremiah – Bullae = clay seals indicating authorship, ownership, authority (cf. Rv. 5.1ff; Jer. 36.10, 11, 14).
 - ii. 1982 – Gemariah seal (36.25) in City of David.
 - iii. 1970s-1980s – Baruch (32.10f; 45.1); Jerahmeel (36.26) in black market.
 - iv. 2005 – Jucal, son of Shelemiah (38.1) in City of David.
 - v. 2008 – Gedaliah, son of Pashur (38.1) in City of David.

5. THE ETHICS OF THE BIBLE

- a. Ted Turner represents the thinking of many – “When Moses went up on the mountain, there was no poverty. Today the Ten Commandments wouldn’t go over. Nobody around likes to be commanded. Commandments are out.”
- b. In reply:
 - i. New problems are old problems – Ro. 1.18-32.
 - ii. The truth of Scripture is timeless – Ps. 119.142; Is 40.6ff.

6. THE EFFECTS OF THE BIBLE

- a. 1 Th 2.13 – power of God’s word to change people
- b. Example of Saul of Tarsus – 1 Tm. 1.12-17.
 - i. Committed Jew – Php. 3.1ff.
 - ii. Radical change – Ac. 9.1-9, 17ff.
- c. Extraordinary suffering – 2 Co. 11.22-29.
- d. Apologetic value
 - i. George Lyttelton & Gilbert West – met @ Oxford as skeptics; set out to disprove 2 things – Jesus’ resurrection (West) & Saul’s conversion (Lyttelton); after a year of study, both converted.
 - ii. Lyttelton – “The conversion and apostleship of Saint Paul alone, duly considered, was of itself a demonstration sufficient to prove Christianity a divine revelation.”
- e. Each of us needs to ask, “How has the Bible changed me?”

Conclusion

The Bible claims to come from God. That alone makes it unique. But that means the stakes couldn’t be higher. If it IS NOT the word of God, then we are all fools for believing it and acting upon it. If it IS the word of God, then none of us can afford to ignore it.

What will you do about it?