

# Evidence for the truth of the Bible

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## **(1) Self-Attestation:** The Bible claims to be the Word of God.

*1 Thessalonians 2:13 "And we also thank God continually because, when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but as it actually is, the word of God, which is at work in you who believe."*

*2 Timothy 3:16-17 "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work."*

*2 Peter 1:20-21 "Above all, 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."*

*John 12:49-50 "For I did not speak of my own accord, but the Father who sent me commanded me what to say and how to say it. I know that his command leads to eternal life. So whatever I say is just what the Father has told me to say."*

*John 14:10 "Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you are not just my own. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work."*

**(2) Authorial Martyrdom:** The writers suffered and died for their message. (This does not prove the Bible is true, but rather that the writers were convinced their message. Who would die for lie? Their death differs from other martyrs as they did not suffer or die for an ideology, rather, they suffered and died for what they heard and saw. They were witnesses.)

**(3) Congruency:** An extremely high percentage of congruency exists among a high number of copies. Earlier manuscripts have been found later in history confirming the Bible was not altered.

The original writings of the Bible have been lost. But before they were lost, they were copied. These copies were incredibly accurate, very meticulous, and very precise. The people who copied them were extremely dedicated to God and their copying tasks. They took great care when copying the original manuscripts. This copying method is so exact, and so precise, that the New Testament alone is considered to be 99.5% textually pure. This means that of the 6000 Greek copies (the New Testament was written in Greek), and the additional 21,000 copies in other languages, there is only one half of 1% variation. Of this very slight number, the great majority of the variants are easily corrected by comparing them to other copies that don't have the "typos" or by simply reading the context. You should know that copying mistakes occur in such ways as word repetition, spelling, or a single word omission due to the copyist missing something when moving his eyes from one line to another. The variants are very minor. Nothing affects doctrinal truth and the words and deeds of Christ are superbly reliably transmitted to us. (<http://www.carm.org/is-the-bible-reliable>)

The Bible was completed in its entirety nearly 2,000 years ago and stands today as the best-preserved literary work of all antiquity with over 24,000 ancient New Testament manuscripts discovered thus far. Compare this with the second best-preserved literary work of antiquity, Homer's Iliad, with only 643 preserved manuscripts discovered to date. (<http://www.allabouttruth.org/is-the-bible-true-c.htm>)

When we consider the New Testament, we have approximately 6,000 early manuscripts that are over 99.5% textually pure. (There are many more manuscripts than this, but 6,000 that were actually composed close to the date of the writings of the autographs, the originals). In saying that the texts are over 99.5% pure, I am asserting that there was only one-half of one percent where discrepancies were encountered. Most of these discrepancies are made up of simple deletions of words, or misspellings, not whole-sale textual changes. (<http://www.biblearchaeology.org/post/2008/06/25/Responding-to-a-Skeptic.html>)

**(4) Church:** The Bible is proven by those who adhere to it.

*Matthew 11:19b "But wisdom is proved right by her actions."*

*John 7:38 Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him.*

**(5) Orthodoxy:** Since conception, the church has agreed upon a Biblically based theology based upon the congruency of Christian orthodox theology.

**(6) Church Assertion:** Throughout the history of the church, the church has affirmed and confirmed the Biblical message. (Division and problems has arisen when the church doesn't obey the Scriptures causing other's to break away and seek to obey it.)

**(7) Quotation:** Nearly the entire Bible may be pieced together from early quotations.

**(8) Popularity:** Best-selling book of all time.

**(9) Longevity:** The Bible stands beyond every critic and continues to spread. False gospels have faded and passed away. Many attempts to squelch the Bible has failed. The Bible has been preserved despite many difficulties like the fall of empires, burning of libraries, hand copying, and church division.

**(10) Solidity:** The Bible stands. Isaiah 40:8

*"The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God stands forever. "*

**(11) Testimonial:** The Bible was not written by Jesus Christ whom the entire Bible is about. Rather, it was written by various authors testifying to Christ. This shows the Bible is true because Jesus doesn't exalt Himself. Also, the testimony is not dependent upon one person saying it is true. Lastly, the Bible didn't start in canonized form. Each book was written and distributed. It was canonized later. This means the Bible didn't stem from one source. The harmony between the books is not based upon a lie.

*John 5:31 "If I testify about myself, my testimony is not valid."*

**(12) Fruit & Faithfulness:** The Bible is fulfilled. People's lives are transformed by its message. The message is spreading leading people to faith and salvation.

*Matthew 24:14 "And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come."*

*Isaiah 55:10 "As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose I for which I sent it."*

**(13) Prophecy:** Old Testament prophecy is fulfilled in the New Testament. Additionally, other prophecies are being fulfilled even to this day.

Consider, for example, Ezekiel's prophecies concerning God's judgment against the ancient Phoenician capital of Tyre (Ezekiel, chapter 26). The prophecy states that Tyre would first be razed by Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar. Later, it would be utterly destroyed by a coalition of nations, flattened like the top of a rock, its ruins (and even its dust) scraped and thrown into the sea, becoming a place for fishermen to spread their nets. The surrounding nations would witness Tyre's fate and surrender without a fight. It's a rather odd prophecy. Amazingly, the conditions of Ezekiel's prophecy were fulfilled, even to the tiniest detail. Nebuchadnezzar sacked Tyre. Later, Alexander the Great led a coalition of nations against Tyre, demolished it, scraped it to bedrock and threw its ruins into the sea. The ancient site became (and remains to this day) a place for local fishermen to spread their nets to dry. (For secular confirmation, see *General History for Colleges and High Schools*, Boston, Ginn & Co., p. 55). (<http://www.allabouttruth.org/is-the-bible-true-c.htm>)

In 70 AD, Roman legions decimated Israel, dispersed the Jews throughout the world, and banned them from ever reentering their homeland. The Jews were without a homeland for 1,900 years! Nevertheless, God promised the Jews that though He would remove them from the land, they would remain an identifiable people and would return to their land again. (see, for example, Leviticus 26:13-16; Nehemiah 1:8-9; Deuteronomy 30:1-5). (<http://www.allabouttruth.org/is-the-bible-true-c.htm>)

**(14) Harmony:** The Bible harmonizes as one book with one message and story though it was written by many authors over a span over 2000 years.

**(15) Archeology:** The Bible is proven true by the archeological evidence that coincides with the text.

- **"It may be stated categorically that no archaeological discovery has ever controverted a biblical reference."** (McDowell, *Evidence that Demands a Verdict*, Here's Life Publishers Inc., 1979, p. 65.)
- Archaeologists have discovered a number of evidences vindicating the **Bible's exodus account**, including chariot wheels embedded in coral along the land bridge at the bottom of the Red Sea. (*Exodus Revealed*, video documentary by Discovery Media Productions.)
- When renowned archaeologist Sir William Ramsay started his explorations in Asia Minor, he doubted the **historicity of the book of Acts**. But after hundreds of hours of research, he began to change his mind. A careful study of Acts 14:5-12 led him to believe that Luke was quite familiar with the places, people, and events about which he wrote. (<http://www.apologeticspress.org/articles/1616>)
- The **Isaiah scrolls found at Qumran** closed that gap to within 500 years of the original manuscript. Interestingly, when scholars compared the MT of Isaiah to the Isaiah scroll of Qumran, the correspondence was astounding. The texts from Qumran proved to be word-for-word identical to our standard Hebrew Bible in more than 95 percent of the text. The 5 percent of variation consisted primarily of obvious slips of the pen and spelling alterations (Archer, 1974, p. 25). Further, there were no major doctrinal differences between the accepted and Qumran texts (see Table 1 below). (<http://www.apologeticspress.org/articles/266>)
- **The discovery of the Ebla archive** in northern Syria in the 1970s has shown the Biblical writings concerning the Patriarchs to be viable. Documents written on clay tablets from around 2300 B.C. demonstrate that personal and place names in the Patriarchal accounts are genuine. The name "Canaan" was in use in Ebla, a name critics once said was not used at that time and was used incorrectly in the early chapters of the Bible. The word *tehom* ("the deep") in Genesis 1:2 was said to be a late word demonstrating the late writing of the creation story. "Tehom" was part of the vocabulary at Ebla, in use some 800 years before Moses. Ancient customs reflected in the stories of the Patriarchs have also been found in clay tablets from Nuzi and Mari. (<http://www.christiananswers.net/q-abr/abr-a008.html>)

- The **Hittites** were once thought to be a Biblical legend, until their capital and records were discovered at Bogazkoy, Turkey. Many thought the Biblical references to Solomon's wealth were greatly exaggerated. Recovered records from the past show that wealth in antiquity was concentrated with the king and Solomon's prosperity was entirely feasible. (<http://www.christiananswers.net/q-abr/abr-aoo8.html>)
- It was once claimed there was no Assyrian king named **Sargon** as recorded in Isaiah 20:1, because this name was not known in any other record. Then, Sargon's palace was discovered in Khorsabad, Iraq. The very event mentioned in Isaiah 20, his capture of Ashdod, was recorded on the palace walls. What is more, fragments of a stela memorializing the victory were found at Ashdod itself. (<http://www.christiananswers.net/q-abr/abr-aoo8.html>)
- Another king who was in doubt was **Belshazzar**, king of Babylon, named in Daniel 5. The last king of Babylon was Nabonidus according to recorded history. Tablets were found showing that Belshazzar was Nabonidus' son who served as coregent in Babylon. Thus, Belshazzar could offer to make Daniel "third highest ruler in the kingdom" (Dan. 5:16) for reading the handwriting on the wall, the highest available position. Here we see the "eye-witness" nature of the Biblical record, as is so often brought out by the discoveries of archaeology. (<http://www.christiananswers.net/q-abr/abr-aoo8.html>)

The following is from: <http://www.carm.org/archaeological-evidence-verifying-biblical-cities>

1. An inscribed stone was found that refers to Pontius Pilate, named as Prefect of Judaea.' (The New Bible Dictionary, (Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.; 1962.)
  1. Luke 3:1, "Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea..."
2. "A decree of Claudius found at Delphi (Greece) describes Gallio as proconsul of Achaia in ad 51, thus giving a correlation with the ministry of Paul in Corinth (Acts 18:12)." (The New Bible Dictionary)
  1. Acts 18:12, "But while Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, the Jews with one accord rose up against Paul and brought him before the judgment seat."
3. Excavations have revealed a text naming a benefactor Erastus which may be a reference relating to the city-treasurer of Rom. 16:23. (The New Bible Dictionary)
  1. Rom. 16:23, "Gaius, host to me and to the whole church, greets you. Erastus, the city treasurer greets you, and Quartus, the brother."
4. At Ephesus parts of the temple of Artemis have been uncovered as is mentioned in Acts 19:28-41. (The New Bible Dictionary)
  1. Acts 19:28, "And when they heard this and were filled with rage, they began crying out, saying, "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians."
5. "It is known that Quirinius was made governor of Syria by Augustus in AD 6. Archaeologist Sir William Ramsay discovered several inscriptions that indicated that Quirinius was governor of Syria on two occasions, the first time several years prior to this date... archaeology has provided some unexpected and supportive answers. Additionally, while supplying the background behind these events, archaeology also assists us in establishing several facts: (1) A taxation-census was a fairly common procedure in the Roman Empire and it did occur in Judea, in particular. (2) Persons were required to return to their home city in order to fulfill the requirements of the process. (3) These procedures were apparently employed during the reign of Augustus (37 BC–AD 14), placing it well within the general time frame of Jesus' birth."<sup>2</sup>
6. "The historical trustworthiness of Luke has been attested by a number of inscriptions. The 'politarchs' of Thessalonica (Acts 17:6,8) were magistrates and are named in five inscriptions from the city in the 1st century AD. Similarly Publius is correctly designated *proptos* ("first man") or Governor of Malta (Acts 28:7). Near Lystra inscriptions record the dedication to Zeus of a statue of Hermes by some Lycaonians, and near by was a stone altar for 'the Hearer of Prayer' (Zeus) and Hermes. This explains the local identification of Barnabas and Paul with Zeus (Jupiter) and Hermes (Mercury) respectively (Acts 14:11). Derbe, Paul's next stopping-place, was identified by Ballance in 1956 with Kaerti Hüyük near Karaman (ASLuke 2:2) and to Lysanias as tetrarch of Abilene (Luke 3:1) have likewise received inscriptional support." (The New Bible Dictionary.) 7, 1957, pp. 147ff.). Luke's earlier references to Quirinius as governor of Syria before the death of Herod I (Luke 2:2) and to Lysanias as tetrarch of Abilene (Luke 3:1) have likewise received inscriptional support." (The New Bible Dictionary.)

**(16) Historical Affirmations:** Historical accounts authenticating the Bible.

The following is from: <http://www.carm.org/non-biblical-accounts-new-testament-events-andor-people>

1. **Flavius Josephus (AD 37?-101?) mentions Jesus - Antiquities, Book 18, ch. 3, par. 3.**
  1. Now there was about this time Jesus, a wise man, if it be lawful to call him a man; for he was a doer of wonderful works, a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure. He drew over to him both many of the Jews and many of the Gentiles. He was [the] Christ. And when Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men amongst us, had condemned him to the cross, (9) those that loved him at the first did not forsake him; for he appeared to them alive again the third day; (10) as the divine prophets had foretold these and ten thousand other wonderful things concerning him. And the tribe of Christians, so named from him, are not extinct at this day.
    1. There is debate among scholars as to the authenticity of this quote since it is so favorable to Jesus. For more information on this, please see Regarding the quotes from the historian Josephus about Jesus
2. **Tacitus (A.D. c.55-A.D. c.117, Roman historian) mentions "Christus" who is Jesus - Annals 15.44**
  1. "Consequently, to get rid of the report, Nero fastened the guilt and inflicted the most exquisite tortures on a class hated for their abominations, called Christians by the populace. Christus, from whom the name had its origin, suffered the extreme penalty during the reign of Tiberius at the hands of one of our procurators, Pontius Pilatus, and a most mischievous superstition, thus checked for the moment, again broke out not only in Judea, the first source of the evil, but even in Rome, where all things hideous and shameful from every part of the world find their centre and become popular."
  - Ref. from <http://classics.mit.edu/Tacitus/annals.mb.txt>

**(17) Universal:** Accepted across culture, countries, and peoples.

**(18) Objective:** The message is objective and not subject to the readers.

**(19) Humility:** Before anyone can know if the Bible is true, they must approach the Bible with humility. A person must be open to the message and not convinced of their own bias. They must truly be seeking truth. We do not come to judge the Bible, but to be judged by the Bible.

**(20) Holy Spirit Affirmation:** In those whom the Holy Spirit dwells, they know God and recognize His voice.

*John 10:27 "My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me."*

*1 John 4:6 "We are from God, and whoever knows God listens to us; but whoever is not from God does not listen to us. This is how we recognize the Spirit of truth and the spirit of falsehood."*

**(21) Obedience & Application:** Those who put the Bible into practice and obey the Bible find the Bible to be true.

*John 7:17 "If anyone chooses to do God's will, he will find out whether my teaching comes from God or whether I speak on my own."*