

A DEPENDABLE GUIDEBOOK

In our first study we found that the Bible reveals a perfect beginning to our world many years ago, and the coming of a renewed perfect world in the near future. The first people created by God upon the earth were holy and happy, as will be all who will occupy that which the Bible calls a "new earth" (Revelation 21:1).

We then studied briefly how God, after man's disobedience, chose to reach sinners on this earth by working through chosen "holy men" (2 Peter 1:21) who have spoken and written out His counsels for the purpose of guiding the direction and reshaping the lives of disobedient people so that they might be directed toward a new life on this to-be-renewed earth.

The writers of the holy Bible make tremendous claims for the authenticity of every part of their writings. What are these claims? Are they really reliable? Let's examine them and see.

1. Let's begin in the Old Testament. It is extremely interesting how Moses, the earliest author, pinpoints the source of his books. Read Leviticus 1:1 as a sample, and summarize his strong claim.

(See also Genesis 1:3; Exodus 3:7; Numbers 1:1; or Deuteronomy 1:3.)

2. Clarify this point a little further. As God called Jeremiah to speak for Him to the people, what great assurance did God give him in Jeremiah 1:4-9 (especially verse 9)? (You can find this same guarantee in other prophets such as in Isaiah 55:8,9, and Ezekiel 3:10.)

3. An excellent summary passage in the Old Testament is found in Amos 3:7. To what extent does God attempt to lead people through His Bible writers?

4. When our Lord Jesus Christ lived upon the earth, He both used, and made strong claims for, the authenticity of the Old Testament. Analyze in your own words what Christ claimed in this list of gospel passages.

(a) Matthew 1:21-23 _____

(b) Matthew 4:1-11 (Especially verses 4,7,10) _____

(c) Luke 24:27,44 _____

(d) John 5:46,47 _____

5. The New Testament writers following Christ's day continue to make strong claims for the divine origin of their words and writings. Summarize.
- (a) Paul, in 1 Cor. 14:37 and 1 Thessalonians 2:13 _____


 - (b) Peter, in 2 Peter 1:16-21 _____

 - (c) John, in 1 John 1:1-4 _____
 - (d) John, in Revelation 5:1; 6:1; 7:1 _____
6. Thus far, we have looked at some of the "internal" claims of the Bible writers for the authenticity of their product. There are also important "external" evidences that further help us to recognize the divine Source for, and accuracy of, the Scriptures. (Your instructor will help you list a few of these on the illustration below.)
7. What is at stake for us in relation to our believing the Bible is truly a book from God?
- (a) Jehoshapat's experience, 2 Chronicles 20:20. (Background in verses 1:30)

 - (b) Christ's illustration, Matthew 7:24-27 _____

 - (c) Paul's admonition, Romans 15:4 _____

 - (d) John's warning, Revelation 22:18,19 _____

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<p><u>OLD TESTAMENT CLAIMS</u></p> <p>1 _____</p> <p>2 _____</p> <p>3 _____</p>		<p><u>NEW TESTAMENT CLAIMS</u></p> <p>5a _____</p> <p>5b _____</p> <p>5c _____</p> <p>5d _____</p>
<p>_____</p>	<p><u>JESUS CLAIMS</u></p> <p>4a _____</p> <p>4b _____</p> <p>4c _____</p> <p>4d _____</p>	<p><u>EXTERNAL EVIDENCES</u></p> <p>6a _____</p> <p>6b _____</p> <p>6c _____</p> <p>6d _____</p>

(Comments on Question 6)

SOME EXTERNAL EVIDENCES THAT SUPPORT
THE VALIDITY OF THE SCRIPTURES

(1) The Marvelous Preservation of the Bible Through the Centuries.

Shocking as it might seem, we do not have even one original manuscript in existence today which came from the actual pen of the Bible writers of either the Old or the New Testaments! Most were written on papyrus which is not a durable material. But we do have thousands of manuscript copies which have been kept in such accurate condition that we need not doubt any of the truths of God's word.

The discovery of these Bible manuscripts is a thrilling story. We had only about one hundred at the time the first King James Version was written in 1611. Since then, searchers have discovered about 2,000 manuscripts of the Old Testament and about 5,000 of the New Testament. Some are tiny, with only a few verses included, such as the Chester Beatty papyri. Several are no larger than a postage stamp. Others, though, such as the Codex Sinaiticus ("codex" means manuscript book), contain almost the entire Scripture. A fairly recent discovery, that we may have read about, is that of the Dead Sea Scrolls, found in a cave at Qumran in the 1950s, and dating back to the 3rd and 2nd centuries BC. The great century for manuscript discoveries is the 1800s.

More than human hands preserved these thousands of manuscripts so that, today, we can study them, compare them, and verify the correct wording of the Bible passages – from Genesis to Revelation--so that we can clearly find God's message to us, and know for certainty what God wants us to believe, and the details of the pathway that He wants us to walk. He promises to take those who "believe" in Him and His Son, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit, and walk in His ways, into His eternal kingdom.

(2) The Findings of Archaeologists Verify the Bible Story.

Especially in the last one hundred years, archaeologists, in their diggings in the lands of the middle east, have uncovered literally thousands of ancient items which have given validity to previously unverified places, names, terms, habits, backgrounds, etc., that we find in the Bible. Critics of the Bible have been quick to question anything that cannot be verified by findings from their diggings. "Strangely," as the searching archaeologists continue to excavate, the critics have had to pull in their horns, and admit the correctness of the Bible story.

A good illustration of the controversy over the validity of the Bible relates to the time of the patriarchs, such as Abraham. Many once believed the patriarchal period to be a legend because of the lack of archaeological evidence to support the Bible story. Today, we know much about the times of Abraham. For instance the marriage of a person to a slave (as Abraham to Hagar, Gen. 16:1ff) was then a legal custom to obtain an offspring. We know that God did not approve, and Sarah, who suggested that Abraham marry Hagar to obtain an offspring, became the scorned one by the slave woman, even though Sarah was God's chosen mother of Abraham's heir. Why was Abraham hesitant to send Hagar away, when Sarah insisted? Recent discoveries of ancient records have shown

that Abraham would have violated civil laws of that time in complying with his wife's urgent request. But he did comply when God told him to send her away.

In the tenth century BC, the Pharaoh Sheshonk I (Shishak) is found in both Bible and secular records. (1 Kings 11:40.)

For many years the name of Belshazzar in Daniel 5 was considered a mistake because history had produced no such person. The critics focused their attacks on this "error" in the Bible. Archaeologists now have given us proof that there was such a figure, who he was, and where he reigned.

Not all historical statements or characters of the Bible have yet been verified by findings; some never will be. But "truth" can never be endangered by what might be found and as it is rightly understood.

(3) Historical Facts Show Exact Fulfillment of Bible Prophecies.

One characteristic of the prophet or apostle--the inspired writer speaking for God--has always been to outline future events. There are historical facts in abundance to show the accuracy of the fulfillment of dozens of such "prophecies" decades and hundreds of years after they were first given by the writer of the Bible. Daniel 7 and 8 are good examples. An angel tells Daniel the nations that the symbols represent, centuries before such happened.

(4) A Most Important External Evidence of the Validity of the Bible is in the Millions of Lives Changed by its Study.

Sample a few passages for yourself: Psalm 119:11; Jeremiah 15:16; Acts 9:6; 2 Timothy 3:15, etc.

It is not in the power of man to change himself: John 15:5.

But God can change anyone who will trust in Him: Philippians 4:13.

Any who want to reject the dependability of the Bible's claims to be God's holy Word do not have to go back and explain away things that have not been verified historically. They are faced, however, with explaining the fact that millions of men and women absolutely have been changed from vile, unhappy, and purposeless existence into clean, joyous, and useful persons as the result of their study of the Scripture. There are many good and important books around: English, biology, history, mathematics, astronomy, encyclopedias--all of which contain much useful information. But they do not change man as does the holy Word.

Introduction

Revelation 21:1

¹Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea.

2 Peter 1:21

²¹for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke *as they were* moved by the Holy Spirit.

1. Leviticus 1:1

Now the Lord called to Moses, and spoke to him from the tabernacle of meeting, saying, . . .

Answer: The Lord “spoke to Moses” – Moses records what God revealed to him.
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1. (Additional Text) Genesis 1:3

³Then God said, “Let there be light”; and there was light.

1. (Additional Text) Exodus 3:7

⁷And the Lord said: “I have surely seen the oppression of My people who *are* in Egypt, and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters, for I know their sorrows.

1. (Additional Text) Numbers 1:1

¹Now the Lord spoke to Moses in the Wilderness of Sinai, in the tabernacle of meeting, on the first *day* of the second month, in the second year after they had come out of the land of Egypt, saying: . . .

1. (Additional Text) Deut 1:3

³Now it came to pass in the fortieth year, in the eleventh month, on the first *day* of the month, *that* Moses spoke to the children of Israel according to all that the Lord had given him as commandments to them, . . .

2. Jeremiah 1:4-9

⁴ Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying:

⁵“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you;
Before you were born I sanctified you;
I ordained you a prophet to the nations.”

⁶ Then said I:

“Ah, Lord GOD!
Behold, I cannot speak, for I *am* a youth.”

⁷But the LORD said to me:
“Do not say, ‘I *am* a youth,’

For you shall go to all to whom I send you,
And whatever I command you, you shall speak.

⁸Do not be afraid of their faces,
For I *am* with you to deliver you," says the LORD.

⁹ Then the LORD put forth His hand and touched my mouth, and the LORD said to me:

2. (Additional Texts) Isaiah 55:8,9

⁸"For My thoughts *are* not your thoughts,
Nor *are* your ways My ways," says the Lord.

⁹"For *as* the heavens are higher than the earth,
So are My ways higher than your ways,
And My thoughts than your thoughts.

2. (Additional Texts) Ezekiel 3:10

¹⁰Moreover He said to me: "Son of man, receive into your heart all My words that I speak to you, and hear with your ears.

Answer: The Lord came and spoke to Jeremiah directly.

3. Amos 3:7

⁷Surely the Lord GOD does nothing,
Unless He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets.

Answer: God reveals to His people, through His prophets what He is going to do.

4a. Matthew 1:21-23

²¹And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins."

²²So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying:
²³"Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel," which is translated, "God with us."

Answer (a): "spoke by the Lord" – Jesus would be born of a virgin and called "Immanuel" (God with us).

4b. Matthew 4:1-11

¹Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. ²And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterward He was hungry. ³Now when the tempter came to Him, he said, "If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread."

⁴But He answered and said, "*It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.'*"

⁵Then the devil took Him up into the holy city, set Him on the pinnacle of the temple, ⁶and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down. For it is written: '*He shall give His angels charge over you,*' and, '*In their hands they shall bear you up, Lest you dash your foot against a stone.*'"

⁷Jesus said to him, "*It is written again, 'You shall not tempt the Lord your God.'*"

⁸Again, the devil took Him up on an exceedingly high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. ⁹And he said to Him, "All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me."

¹⁰Then Jesus said to him, "Away with you, Satan! For it is written, '*You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only you shall serve.*'"

¹¹Then the devil left Him, and behold, angels came and ministered to Him.

Answer (b): ". . . every word from God's mouth" tells us how to live (not by bread alone).

4c. Luke 24:27, 44

²⁷And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.

⁴⁴Then He said to them, "*These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me.*"

Answer (c): The Bible (what God has revealed about Himself and His plans) tell us about Jesus, who He was, and why he came and what He is able to do for us who are doomed to die because we have sinned.

4d. John 5:46, 47

⁴⁶*For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote about Me.* ⁴⁷*But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?"*

Answer (d): Moses wrote about Jesus; therefore, if we believe what Moses wrote then we should be willing to believe the One he wrote about.

5a. 1 Corinthians 14:37

³⁷If anyone thinks himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things which I write to you are the commandments of the Lord.

Answer (a): “. . . the things which I write to you are the commandments of the Lord”.

5a. (Additional Text) 1 Thess. 2:13

¹³For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed *it* not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe.

5b. 2 Peter 1:16-21

¹⁶For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty. ¹⁷For He received from God the Father honor and glory when such a voice came to Him from the Excellent Glory: “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” ¹⁸And we heard this voice which came from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain.

¹⁹And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts; ²⁰knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, ²¹for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke *as they were* moved by the Holy Spirit.

Answer (b): “. . . we heard this voice (God the Father’s voice) when He acknowledged (affirmed) Jesus. Prophecy comes through the Holy Spirit.

5c. 1 John 1:1-4

¹That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life— ²the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us— ³that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship *is* with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. ⁴And these things we write to you that your joy may be full.

Answer (c): We “heard, saw, looked upon, handled” we declare

5d. Revelation 5:1

¹And I saw in the right *hand* of Him who sat on the throne a scroll written inside and on the back, sealed with seven seals.

5d. (Additional Text) Rev. 6:1

¹Now I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals; and I heard one of the four living creatures saying with a voice like thunder, "Come and see."

5d. (Additional Text) Rev. 7:1

¹After these things I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, on the sea, or on any tree.

Answer (d): I "saw" (and recorded) what I was shown.

6. No texts to look up.**7a. 2 Chronicles 20:20**

²⁰So they rose early in the morning and went out into the Wilderness of Tekoa; and as they went out, Jehoshaphat stood and said, "Hear me, O Judah and you inhabitants of Jerusalem: Believe in the Lord your God, and you shall be established; believe His prophets, and you shall prosper."

Note verses 1:30:

7b. Matthew 7:24-27

²⁴"Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: ²⁵and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock.

²⁶"But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: ²⁷and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall."

7c. Romans 15:4

⁴For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.

7d. Revelation 22:18, 19

¹⁸For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; ¹⁹and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and *from* the things which are written in this book.

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Notes for the Instructor

Purpose of Lesson 2: To examine both internal and external evidences in connection with the authority and authenticity of the Bible. The writers of both the Old and New Testaments make strong claims for a divine Authorship, in order that the listener and reader in their own day, and the readers since their day, might recognize their records as of divine origin. In the course of teaching the lesson, the instructor would do well to clarify "revelation" and "inspiration" for the student. God revealed truth to the human agent,--in broad outlines, pictures, thoughts, and often specifics. Inspiration involves the process, in which God spoke through visions, dreams, angels, audible voice, and man depended upon the guidance of the Holy Spirit to speak and record it correctly for people.

During the study itself: Do not hurry your students. Make sure that they find every text. Thus, we, as the teachers, let the Bible speak. This is key to the mighty working of the Holy Spirit on the mind of the students. They hear the divine Author, rather than just the human teacher. And they hear it from their Bible. This helps to dissolve the often heard criticism that they are being taught "Adventist doctrine." And if you will urge them to underline the texts at home from week to week, they will hear God speak again, from their Bible, and without you around. Your work through the week is to pray earnestly for them, and for the speaking of the Holy Spirit to them. This leads to eternal decisions.

Appeal: In addition to the "intrinsic" appeal of every question, question 7 is especially designed to become the climactic point.

Illustration: As in the first lesson, the numbers used in the illustration correspond with the numbers of the questions in the lesson outline. In this lesson, you will need to supply illustration points in connection with question 6. See Unto a Perfect Man, pages 66-68. The four points that you find there are excellent external evidences of the divine Authorship and credibility of the records of the Bible. You may have other points that you want to use and include in the illustration. The unnumbered entries are for review and could be put in following the brief introduction. Then study the lesson through, and fill in the numbered points to summarize the lesson at its close.

