

11. Scriptures and other evidences

Last Sunday we learned that the odds of Jesus fulfilling His own prophecies - just 8 out of hundreds that were mentioned throughout the OT was one in a quadrillion which is beyond our comprehension. It shows us that the Bible, the Word of God is trustworthy and its Author, God is faithful to the end.

This morning we are going to go over other evidences to bring forth further proofs of the trustworthiness of the Bible unlike any other religious books around the world because it was written by the Lord our God.

2 Timothy 3:16-17 All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

A. ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE OF THE BIBLE

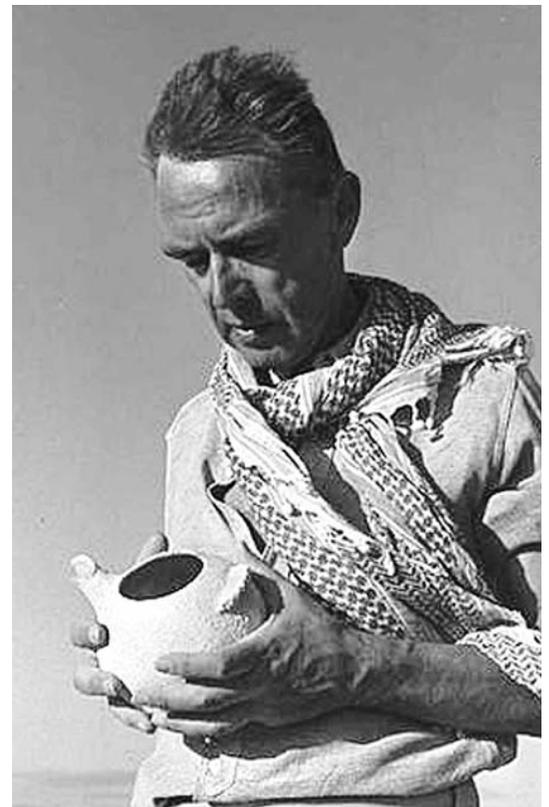
Over the years there have been many criticisms leveled against the Bible concerning its historical reliability. These criticisms are usually based on a lack of evidence from outside sources to confirm the biblical record.

Since the Bible is a religious book, many scholars take the position that it is biased and cannot be trusted unless we have corroborating evidence from extra-biblical sources. In other words, the Bible is guilty until proven innocent, and a lack of outside evidence places the biblical account in doubt.

This standard is far different from that applied to other ancient documents, even though many, if not most, have a religious element. They are considered to be accurate, unless there is evidence to show that they are not. Although it is not possible to verify every incident in the Bible, the discoveries of archaeology since the mid-1800s have demonstrated the reliability and trustworthiness of the Bible texts.



Dr. Nelson Glueck, an American rabbi, academic and archaeologist, probably the greatest modern authority on Israeli archeology, has said, "No archeological discovery has ever overturned a biblical reference. Scores of archeological findings have been made which confirm in clear outline or in exact detail historical statements in the Bible. And, by the same token, proper evaluation of biblical descriptions has often led to amazing discoveries."



Here are some examples:

1) The discovery of the Ebla archive



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.

Genesis 1:2 The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.

The Hebrew word 'tehom' which means "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.

The Hittites territory and the archaeological discovery items >>>

2) The Hittites

The Hittites were once thought to be a biblical legend, until their capital and records were discovered at Bogazkoy, Turkey.

3) Solomon's wealth

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.



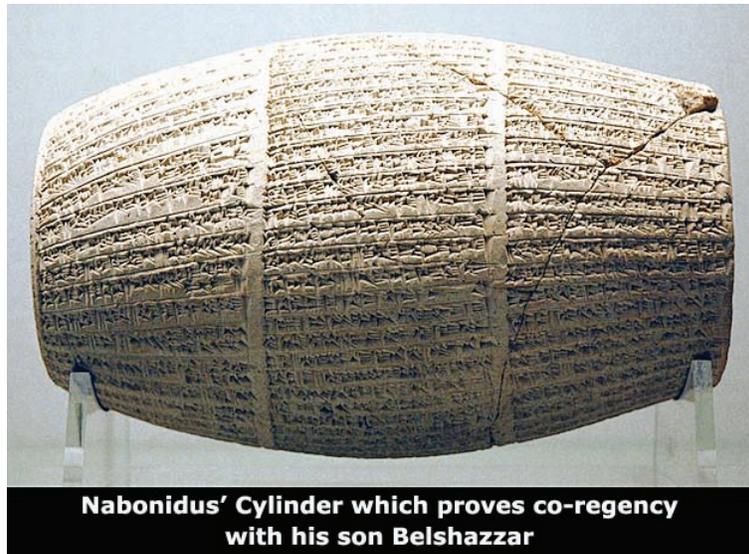
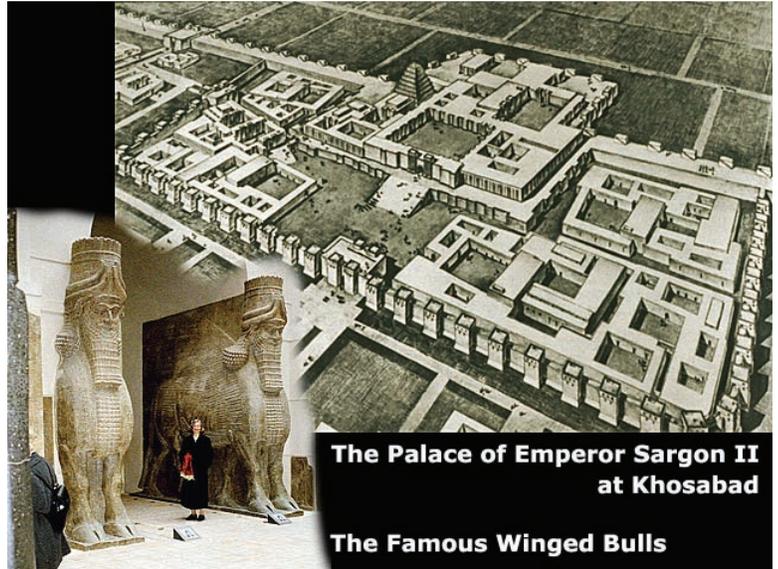
4) Assyrian king Sargon

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.

Isaiah 20:1 In the year when King Sargon of Assyria captured the Philistine city of Ashdod



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 an inscription pillar memorializing the victory were found at Ashdod itself.



5) Belshazzar, king of Babylon

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" for reading the handwriting on the wall, the highest available position.

Daniel 5:16 I am told that you can give interpretations and solve difficult problems. If you can read these words and tell me their meaning, you will be clothed in purple robes of royal honor, and you will wear a gold chain around your neck. You will become the third highest ruler in the kingdom.

6) Pontius Pilate

The Bible says that he was the Roman governor of Judea and the man who issued the official order for Jesus to be sentenced to death by crucifixion. But for some reason, secular scholars believed that it was a fairy tale story because they didn't see his name in the Roman history.



In June of 1961 a team of Italian archaeologists, led by Dr. Antonio Frova, were excavating the Mediterranean port city of Caesarea that had at one time served as the Roman capital of Palestine. It was there in the jumbled ruins of an ancient Roman theater that they uncovered a large 2' x 3', 5" or so thick, limestone rock. The inscription on the rock amazed the archaeologists.



Caesarea and the lime stone that has an inscription: "Pontius Pilate, Prefect of Judea"

It read in: "Pontius Pilate, Prefect of Judea".

Archaeology has not proven so helpful for other religious writings. Consider the Book of Mormon. Not one piece of evidence has ever been found to support the Book of Mormon -- not a trace of the large cities it names, no ruins, no coins, no letters or documents or monuments, nothing in writing. Not even one of the rivers or mountains or any of the topography it mentions has ever been identified. Nothing which demonstrates that the Book of Mormon is anything other than an early nineteenth century piece of American fiction, invented by Joseph Smith has ever been found.

B. THE INTERNAL CONSISTENCY OF THE BIBLE

From the first Book of the Bible, Genesis, to the last Book, Revelation, the Bible is absolutely consistent.

Skeptics insist that there are many inconsistencies and contradictions in the Bible for them to trust. When I hear that, I always hand out my Bible or my iPhone which contains two versions of the Bible to them and ask them to show me any inconsistency or contradiction from it. I have not yet been shown a single proof of inconsistency in the Bible from them.

I am sure that you've heard me saying this before, but it is worth repeating: People reject the Bible not because it contradicts itself, but people reject it because it contradicts people's sinful lifestyles.

1) The Bible addresses life's most controversial questions.

- How did the universe come into existence?
- Does God exist? And if so, what is He like?
- Why does man exist?
- What is our purpose for being here?
- Why is there evil and suffering in the world?
- Where is God when bad things happen to good people?
- What happens to me after I die?

Can we get answers for all these questions right away? If you do, I'd like to know your source. We get to have some of the answers from the Lord as we walk with Him everyday for our lifetime and depends on Him more than ever before.

Though we may not get to have all the answers for our questions, we know one thing for sure: If we can believe Genesis 1:1, believing the rest of the Bible and what the Lord Jesus promised to us would be a piece of cake.

2) The Bible is a collection of 66 different documents.

It might be easy to have harmony of thought in a single book like the Qur'an, that contains the teachings of a single man. But the Bible is not a single book. It is a compilation of Books: 39 Books in the Old Testament and 27 Books in the New Testament. All these 66 Books in the Bible are consistently pointing to One person: Jesus Christ.

3) The Bible was written by approximately 40 authors who came from different educational, cultural and historical backgrounds.

Peter was a fisherman; Abraham was a sheepboy instead of cowboy; Paul was a scholar; Matthew was a despised IRS agent; David was a shepherd boy, then a king; Mark was a missionary who AWOLed once; Luke was a historian and medical doctor, Asaph was a musician; Amos was a fig picker who prophesied. Yet, all these people were consistently used by the Lord to speak the truth to us and glorified the Lord.

4) The Bible was written over a period of approximately 2000 years, covering over 60 some generations.

5) Many authors were separated by hundreds and thousands of miles geographically.

Many people don't realize this, but the Bible was written in a variety of places on three continents - Africa (mainly Egypt), Asia (mainly the Middle East and Asia Minor), Europe (Rome and Greece).

Paul wrote four letters imprisoned in Rome, located in Italy. The apostle John, wrote while a prisoner banished to the Isle of Patmos in the Mediterranean Sea. The prophet Ezekiel wrote his work while held captive in Babylon. Jeremiah was in a dungeon. Luke wrote while traveling. Daniel wrote from a hillside and in a palace in Babylon. Moses wrote while they were making a journey of Exodus from Egypt to the Promised Land.

6) The Bible was written in three languages – Hebrew, Greek and Aramaic.

In spite of all of these different factors we find the Bible to be a consistent, harmonious, perfectly unified account of how God is seeking to reconcile sinners back to Himself through the person of His Son Jesus Christ. This is an amazing evidence of its divine origin.

Show me one book that has a complete consistency in these requirements like the Bible. You CAN NOT.

C. THE MANUSCRIPT EVIDENCE

German Johannes Gutenberg invented his first printing press around 1,440. Until that time, if you wanted to have a copy of the Bible, you'd better have a half year or so set aside to start to copy the entire Bible by hand.

The New Testament is constantly under attack and its reliability and accuracy are often contested by critics. But, if the critics want to disregard the New Testament, then they must also disregard other ancient writings by Plato, Aristotle and Homer.

There are presently 5,686 Greek manuscripts in existence today for the New Testament. If we were to compare the number of New Testament manuscripts to other ancient writings, we find that the New Testament manuscripts far outweigh the others in quantity and accuracy.

Here are a few comparisons:

- Plato was written in 427-347 B.C. Its earliest copy was done 900 A.D. Approximate time span between original and the first copy is 1,200 years and there are 7 copies found.

- Aristotle was written in 384-322 B.C. Its earliest copy was done 1100 A.D. Approximate time span between original and the first copy is 1,400 years and there are 49 copies found.

- Homer was written in 900 B.C. Its earliest copy was done 400 B.C. Approximate time span between original and the first copy is 500 years and there are 643 copies found. The accuracy is 95%. That is very good.

- New Testament was written in 50-100 A.D. Its earliest copy was done A.D. 130. Approximate time span between original and the first copy is less than 100 years and there are 5,686 copies found. In addition there are over 19,000 in copies in the Syriac, Latin, Coptic, and Aramaic languages. The total supporting New Testament manuscript base is over 24,000. The accuracy is 99.5%.

In other words, the Bible you have on your lap has the same content as the original manuscripts 2,000 years ago. Try to beat that.

So then, what kind of proof is the Muslim or Mormon able to offer to prove that the Bible has been changed or corrupted down through generations and centuries? NONE, ZIP, NADA, NOTHING!!!

For them to prove inconsistency and corruption of the textual purity of the Bible, they have to hold up ancient copies of the Bible and the current Bible and should show us the errors in them. But they cannot. Even though they can go to museums and libraries around the world to see these NT manuscripts, they can not dare to make an attempt.

D. APPLICATIONS

1) The Word of God is not temporal, but eternal. It is not one bit affected by cultural, generational, linguistic and historical differences.

Isaiah 40:8 The grass withers, the flower fades, But the word of our God stands forever."

Matthew 24:35 Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.

2) The Word of God is not corrupted, not inconsistent like any other human literatures, because it is written by the Lord.