

Sunday Sermon

4/28/24

Series: God-Breathed

Passage: Various

Title: Evidence (Part 2) - Internal and Experiential

Good morning, Church! It is good to see you all this morning. Welcome to those joining us online and to those who are visiting us this morning. We are glad you are here. We are going to start where we left off last week. Last week, we began a series on the Bible called “God-breathed.” It’s a word that comes from 2 Tim. 3:16 which says, **“All scripture is God-breathed and is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.”**

And this series is all about building a foundation on which we can stand confident that what we have in the Bible is God’s uncompromised Word.

Is this God’s book? How do we know? That’s why I’ve subtitled the series: **Why I believe the Bible**. I mentioned last week, my goal with this series is not to bring irrefutable proof or convincing, it is to present you with evidence concerning the issue of the Bible being a unique, supernatural book that we can trust because it’s God’s book.

Quick recap: Last week, we talked about external evidence for the Bible. We are not going to recap all that this morning, if you missed it, you can find it online - facts concerning the the Bible’s **preeminence among all literature, its supernatural preservation against attack, and the overwhelming support from archeology** that has, time and again, confirmed the reliability of the scriptural record.

As Is. 40:8 says, **“The grass withers and the flower fades, but the word of our God shall stand forever.”**

And, this morning, we are going to shift from the external evidence that God wrote a book to the internal and experiential evidence – evidence from within the Bible itself and evidence concerning the impact the bible has had on those who read it with sincere hearts.

So, let's look at that evidence this morning, what's in the book, but before we jump in, as always, let’s invite God into our time together. **[Pray]**

So, as we begin, I want us to think about a concept by doing a bit of an exercise this morning. Suppose we were to take the people on this side of the worship center (that's about 40 people approximately), and I said that I wanted all of you to write about a subject, something non-controversial. I want you to write about sports.

OK, ready to write? Specifically, I want you all to write about what you believe is going to happen in the Bills season this year. OK? The NFL draft was this week. It’s a brand-new season. Write about **what** you believe is going to happen, and **how** you think it’s gonna

happen with the Bills this season. Now tell me, if we did that, what do you think the possibility is of those 40 people agreeing in what they wrote? Everyone give me the universal sign. I mean zero possibility.

That's our first Internal Evidence this morning:

1. **Scripture's amazing agreement with itself.**

Agreement means harmony or in accordance with itself. When it comes to agreement, scripture has a very high standard for itself. Do you know that? So to ground this, I want to let scripture speak for itself concerning this issue. Ready? If you're ready say go.

Psalm 19 – ***“The law of the Lord is PERFECT, reviving the soul; the testimony of the Lord is SURE, making wise the simple; the precepts of the Lord are RIGHT, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is PURE, enlightening the eyes; the fear of the Lord is CLEAN, enduring forever; the rules of the Lord are TRUE, and righteous altogether.” – Ps. 19:7-9***

That's a high standard - perfect, sure, right, pure, clean, true. That's not my standard for God's Word. That's his standard.

Now think for a moment of all we have in this book. We have a book that was written over a period of 1500 years. It was written by 40 different people, and not 40 people that went to the same church, 40 people from all different walks of life: poets and shepherds and kings and preachers. A lot of very different people over 1500 years, and they write with amazing agreement. You know why? Cause all mighty God had his hand on the pen. Scripture is God-breathed, and he guided them to write the words that were his words. This is a supernatural book, and because of that there is amazing agreement.

But then someone might ask, “What about all the contradictions?” Right? That was the #1 common misconception people had about the bible in our list last week. What contradictions?

Now, I don't want to downplay this because this is an important subject. Let's be honest with each other, if the Bible is filled with contradictions, how many people have a hard time believing that God wrote it? I would. But it doesn't contradict itself.

This leads us to our second point this morning:

2. **The total consistency of the Bible.**

In fact, next time somebody says to you that the Bible is filled with contradictions, will you do this? Will you say to them, “Name one. And your first one is?”

Now, when you say that, you'll find out that the vast majority of people really have no clue, they were just regurgitating something they heard from someone somewhere. But if they do come up with one, let's talk about some of the kinds of things people say are contradictions. These are the main categories of supposed contradictions in the Bible.

1) **The supposed contradictions of message.**

Some people say, “You know, the message of the Bible contradicts itself. I mean, you ever read the Old Testament? Totally changes in the New Testament!” In the Old Testament, it

says, ***“An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth.”*** Somebody knocks your tooth out, knock their tooth out. Jesus said something different. That's a contradiction.

No, it isn't. Read the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus says straight up, ***“You have heard that it was said, ‘an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth,’ but I say unto you, ‘turn the other cheek, go the second mile.’”*** Is that a contradiction? No. That's a development of the message. The issue of circumcision is the same way. The Old Testament was law; the New Testament is grace. There's no contradiction. These supposed contradictions are just held onto by people who don't have a clue about the Bible, and who poach verses and assume theologies without understanding message or context. They should read it.

2) The supposed contradictions of numbers.

People like to get real technical with the Bible. They say, “Well, hang on for a second. In Mark and Luke, it says that Jesus healed 2 blind men. In Matthew, it says that he healed one blind man at Jericho. Now which is it? Did he heal two or did he heal one?”

You know, by definition, in order for a contradiction to be a contradiction, it has to be two things that cannot be true at the same time. So help me out. If two blind men were healed by Jesus at Jericho, is it not also accurate to say that one blind man was healed by Jesus at Jericho? Now, I don't know why one of the writers of Scripture wanted to key in on one man and the circumstances surrounding him. Maybe there were several hours setting them apart. Maybe Jesus went to Jericho at two separate times. The Gospel of John tells us that that the Bible could not begin to contain all the things that Jesus said and did. Maybe they are on two totally separate days. I mean, I'm just like, not laying awake on that one.

3) The supposed parallel story contradictions.

You'll hear this one in academia a lot. Slight detailed differences between parallel accounts. Gen. 1&2, the women at the empty tomb on Easter morning.

But let me give you one of the biggest: In Matthew 27, it says that Judas hanged himself. In Acts chapter 1, it says that Judas fell headlong and burst open. Those two things cannot both be true. Agreed? Unless you understand the Valley of Hinnom where Judas took his life. It's called a valley for a reason. It's very easy to picture Judas going out there trying to kill himself, finding a tree that hung over the edge of the cliff and jumping. Whether immediately or after a while, the branch breaks and he falls to the bottom, lands on a jagged rock and bursts open.

In Acts, they're describing what it was like to discover Judas's body. A pretty horrific scene. There at the bottom, obviously, he hung himself, the branch broke, and they found him at the bottom. Both are true. One describes how they found him, the other describes how he tried to take his life. One described how he ended up, how he maybe actually died. One describes how he tried to kill himself. How many people can put those two things together? Now I'm giving you some of the biggest supposed contradictions in the Bible.

4) The supposed historical contradictions.

This is whether archeological evidence comes back into the picture. People saying, “There’s no such place as Jericho, no evidence it ever existed!” And then they found it. Oops. “There’s no such king as David!” And then they found it, in 1993, tablets that had the inscription on it, “the House of David.” That phrase over 40 times in the Old Testament. The House of David. The House of David. The House of David. And then they’re like, “Oops, I guess there was a David.”

Probably one of the most debated today is the lack of archeological proof of the Exodus. A pretty key part of the story of Israel, a pretty key theme in the broader metanarrative of scripture is the theme of God’s ability to deliver his people from bondage and slavery. People are saying, “Time out. That never happened!” Do we have proof? No. But let me tell you what we have found. We’ve found sites of Israelite housing in Egypt. Egyptian texts, artifacts and archaeological sites that all confirm the presence of the Hebrew people in the land of Egypt. Egyptian papyrus with the names of Hebrew slaves. Egyptian tomb paintings of a large workforce of slaves making bricks. Leather scrolls of brickmaking quota. References to the Hebrew God, Yahweh, in Egyptian temples.

It's amazing. Did you know that many predict that only 1% of all archaeological evidence has been uncovered? 1%. If I were to stand here this morning and tell you I don't believe in Abraham Lincoln, that I don't believe he ever existed, but I've only looked at 1% of the information. You'd say, “We'll get serious. Look at some more.” So why do we let people stand up in front of us and say there was no this, there was no that, when they've only looked at 1% of the evidence and most of them haven't even looked at that much.

Let me tell you, this is what Romans chapter 1 calls “**suppressing the truth and unrighteousness.**” People want the Bible **NOT** to be God's word, not because of the evidence for or against, but because if God wrote a book, then I better read it. I better believe it and do what it says. I don’t want to do what it says. And so people, as Romans 1 says, “suppress the truth in unrighteousness.”

And then, finally, **there's the supposed scientific contradictions.** People are like, “The Bible is just not scientific.” This is the rejection of miracles. And so you say, “Well, what do you mean? Give me an example.” Well, take, for example, the book of Joshua. The book of Joshua says that God made the sun stand still for a whole day. Any scientist knows that if the sun stood still for a whole day, the earth would explode. Ok, so if God can make the sun stand still, you don’t think He couldn't also hold the earth together? Listen, that's all rooted in a hyper scientific, anti-supernatural, if it can't be explained on paper, it didn't happen.

I believe in a God who spoke the universe into existence. Do you? And I don't find one single thing in the Bible that a person who could speak and create a universe, couldn't also do. The greatest miracles in the Bible are in Genesis chapter 1. After that it gets really easy. So all you have to decide is this: **Do you believe that the world was designed by designer, or do you believe it came from a random explosion in space?** For me, option 2 requires a lot more faith.

I don't see how you could throw a stick of dynamite into a printing factory and produce the Declaration of Independence. You say, "Well, I have a lot of dynamite." Look, I don't care how much dynamite you have, OK? Order doesn't come out of explosion. Design doesn't come from chaos. It comes from a Creator. And that's what I believe. And if there is not a creator, then I'll have a hard time believing in the miracles in the Bible. But I'm thrilled to know that the Creator loves us enough to have written a book.

And lastly, before we move on to experiential evidence this morning, let's talk just for a moment about fulfilled prophecy.

Internal Evidence: Fulfilled Prophecy

2 Pt. 1:20-21 – ***"Knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of scripture comes from one's own interpretation. For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit."***

As we read through the Bible, we find that all through its pages are prophecies. What are prophecies? Prophecies are predictions or foretellings of something that will happen in the future. The bible is full of fulfilled prophecy. No other book has that. You say, "Time out. Other religious books contain prophecy." You're right. I said "fulfilled prophecy." And in that, no other book is like the Bible.

Consider with me for a moment just the prophecies concerning Jesus Christ. Just those. Isaiah 9 says that the Promised Child would establish an eternal Kingdom. Isaiah 7 says that he would be born of a virgin. Psalm 72 says that the Promised One would be worshipped by shepherds and kings. Micah 5 says that the promised one would be born in Bethlehem. Some would say that was just luck. What a ridiculous coincidence!

Well, hang on for a second. There are 60 major prophecies concerning the Lord Jesus Christ that were written hundreds of years to millennia before his birth. Now mathematicians tell us that the statistical probability of just seven or eight of those 60 prophecies coming true in one person is one in 10 to the power of 17. That's a big number.

You say, "Can you boil that down for me?" Sure. Josh McDowell describes it this way. He says, "Take the state of Texas. Cover it in silver dollars, two feet deep. Put a blindfold on a person, put a red dot on one of the silver dollars and ask him to wade out into the state of Texas and lay his hand on the right silver dollar." You say, "Well, how much time do I get?"

Listen: there is absolutely no possibility that all of the prophecies in regard to the Christ child could have come true to the letter as they did, apart from the truth that I bring to you this morning: God wrote a book. God wrote a book. There's external evidence for it. There's internal evidence for it.

Now let's talk about **experiential evidence** as we close. You think about your own life.

Now, I'm about to tell you something that many of you have experienced this to be true. If this is God's book, this isn't going to be like reading Moby Dick. Reading this book is gonna impact me and influence me in a way that is different than any other book. True or false?

Now notice this, first of all. **The word of God is gripping.** Don't you agree? There's something in the way that the scriptures, when you encounter them, reach down into your heart.

Hebrews 4:12 says this, **“The word of God is living and powerful. It's sharper than any two-edged sword. It's able to pierce to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit. It is a discernor of the thoughts and intentions of the heart.”**

You know what that means? It means when I pick up this book and read it, it knows what I'm thinking. There are times when I open God's Word and it just penetrates. It's, like, going after me about stuff that I need gone after. If I'm not telling the truth, the Bible grips me about it. If I'm not loving my spouse the way that I should, the Bible grips me about it. If I'm living in my flesh, if I have a secret sin...man! I don't want to read the Bible, because when I do, it grips me. Who's experienced that?

That's because it's God's book. The Bible's gripping...but notice this, **the Bible is also comforting.** God's Word is comforting, isn't it? Cast all your anxieties on him because he cares for you. Trust in the Lord with all your heart. The Lord will fight for you. He is a strong tower. Its truth is comforting to my soul. That's why passages like Psalm 23 are read at so many funerals.

There's a woman in our church who many of you know and we love who has had a hard couple of weeks – in and out of the hospital. Health issues. No answers. I talked to her last Thursday afternoon and asked her, “How are you in the midst of everything going on, has God been speaking anything to you through his Word?”

And she said, “Oh yes. Ps. 46:10: **“Be still and know that I am God.”** That's comfort. God saying, “I've got you. I've got this.”

How would you like to try to write a book like that? Could you write a book that could touch every person who opens it with a sincere heart? Could you write a book that would lift the burdens of every sincere person who opened its pages? Could you do that? No. And no man has ever lived who could do that. This is God's book, and it's comforting.

But then notice this also. **The Bible is convicting.** Isn't it? Man, the Bible is so convicting. I know that because I get shaken by it before you guys do. I study all week and I'm in my office and often it just convicts me, and then I stand up here on Sunday morning with a knot in my stomach and my knees trembling. And I can't believe that I have to say this stuff to people. But wanting to be truthful to God's Word, I stand up here and I open this book and I begin to preach and proclaim the things that are in its pages.

And as I do, I look out and I watch your faces. And I see the Spirit of God begin to use the Word of God to bring a beautiful and grace-filled conviction. I see people hang their heads, tears running down people's cheeks. And I see this book that God wrote actively laying hold of people's hearts, and it just reminds me again and again, this book is God-breathed.

My wife, Becky has started to get up early a few mornings each week to read through the Bible with our oldest daughter, Anna. They'll grab a coffee and read through a passage and talk about it – what it says, what it means. I want to share with you the prayer that Anna prayed, it struck my wife as so profound, they had just finished reading John 2 about Jesus and the wedding at Cana. Here's her prayer: **“Dear Jesus, thank you for the Bible. Thank you that when I read the Bible, it makes me feel safe. Thank you, Jesus, for doing miracles like turning water into wine at the wedding. I know that Jesus can do big things, that he loves me and died on the cross for my sins. Amen.”**

Listen: that's God's word. This book is God-breathed, and it's gripping, it's comforting, it's convicting, and finally: its freeing.

How many here have been set free by the truth in God's word? Jesus said, **“You will know the truth and the truth will make you free.”** – John 8:32

That's why we proclaim the message of the Word of God without reservation because through it, we are saved. And if you've never had your sins forgiven, if you've never experienced what Christ died to provide for you, you can make that choice. Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved. Let him set you free from sin and fill you with his life. He is the one to whom this book points. Follow him. Will you pray with me?

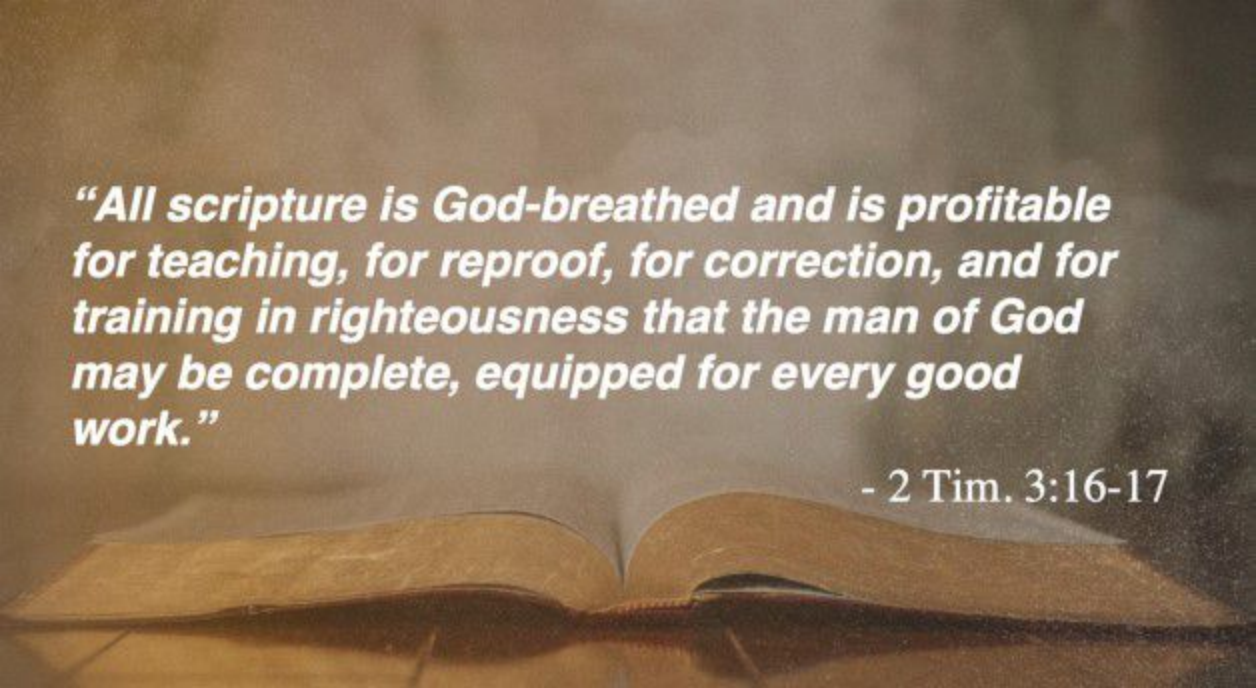
God-breathed

Why I believe the Bible



“All scripture is God-breathed and is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.”

- 2 Tim. 3:16-17



Why I Believe the Bible: External Evidence

- 1) Preeminence among all literature
- 2) Supernatural preservation against attack
- 3) Proof from archaeology



“The grass withers and the flower fades, but the word of our God shall stand forever.”

- Is. 40:8



God-breathed

Why I believe the Bible




Why I Believe the Bible: Internal Evidence

1) Scripture's amazing agreement with itself



***“The law of the Lord is PERFECT, reviving the soul;
the testimony of the Lord is SURE, making wise the simple;
the precepts of the Lord are RIGHT, rejoicing the heart;
the commandment of the Lord is PURE, enlightening the eyes;
the fear of the Lord is CLEAN, enduring forever;
the rules of the Lord are TRUE, and righteous altogether.”***

- Ps. 19:7-9



Why I Believe the Bible: Internal Evidence

1) Scripture's amazing agreement with itself

- Written over 1,500 years
- Written by 40 different people



Why I Believe the Bible: Internal Evidence

- 1) Scripture's amazing agreement with itself
- 2) The total consistency of the Bible**



Supposed Contradictions: Main Categories

1) Contradictions of Message



Supposed Contradictions: Main Categories

1) Contradictions of Message

“An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth.” - Lev. 24:20

“You have heard that it was said, ‘an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth,’ but I say unto you... ‘turn to him the other cheek...go with him two miles.’”

- Matt. 5:38-41

Supposed Contradictions: Main Categories

- 1) Contradictions of Message
- 2) Contradictions of Numbers**



Supposed Contradictions: Main Categories

- 1) Contradictions of Message
- 2) Contradictions of Numbers
- 3) Parallel Story Contradictions**



Supposed Contradictions: Main Categories

- 1) Contradictions of Message
- 2) Contradictions of Numbers
- 3) **Parallel Story Contradictions**

“...and he went and hanged himself.” - Matt. 27:5

*“...and falling headlong he burst open in the middle
and all his bowels gushed out.”* - Acts 1:18

Supposed Contradictions: Main Categories

- 1) Contradictions of Message
- 2) Contradictions of Numbers
- 3) Parallel Story Contradictions
- 4) **Historical Contradictions**



Supposed Contradictions: Main Categories

- 1) Contradictions of Message
- 2) Contradictions of Numbers
- 3) Parallel Story Contradictions
- 4) Historical Contradictions
- 5) **Scientific Contradictions**



Supposed Contradictions: Main Categories

- 1) Contradictions of Message
- 2) Contradictions of Numbers
- 3) Parallel Story Contradictions
- 4) Historical Contradictions
- 5) **Scientific Contradictions**

Do you believe that the world was designed by designer, or do you believe it came from a random explosion in space?

Why I Believe the Bible: Internal Evidence

- 1) Scripture's amazing agreement with itself
- 2) The total consistency of the Bible
- 3) Fulfilled Prophecy**



Why I Believe the Bible: Internal Evidence

3) Fulfilled Prophecy

“Knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of scripture comes from one’s own interpretation. For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.”

- 2 Peter 1:20-21

Why I Believe the Bible: Internal Evidence

3) Fulfilled Prophecy

*7-8 of the 60 prophecies concerned the Messiah
coming true in one person =*

1 x 100,000,000,000,000,000



Why I Believe the Bible: Internal Evidence

3) Fulfilled Prophecy

“Take the state of Texas. Cover it in silver dollars, two feet deep. Put a blindfold on a person, put a red dot on one of the silver dollars and ask him to wade out into the state of Texas and lay his hand on the right silver dollar.”

- Josh McDowell

Why I Believe the Bible: Experiential Evidence



Why I Believe the Bible: Experiential Evidence

1) The Bible is gripping



Why I Believe the Bible: Experiential Evidence

1) The Word of God is gripping

“The word of God is living and powerful. It's sharper than any two-edged sword. It's able to pierce to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, joints and marrow. It is a discerner of the thoughts and intentions of the heart.”

- Heb. 4:12

Why I Believe the Bible: Experiential Evidence

- 1) The Bible is gripping
- 2) The Bible is comforting



Why I Believe the Bible: Experiential Evidence

- 1) The Bible is gripping
- 2) The Bible is comforting
- 3) The Bible is convicting



Why I Believe the Bible: Experiential Evidence

- 1) The Bible is gripping
- 2) The Bible is comforting
- 3) The Bible is convicting
- 4) The Bible is freeing



Why I Believe the Bible: Experiential Evidence

- 1) The Bible is gripping
- 2) The Bible is comforting
- 3) The Bible is convicting
- 4) The Bible is freeing

*“If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples,
and you will know the truth
and the truth will make you free.”*

- John 8:32