

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, 7-19-15 PM NOTES
"THE FOUNDATION ON WHICH WE STAND"
PART 2

John 17:17b (NKJV) "Your word is truth."

Hebrews 4:12 (NKJV) "For the word of God *is* living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."

Ten Evidential Truths About the Bible

1. The Bible's own claims
2. The Bible's history
3. The Bible's accuracy compared to archeology
4. The Bible's scientific accuracy
5. The Bible's prophesies
6. The Bible's unity
7. The Bible's perseverance
8. The teaching of Jesus about the Bible
9. The changed lives of believers
10. The testimony of the Holy Spirit

Review:

- I. What the Bible Claims about Itself
- II. The History of the Bible
 - A. The Bible's Content
 - B. The Bible's Manuscripts
 1. The Old Testament
 2. The New Testament

Comparison of Ancient Texts

<u>Author</u>	<u>Date Written</u>	<u>Earliest Copy</u>	<u>Number of Copies</u>
Caesar	1 st Century B.C.	900 A. D.	10
Livy	1 st Century B. C.	Unknown	20
Tacitus	100 A. D.	1100 A. D.	20
Thucydides	5 th Century B. C.	900 A. D.	8
Herodotus	5 th Century B. C.	900 A. D.	8
Demosthenes	4 th Century B. C.	1100 A. D.	200
Homer	9 th Century B. C.	-----	643
New Testament	50-100 A. D.	130A. D.	5,000

(From "Christian Apologetics" by Norman Geisler, Page 307)

"The interval then between the dates of original composition and the earliest extant evidence becomes so small as to be in fact negligible, and the last foundation for any doubt that the Scriptures have come down to us substantially as they were written has now been removed."
—Sir Fredrick Kenyon

III. The Bible's Accuracy Compared to Archeology

"Archeology is a study based on the excavation, decipherment and critical evaluation of the records of the past as they affect the Bible."
—The New American Standard Open Bible

A. The Hittites

B. Belshazzar

C. The New Testament

"Archeology is highly relevant for Bible studies, consistently demonstrating that the Bible is the world's most accurate history text book..."
—Dr. Clifford Wilson

"It may be stated categorically that no archeological discovery has ever controverted a biblical reference. Scores of archeological findings have been made which confirm in clear outline or exact detail historical statements in the Bible."
—Dr. Nelson Glueck

IV. The Bible's Scientific Accuracy

2 Timothy 3:16-17 (NKJV) "16 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."

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T. H. Huxley, a biologist friend of Charles Darwin wrote in 1890 that he visualized a day when, "faith would be separated from fact and then faith would go on triumphantly forever." In today's culture, Huxley's vision has come true. Secularists have succeeded in separating faith from fact. Faith has been relegated to a realm that has no connection to fact. All that matters is what you "feel in your heart". All faith matters are then relative with no objective standard by which they can be measured as truth or error. Because that is the predominant view of our culture, any talk of "this is true and you are wrong because you believe something contradictory," is seen as bigotry. In our secular world, that would be the equivalent of me telling someone that beef liver and frog legs are tasty desirable foods and if you don't like them you are wrong. To our secularized culture, differing religious beliefs and personal tastes in food are in the same category. One of the tasks of apologetics ("defending the faith") is to bring matters of faith back into the realm of fact and take it out of the realm of personal tastes and preferences. Today, almost no one asks if a belief is true; the question is, "Is it meaningful to you and does it work for you?" Thus all beliefs are "true" if they are true for you and no one has the right to tell someone that their belief is

wrong. That perverse thinking would have been laughable to our forefathers but now it is the prevailing view.

We began this short series entitled “The Foundation on Which We Stand” last week to prepare our minds for a really lengthy series entitled “Here We Stand”. We will cover a variety of important doctrines and moral / cultural issues that the Bible speaks to. This coming series will deal with topics like these: “The Sovereignty of God and the Responsibility of Man”, “Homosexuality”, “Biblical Masculinity and Femininity”, “Abortion”, “Homosexual Marriage”, “End of Life Issues”, “Just War”, “The Reality of Hell”, “Evolution Versus Literal Creation”, “The Environment”, “Suffering and the Sovereignty of God”, “The Relationship Between Church and State”, “The Christian and Self Defense”, “Pornography”, “Helping the Poor”, “Religious Liberty”, and “Gambling”. Since all of our responses to these issues and doctrines will be 100% from the Bible, I am laying the foundation with a four part series on the trustworthiness of the Bible. Since we are basing our stand on every issue of life on this book called the Bible, what is the evidence that it is totally trustworthy? If our “truth source” isn’t reliable, then we are living on a very shaky foundation. I have good news! The truth source we stand on is solid! Jesus Himself said in **John 17:17b (NKJV)** “Your word is truth.” It is not just black print on white paper; it is living and powerful. **Hebrews 4:12 (NKJV)** “For the word of God *is* living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”

In the last message, we saw that the Bible stands as a firm foundation because it rests on 10 evidential truths. Those evidential truths are:

1. The Bible’s Own Claims
2. The Bible’s History
3. The Bible’s Accuracy Compared to Archeology
4. The Bible’s Scientific Accuracy
5. The Bible’s Prophecies
6. The Bible’s Unity
7. The Bible’s Perseverance
8. The Teaching of Jesus about the Bible
9. The Changed Lives of Believers
10. The Testimony of the Holy Spirit

Review:

- I. What the Bible Claims about Itself
- II. The History of the Bible
 - A. The Bible’s Content
 - B. The Bible’s Manuscripts (we introduced this point, but did not get very far)

Even if we accept the fact that the original manuscripts of the Bible were God-breathed, how do we know that what we have today is accurate and trustworthy? The easy answer and I believe a very accurate one is that the all-powerful God who inspired the Bible is perfectly capable of protecting and preserving it from one generation to the next. But do we have any objective evidence of that? Yes! There is overwhelming evidence that what we have today is accurate and trustworthy – both Old and New Testaments.

1. Old Testament

I’m not going to spend much time here since the accuracy of the copies of Old Testament Scriptures we have is not questioned nearly as much as the New Testament. We know that the Jewish office of “Scribe” (the ones who copied the Old Testament texts) was a highly professional office. They had all sorts of checks to make sure that the copies of Scripture were accurate. For instance, they would count the number of letters in a book and then subject the copy to the test. If there were more or less letters, they would go back and find their mistake. Ah, but what if a letter had been added and later a letter deleted? They had a second check. They would count and find the middle letter of the master document and make sure it was the middle letter of the copy. Until about 68 years ago, the date of the earliest copies we had of the Hebrew text was about 900 AD. Then, in 1947 a Bedouin goat herdsman accidentally discovered in a

cave in the Judean wilderness close to the Dead Sea a lot of large clay pots that contained old Hebrew manuscripts. They came to be known as the Dead Sea Scrolls. There was the complete book of Isaiah and fragments of almost every book of the Old Testament. Remember that the oldest manuscripts we had were 900 AD. These scrolls were dated around 100 BC. They were almost 1000 years older than the previous documents. How did they compare? How accurate were the texts we had been using for centuries? They were amazingly accurate! For instance, the two copies of Isaiah proved to be word for word identical with our Hebrew texts in more than 95% of the text. The 5% variation could be explained by obvious slips of the pen and variations in the spelling of words. The Dead Sea Scrolls present compelling evidence that the Old Testament we now possess is trustworthy and accurate.

2. The New Testament

Some of the critics of the Bible are quick to point out that we cannot make claims about the trustworthiness of the Bible because we do not have the original copies. Anyone who says that shows their total lack of understanding as to how ancient documents are deemed trustworthy. We don't have the originals of any ancient documents. We have copies and the accuracy of those copies is determined primarily by two factors: 1) How close in time are the copies to the originals, and 2) how many ancient copies do we possess. In comparing ancient copies to one another, it becomes fairly obvious when something has been added to a manuscript. Let's see how the bible compares to other ancient manuscripts.

COMPARISON OF ANCIENT TEXTS

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(From "Christian Apologetics" by Norman Geisler, Page 307)

No other ancient document even comes close to the Bible in this test for the accuracy of the copies we have. Let me share something amazing. Not only does the New Testament have far better reliability than the classics, it is also in better textual shape than the 37 plays of William Shakespeare which were written in the 17th Century! In every one of Shakespeare's plays there are gaps in the printed text where we have no idea what was originally said [Josh McDowell, "A Ready Defense" Page 24]. In addition to the ancient manuscripts of the New Testament, the early church Fathers (writing between 90-160 A. D.) quoted so much of the New Testament in their writings that much of the New Testament can be reconstructed from their writings. Sir Fredric Kenyon was a world-renowned scholar of ancient manuscripts. He said: "The interval then between the dates of original composition and the earliest extant evidence becomes so small as to be in fact negligible, and the last foundation for any doubt that the Scriptures have come down to us substantially as they were written has now been removed." [Quoted in Paul Little, "Know Why You Believe" Page 79]. The bottom line is this, the Bible we have includes the inspired books and the text we have is totally trustworthy.

III. The Bible's Accuracy Compared to Archeology

In this section we will focus on the main evidence for the historical accuracy of the bible which is the findings of archeology. It is interesting that no other historical documents are approached with the skepticism that the Bible is approached with by so called "scholars". The reason of course is a prejudice against the reliability of the biblical documents. When I come to the Biblical text with a prejudice against

a God who created me and has the right to set the rules and standards and a prejudice against miracles and the supernatural, I am going to come up with different conclusions than a person who comes believing or even an honest questioner. The Bible is filled with references to places and people who it says really existed. Is there any evidence these people and places really existed? The discipline of Biblical archeology provides a huge amount of evidence for the historical accuracy of the Bible. The role of archeology is not to prove the Bible. The role of archeology is to provide evidence of the historical accuracy of the Bible. If the Bible really is what it claims to be, then it would certainly be historically accurate.

Let's make sure we understand what archeology really is. Someone defined archeology as the study of durable rubbish. That's really not a bad definition. Here is the definition I like of Biblical Archeology: "A study based on the excavation, decipherment and critical evaluation of the records of the past as they affect the Bible" (The New American Standard Open Bible, 1978, Page 1257). Archeology is not an exact science. Dating methods are not exact, but even with those limitations, we will find archeology an interesting tool in evaluating the accuracy of the Scriptures.

Sir William Ramsey was an atheist and the son of atheists. He was wealthy and had a PhD from Oxford. He gave his whole life over to archeology and determined that he would prove the Bible to be inaccurate. He went to the Holy land and set his focus on disproving the book of Acts. After many years of study Ramsey was impressed by the accuracy of Luke in his writings down to minute details. Instead of discrediting the bible he found amazing evidence supporting the historical accuracy of the Bible. Ramsey shocked the whole critical world by declaring himself to be a Christian [James Kennedy, "Why I Believe" Pages 21,22]. This whole subject of archeology is so massive that I am simply going to give you a few examples of how archeology has provided evidence of the Bible's accuracy and then give you some summary statements.

A. The Hittites

For many years, critics of the Bible said that Biblical writers had invented the Hittites; no such people ever existed. In 1911-1912, Professor Hugo Winckler of Berlin discovered some 10,000 clay tablets in what was determined to be the Hittite capital. He also discovered more than 40 of the Hittite cities. They actually were a superpower between Babylonia and Egypt. Now the existence of the Hittites is proven beyond question.

B. Belshazzar

Because of its predictive prophesy that came true, critics have especially delighted in trying to discredit the book of Daniel. The critics were filled with glee when they found through archeology a glaring "mistake" in Daniel. In Daniel 5 we are told that the last king of Babylon was a man named Belshazzar. Archeological evidence showed clearly that the last king's name was Nabonidus. One of the critics proclaimed, "Belshazzar – history knows no such king" [Kennedy, Page 22]. Archeologists kept digging. In Ur of Chaldea four clay cylinders of King Nabonidus were discovered. From these cylinders it was learned that Nabonidus had a son who served as co-regent. Nabonidus was a big game hunter and somewhat of an archeologist himself and spent a great deal of time away from the capital. While he was gone, his son ruled. His son's name? Belshazzar! There are scores of examples we could use, but let's move on to the New Testament.

C. The New Testament

Rather than give a lot of detail, let me just list several things in the New Testament that have been confirmed from Archeology: The timing of the events surrounding Christ's birth as recorded in Luke were long disputed, but archeology has confirmed their accuracy; the existence of the pool of Bethesda with its 5 porches; the existence of Pilate whose actual existence was doubted for many years; an altar to an

unknown god referred to in Acts 17 was found by archeologists.

Dr. Clifford Wilson wrote a 17 volume survey “Archeology – the Bible and Christ”. In these volumes he brings together over 5,000 facts relating to archeology and the Bible. One of Dr. Wilson’s summary statements is, “Archeology is highly relevant for Bible studies, consistently demonstrating that the Bible is the world’s most accurate history text book...” [Quoted in John Ankerburg, “Ready With an Answer”, Page 288]. Nelson Glueck, a renowned Jewish archeologist said, “It may be stated categorically that no archeological discovery has ever controverted a biblical reference. Scores of archeological findings have been made which confirm in clear outline or exact detail historical statements in the Bible.” [Ankerburg, Page 274].

IV. The Bible’s Scientific Accuracy

We will start this point but not have time to finish. The Bible is not a scientific textbook and does not use scientific jargon, but when it speaks to matters of science, it is accurate. It has long been thought that there is a conflict between the Bible and science. That isn’t totally accurate. The problem is when science stops being science and starts being religion. Science can deal with the observable and reproducible. When science starts dealing with subjects such as origins and destinies it has left its realm. The conflict is between science acting as a religion and the Word of God.

Accepted science is in a continual state of flux (constantly changing). I’m not saying that the facts change; I am saying that as science discovers more and more the conclusions of the scientific community (accepted science) change because of the additional information. It has been stated that the library in the Louvre in Paris has three and one half miles of books on science and most every one of them is obsolete. In 1861 the French Academy of Science wrote a pamphlet stating there were 51 inconvertible scientific facts that proved the Bible not true. Today there is not a reputable scientist on earth that believes one of those 51 so called “facts” [Adrian Rogers, “What Every Christian Should Know”, Page 8]. Accepted science is always changing. The Word of God never changes. When the Bible was written, it contradicted the accepted science of its day. We’ll see lots of examples of that next week. Someone said, “If the bible and science seem to disagree, be patient; science may eventually catch up.” [Adrian Rogers].

CONCLUSION

2 Timothy 3:16-17 (NKJV) “¹⁶ 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.” The trustworthiness of the Bible is indeed the reason that it is a solid foundation for us to stand on, base truth on, and make sense of life here and life to come. Think about how important it is to have a trustworthy Bible. Your salvation depends on knowing and then obeying what the bible says about being saved. Your assurance of salvation depends on resting in the truth of the Bible. Your spiritual growth depends on resting in the truth of the Bible. Your confidence in sharing your faith depends on the confidence you have in the trustworthiness of the Bible. It’s not enough to just mouth nice words about the trustworthiness of the Bible. We must know it, meditate on it, and apply it to our daily walk. It must be the lens through which we view our world (A Biblical Worldview).