

Psalm 12:6-7

The words of the LORD are pure words, like silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. You shall keep them, O LORD, You shall preserve them from this generation forever.

Larger Catechism, Q. 4: *How doth it appear that the Scriptures are the word of God? The Scriptures manifest themselves to be the word of God, by their majesty and purity; by the consent of all the parts, and the scope of the whole, which is to give all glory to God; by their light and power to convince and convert sinners, to comfort and build up believers unto salvation. But the Spirit of God, bearing witness by and with the Scriptures in the heart of man, is alone able fully to persuade it that they are the very word of God.*

Skeptic: “You must prove the truth of the Bible before using it as your ultimate authority.”

- **Response #1:** “How can one’s ultimate authority rest on the testimony of a lesser authority?”
 - “By demanding proof for the Bible, you’ve already rejected its claim to ultimacy.”
- **Response #2:** “Do skeptics prove human reason before using it as their ultimate authority?”
 - “By subjecting the Bible to human reason, you’ve presupposed the latter’s superiority.”

Five Reasons To Trust Your Bible

1. YOUR BIBLE IS GOD-BREATHED. (Inspiration)

- **II Tim. 3:16**, All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.
- **II Pet. 1:20-21**, Knowing this first: that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.
 - **INCARNATIONAL:** Just as the Eternal Word is a divine person who accomplished redemption by means of a human nature, so the Written Word is a divine book which announces redemption by means of human authors.
 - **HUMAN:** Its message unfolds gradually over the course of human history, employing a variety of authors with different styles, vocabularies, and temperaments.
 - **DIVINE:** It sets forth a single, coherent, self-interpreting volume of eternal truth, given by One Shepherd (God), to one Church, for one overarching purpose.
 - **VERBAL-PLENARY:** The entire canon of 66 books is inspired (Cf. above) in all it declares (Ex. 20:11), **incl.** individual words & letters (Ps. 12:6; Mt. 5:18; Gal. 3:16).
 - **VERBAL:** Every letter of every word is inspired (not merely ‘dynamic equivalent’).*
 - **PLENARY:** The entire Biblical canon is fully inspired (not merely the red letters) in all it declares (not merely concerning faith and morals).*

- 2. YOUR BIBLE IS INFALLIBLY INERRANT.** [*Infallible* = incapable of error. *Inerrant* = has no errors]
- **Titus 1:1-2**, Paul, a bondservant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect and the acknowledgment of the truth which accords with godliness, in hope of eternal life which God, who cannot lie, promised before time began.
 - **Ps. 119:140**, Your word is very pure; therefore Your servant loves it.
 - **II Sam. 7:28**, And now, O Lord God, You are God, and Your words are true, and You have promised this goodness to Your servant.

➤ **Qualifications**

1. Language of Perspective (*sunrise, four corners of the earth*)
2. Pre-Scientific Categories (*bat = bird*)
3. Round Numbers (*as accurate as originally intended in a given context*)
4. Selective Accounts (*one blind man at the gate vs. two blind men; Synoptics*)
5. Multiple Names (*Uzziah = Azariah*)
6. Common Parlance (*Israel fought with Moab.*)
7. Unapproved Citations (*The Fool: "There is no God."*)
8. Limited Citations (*Paul: cites pagan poet; Jude: cites Book of Enoch*)
9. Literary Devices (*The Lamb of God; The seven-headed, ten-horned Beast*)
10. Questions yet to be answered (but which do not involve inherent contradictions)

3. YOUR BIBLE IS THE RESULT OF PROVIDENTIAL PRESERVATION.

Ps. 12:6-8, The words of the LORD are pure words, like silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. You shall keep them, O LORD; You shall preserve them from this generation forever. The wicked prowl on every side, when vileness is exalted among the sons of men.

Isa. 40:8, The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God stands forever.

Matt. 5:18, For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled.

Jn. 17:17, Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth. As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth. I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word.

Modern "Restorationist" View (w/ Criticisms)

1. Inerrancy is limited to the original "autograph" manuscripts of the Bible.
 - **Not Confessional, Not how Jesus viewed the Bible of His day!** ('Scripture cannot be broken')
2. The Greek NT was intentionally corrupted by the Church in the 4th Century (Lucian of Antioch).
 - **There is no evidence for this claim, nor do modern scholars attempt to prove it.**
3. The 5,200 extant Greek manuscripts are divided up into various categories (Byzantine, Alexandrian, etc) such that roughly 99% of them (found all over the world) are dismissed as corrupt.
 - **Scholars now admit that these categories are not ironclad, since Byzantine characteristics are found even in Alexandrian manuscripts, well prior to the 4th century.**

4. The numerical and geographic majority of Byzantine Manuscripts (the Traditional NT Text) is thought to be outweighed by the antiquity of the few Alexandrian manuscripts.
 - **This presupposes (1) a denial of providential preservation, and (2) a 4th century conspiracy.**
 - **The age of a manuscript is not so important as the age of the text written on it.**
 - **The church generally copied and destroyed its best ancient manuscripts, which could indicate the *inferiority* of surviving ancient manuscripts.**
5. Textual critics must now seek to reconstruct the original NT based on theories derived from two recently discovered ancient manuscripts: Vaticanus and Sinaiticus.
 - **These two manuscripts differ 3,036 times in the Gospels alone.**
 - **Modern “theories” rely heavily on the subjective notion of ‘scribal motive’ (rather than ‘tangible evidence’ and ‘transmissional progression’).**
 - **Neither Vaticanus nor Sinaiticus was in circulation in the church for textual transmission.**
6. Due to the multiplication of textual theories, a single Greek NT Version could only be achieved by way of a panel of competing (liberal) scholars settling each textual variant by majority vote.
 - **If a majority of scholars is acceptable, why not a majority of manuscripts?**
 - **This creates a ‘patchwork quilt’, which looks nothing like any manuscript ever found.**
7. This Greek NT Version (Nestle-Aland) is the basis of virtually all modern English Bible translations, in which many significant texts are removed or altered. [*NKJV & KJV follow traditional text*]
 - **E.g., Matt. 6:13 (Conclusion to the LP); Mk. 16:9-20 (Conclusion to Mark); Jn. 7:53-8:11 (Woman Caught in Adultery); I Tim. 3:16 (Mystery of Godliness: God manifested in the flesh); I John 5:7 (Three Bear Witness in Heaven: Father, Word, Spirit). 15% of NT**
8. On this view, new archaeological discoveries could alter the Bible at any moment (by subtraction or addition), making *any* verse potentially the result of a 4th century conspiracy to corrupt the Bible.
 - **This is a serious problem for those who profess to rest their eternal destiny on the “faith once delivered” in the Scriptures.**

Confessional “Preservationist” View¹

- **Confession of Faith 1.8a**, *The Old Testament in Hebrew (which was the native language of the people of God of old), and the New Testament in Greek (which, at the time of the writing of it was most generally known to the nations), being immediately inspired by God, and, by His singular care and providence, kept pure in all ages, are therefore authentic; so as, in all controversies of religion, the Church is finally to appeal unto them.*
- **Confession of Faith 1.8b**, *But, because these original tongues are not known to all the people of God, who have right unto and interest in the Scriptures, and are commanded, in the fear of God, to read and search them, therefore they are to be translated into the vulgar language of every nation unto which they come, that the Word of God dwelling plentifully in all, they may worship Him in an acceptable manner; and, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, may have hope.*
 - **Our Session**: *We recommend the NKJV to you as a reliable translation of God’s Word.*

¹ **Further Study:** Maurice Robinson’s *The Case for Byzantine Priority* (<http://www.reltech.org/TC/v06/Robinson2001.html>); and Jakob van Bruggen’s *The Ancient Text of the New Testament* (http://www.enigstetroos.org/pdf/VanBruggenJ_TheAncientTextOfTheNewTestament.pdf)

4. YOUR BIBLE IS PERSPICUOUS. (*a very un-perspicuous word for ‘clarity’ or ‘simplicity’*)

Ps. 19:7, *The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul; The testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple.*

II Tim. 3:15, *From childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.*

I Cor. 1:26-27, *For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise.*

THE ORDINARY MEANS

- 1. READING** (*Mk. 12:10-11, Have you not even read this Scripture: ‘The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone. This was the LORD’S doing, And it is marvelous in our eyes’?*)
- 2. PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION** (*Ps. 119:18, Open my eyes, that I may see wondrous things from Your law. I Cor. 2:12-14, Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God. These things we also speak, not in words which man’s wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.*)
- 3. MEDITATION** (*Ps. 1:1-3, Blessed is the man Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, Nor stands in the path of sinners, Nor sits in the seat of the scornful; But his delight is in the law of the LORD, And in His law he meditates day and night. He shall be like a tree Planted by the rivers of water, That brings forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also shall not wither; And whatever he does shall prosper.*)
- 4. INSTRUCTION** (*Acts 8:30-31, So Philip ran to [the Ethiopian Eunuch], and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah, and said, ‘Do you understand what you are reading?’ And he said, ‘How can I, unless someone guides me?’ And he asked Philip to come up and sit with him. Eph. 4:11-13, And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints, for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.*)
- 5. CONSCIENTIOUS STUDY** (*Heb. 5:11-14, Of whom we have much to say, and hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing. For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food. For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.) Acts 17:10-11, Then the brethren immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea. When they arrived, they went into the synagogue of the Jews. These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so. I Jn. 2:27, But the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you, and you do not need that anyone teach you; but as the same anointing teaches you concerning all things, and is true, and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you will abide in Him.*)

6. **TRAINING** (*Mt. 13:52, Then He said to them, 'Therefore every scribe instructed concerning the kingdom of heaven is like a householder who brings out of his treasure things new and old.'*)
7. **LABOR** (*I Tim. 5:17, Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and doctrine. II Tim. 2:15, Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*) *James 3:1, My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment.*
 - **The Bible was made to be understood. Do you trust it *enough* to study it?**

5. YOUR BIBLE HAS AN ONGOING PROPHETIC POTENCY.

Romans 1:18-32, *For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man – and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things. Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen. For this reason God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature. Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due. And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting; being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness; they are whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, violent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, undiscerning, untrustworthy, unloving, unforgiving, unmerciful; who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them.*

REVIEW: Five Reasons to Trust Your Bible

1. *Your Bible is God-breathed.*
2. *Your Bible is infallibly inerrant.*
3. *Your Bible is the result of providential preservation.*
4. *Your Bible is perspicuous.*
5. *Your Bible has an ongoing prophetic potency.*