

The Reality of our Sacred Text (The Bible)

a...Historical

1...Copies of the manuscripts (Old & New) show that the Bible has been transmitted accurately.

(There are minor differences in manuscripts, called variants, but none of these variants impact or change key Christian beliefs or claims).

- OLD TESTAMENT

1. There are thousands of O.T. Manuscripts (fragmented and whole) of Hebrew writings.

2. There are specific ones that make up the O.T. in the Bible.

3. In 1947 the Dead Sea Scrolls were found. 1,050 scrolls were discovered! Of these manuscripts, about 300 were texts from the Bible, and many of the rest had "direct relevance to early Judaism and emerging Christianity." Every book of the Old Testament was represented except for the book of Esther, and the earliest copies dated from about 250 BC. Once the Dead Sea Scrolls were compared with modern versions of the Hebrew Bible, the text proved to be identical, word for word, in more than 95 percent of the cases. (The other 5% were stylistic wording differences)

- NEW TESTAMENT

1. Over 24,000 manuscripts of the New Testament (5,800 Greek manuscripts catalogued, 10,000 Latin

manuscripts and 9,300 manuscripts in various other ancient languages).

2. 99.5% an accuracy rate.

b...Archeology

1. Dead Sea Scrolls

2. Ebla Tablets - The excavating team discovered almost 15,000 ancient tablets and fragments which when joined together accounted for about 2,500 tablets.

Amazingly, these tablets confirmed that personal and location titles in the Biblical Patriarchal accounts are authentic. Also these tablets have proven the existence of Sodom and Gamorrah.

3. Hezekiah's Tunnel - The tunnel has been dated using various methods, including radiocarbon dating, to Hezekiah's time period, thus confirming the biblical verses that state that it was built by Hezekiah (2 Chronicles 32:2-4, 30; 2 Kings 20:20).

Inside the tunnel was an engraving called the Siloam Inscription. Discovered in 1880, this moving inscription documents the story of the tunnel's construction.

c... Personal Experiences

1. Outcomes of praying to the God of the Bible.

2. Experiences from interacting with the God of the Bible.

3. Miracles, Signs & Wonders, Healings, Super Natural Experiences.

d... **Prophecy**

1. 700 B.C. Jesus' virgin mother

Isaiah 7:14 "Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel."

2. In approximately 700 BC, the prophet Micah named the tiny village of Bethlehem as the birthplace of Israel's Messiah. The fulfillment of this prophecy in the birth of Christ is one of the most widely known and widely celebrated facts in history.

...Micah 5:2

"But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah,
though you are small among the clans[a] of Judah,
out of you will come for me
one who will be ruler over Israel,
whose origins are from of old,
from ancient times."

3. God promised the Jewish people, who had been scattered from their land, that He would raise the nation from "the dead" (v.1-11) by bringing the Jewish people back to the land He had given them and that they would become a nation once again—in the last days. On May 14th, 1948 Israel was 'raised from the dead' after 1900 years by declaring itself a nation.

...This was prophesied in Ezekiel and Zechariah

Ending

...the Bible UNITY (it supports it self): Although this book was composed by men, its unity reveals the hand of the Almighty. The Bible was written over a period of about 1,500 years by more than forty different human authors. These authors came from a variety of backgrounds, including Joshua (a military general), Daniel (a prime minister), Peter (a fisherman), and Nehemiah (a cupbearer).

The authors of the various books wrote in different places, such as the wilderness (Moses), prison (Paul), exile on the Isle of Patmos (John). The biblical writings were composed on three different continents (Africa, Asia, and Europe), and in three different languages (Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek).

The contents of the Bible deal with many controversial subjects. Yet, the Bible is a unit. From beginning to end, there's one unfolding story of God's plan of salvation for mankind.

Find ten people from your local area having similar backgrounds, who speak the same language, and all are from basically the same culture. Then separate them and ask them to write their opinion on only one controversial subject, such as the meaning of life.

When they have finished, compare the conclusions of these ten writers. Do they agree with each other? Of course not. But the Bible did not consist of merely ten authors, but forty. It was not written in one generation, but

over a period of 1,500 years; not by authors with the same education, culture and language, but with vastly different education, many different cultures, from three continents and three different languages, and finally not just one subject but hundreds.

And yet the Bible is a unity. There is complete harmony, which cannot be explained by coincidence or collusion. The unity of the Bible is a strong argument in favor of its divine inspiration.