

Is the Bible True?

Manuscript Evidence

All of the books of the New Testament were written by eyewitnesses of Jesus or by interviewers of eyewitnesses. (Three of the writers were Jesus' disciples—Matthew, John, and Peter.)

Archaeological Evidence

Over 25,000 sites have been discovered that pertain to the Bible. As Nelson Glueck, renowned Jewish archaeologist said, "It may be stated categorically that no archaeological discovery has ever controverted a biblical reference."

Prophetic Evidence

Some 2000 biblical prophecies have already been fulfilled—with no prophetic failures. The probability of 16 predictions being fulfilled is 1 in 10^{45} . For 2000 predictions to be correct is an inconceivable probability number.

Statistical Evidence

The Bible contains 66 books, written by approximately 40 different writers, over 1600 years, on 3 different continents, in 3 different languages, on thousands of different subjects, yet with one central theme—God's redemption of mankind from sin won for the whole world by the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Manuscript Evidence

Reliability of the New Testament as Historical Documents

- "Astounding" number of ancient manuscripts extant: 5,000 Greek manuscripts, 10,000 Latin and 9,000 other--totaling over 24,000 manuscript copies or portions of the New Testament. These are dated from 100 to 300 years after the originals. (There are no original manuscripts ["autographs"] extant, but the number and similarity of copies allows scholars to reconstruct the originals.)
- Early fragments: John Ryland manuscript 130 A.D. in Egypt; Bodmer manuscript containing most of John's gospel 150-200 A.D.; Magdalen fragment from Mat. 26 believed by some to be within a few years of Jesus' death; Gospel fragments found among the Dead Sea Scrolls dated as early as 50 A.D.
- Comparison with other ancient documents (available copies versus the originals):

Caesar—10 copies—1000 year gap

Tacitus—20 copies—1000 year gap

Plato—7 copies—1200 year gap

- F. F. Bruce: "There is no body of ancient literature in the world which enjoys such a wealth of good attestation as the New Testament."
- William F. Albright: "Thanks to the Qumran discoveries, the New Testament proves to be in fact what it was formerly believed to be: the teaching of Christ and his immediate followers circa.25 and circa. 80 AD."

Quotations from Early Church Fathers:

- Clement of Rome (a disciple of the apostles) cited Matthew, John, and 1 Corinthians in 95 to 97 A.D. Ignatius (who knew the apostles well) referred to six Pauline Epistles in about 110. Polycarp (disciple of apostle John) quoted from all four Gospels, Acts, and most of Paul's Epistles from 110 to 150. Taitian's harmony of the Four Gospels completed in 160 A.D. Irenaeus (who apparently heard the apostles) quoted from Matthew, John, Acts, and 1 Corinthians in 160 A.D.
- Of the four Gospels alone, there are 19,368 citations by the church fathers from the late first century on. Even if we had no manuscripts, virtually the entire New Testament could be reconstructed from these quotations. This argues powerfully that the Gospels were in existence before the end of the first century, while some eyewitnesses (including John) were still alive.

Primary Source Value

- Testimony of the New Testament authors themselves: [Luke 1:1-3, 3:1](#), [John 21:24](#), [Acts 26:24-26](#), [2 Peter 1:16](#), [1 John 1:3](#).
- Both liberal and conservative scholars in recent years have moved to the view that ALL of the New Testament was written prior to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD. (Liberal scholar John A. T. Robinson's book *Redating the New Testament*. Conservative scholar Kenneth Gentry's book *Before Jerusalem Fell*). One reason for their argument for early date for the New Testament is because there is no mention in the past tense of the devastating destruction of Jerusalem and the temple anywhere in the New Testament, and there is consistent mention of it still standing (even in the book of Revelation). Though the Gospels include prophecies of such a destruction, they are prophetic stock-in-trade. These

prophesies lack any details that certainly would have been added if written after this important historical event.

- Substantial other evidences of New Testament being written between 40 and 60 A.D. See *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics*.

Reliability of the Old Testament

- Jewish scholars performed "unbelievable" care in copying and preserving Scripture.
- The Dead Sea Scrolls discovered in 1947 are dated from the third century B.C. to the first century A.D. These manuscripts predate by 1000 years the previous oldest manuscripts. They represent every Old Testament book except Esther (as well as non-biblical writings). There is word for word identity in more than 95% of the cases, and the 5% variation consists mostly of slips of the pen and spelling.

Archaeological Evidence

Archeology consistently confirms the Bible!

Archaeology and the Old Testament

- Ebla tablets—discovered in 1970s in Northern Syria. Documents written on clay tablets from around 2300 B.C. demonstrate that personal and place names in the Patriarchal accounts are genuine. In use in Ebla was the name "Canaan," a name critics once said was not used at that time and was used incorrectly in the early chapters of the Bible. The tablets refer to all five "cities of the plain" mentioned in Genesis 14, previously assumed to have been mere legends.
- Greater proportion of Egyptian words in the Pentateuch (first five books) than in rest of the Old Testament. Accurate Egyptian names: *Potiphar* (Gen.39), *Zaphenath-Paneah* (Joseph's Egyptian name, Gen. 41:45), *Asenath* (Gen.41:45), *On* (Gen. 41:45), *Rameses* (Gen. 47:11), *Oithom* (Exodus 1:11).
- Finds in Egypt are consistent with the time, place, and other details of biblical accounts of the Israelites in Egypt. These include housing and tombs that could have been of the Israelites, as well as a villa and tomb that could have been Joseph's.
- Confounding earlier skeptics, but confirming the Bible, an important discovery was made in Egypt in 1896. A tablet—the Merneptah Stela—was found that mentions Israel. (Merneptah was the pharaoh that ruled Egypt in 1212-1202 B.C.) The context of the stela indicates that Israel was a significant entity in the late 13th century B.C.
- The Hittites were once thought to be a biblical legend, until their capital and records were discovered in Turkey.
- Crucial find in Nuzi (northeastern Iraq), an entire cache of Hittite legal documents from 1400 B.C. Confirms many details of Genesis, Deuteronomy, such as: (a) siring of legitimate children through handmaidens, (b) oral deathbed will as binding, (c) the power to sell one's birthright for relatively trivial property (Jacob & Esau), (d) need for family idols, such as Rachel stole from Laban, to secure inheritance, (e) form of the covenant in Deuteronomy exactly matches the form of suzerainty treaties between Hittite emperors and vassal kings.
- Walls of Jericho—discovery in 1930s by John Garstang. The walls fell suddenly, and outwardly (unique), so Israelites could clamber over the ruins into the city (Joshua 6:20).
- In 1986, scholars identified an ancient seal belonging to Baruch, son of Neriah, a scribe who recorded the prophecies of Jeremiah (Jer. 45:11).
- In 1990, Harvard researchers unearthed a silver-plated bronze calf figurine reminiscent of the huge golden calf mentioned in the book of Exodus.
- In 1993, archaeologists uncovered a 9th century B.C. inscription at Tel Dan. The words carved into a chunk of basalt refer to the "House of David" and the "King of Israel." And the Bible's version of Israelite history after the reign of David's son, Solomon, is believed to be based on historical fact because it is corroborated by independent account of Egyptian and Assyrian inscriptions.
- 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. Then, Sargon's palace was discovered in Iraq. The very event mentioned in Isaiah 20, his capture of Ashdod, was recorded in the palace walls! Even more, fragments of a stela (a poetic eulogy) memorializing the victory were found at Ashdod itself.
- 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. Tablet was found showing that Belshazzar was Nabonidus' son.
- The ruins of Sodom and Gomorrah have been discovered southeast of the Dead Sea. Evidence at the site seems consistent with the biblical account: "Then the Lord rained down burning sulfur on Sodom and Gomorrah—from the Lord out of the heavens." The destruction debris was about 3 feet thick and buildings were burned from fires that started on the rooftops. Geologist Frederick Clapp theorizes that

that pressure from an earthquake could have spewed out sulfur-laden bitumen (similar to asphalt) known to be in the area through the fault line upon which the cities rest. The dense smoke reported by Abraham is consistent with a fire from such material, which could have ignited by a spark or ground fire.

Archaeology and the New Testament

- The New Testament mentions specific individuals, places, and various official titles of local authorities, confirmed by recent archeology. Luke sites exact titles of officials. (Titles varied from city to city so they are easily checked for accuracy.) *Lysanias the Tetrarch* in Abilene ([Luke 3:1](#))—verified by inscription dated 14-29 A.D. *Erastus*, city treasurer of Corinth ([Romans 16:23](#))—verified by pavement inscription. *Gallio*—proconsul of Achaia (Greece) in A.D. 51 ([Acts 18:12](#)). *Politarchs* ("city ruler") in Thessalonica ([Acts 17:6](#)). *Chief Man of the Island* on Malta ([Acts 28:7](#)). *Stone Pavement* at Pilate's headquarters ([John 19:13](#))—discovered recently. *Pool at Bethesda*—discovered in 1888. Many examples of silver shrines to *Artemis* found ([Acts 19:28](#)). Inscription confirms the title of the city as "Temple Warden of Artemis". Account of Paul's sea voyage in Acts is "one of the most instructive documents for the knowledge of ancient seamanship."
- Census of [Luke 1](#). Census began under Augustus approximately every 14 years: 23-22 B.C., 9-8 B.C., 6 A.D. There is evidence of enrollment in 11-8 B.C. in Egyptian papyri.
 - Problem: Historian Josephus puts Quirinius as governor in Syria at 6 A.D. Solution: Recent inscription confirms that Quirinius served as governor in 7 B. C. (in extraordinary, military capacity).
 - Problem: Herod's kingdom was not part of the Roman Empire at the time, so there would not have been a census. Solution: it was a client kingdom. Augustus treated Herod as subject (Josephus). Parallel—a census took place in the client kingdom of Antiochus in eastern Asia Minor under Tiberius.
 - Enrollment in hometown? Confirmed by edict of Vibius Maximus, Roman prefect of Egypt, in 104 A.D. "...it is necessary for all who are for any cause whatsoever way from their administrative divisions to return home to comply with the customary ordinance of enrollment."
- Opinion of Sir William Ramsay, one of the outstanding Near Eastern archeologists: "Luke is a historian of the first rank; not merely are his statements of fact trustworthy; he is possessed of the true historic sense; he fixes his mind on the idea and plan that rules in the evolution of history, and proportions the scale of his treatment to the importance of each incident. He seizes the important and critical events and shows their true nature at greater length...In short, this author should be placed among the very greatest of historians."
- Diggers recently uncovered an ossuary (repository for bones) with the inscription "Joseph Son of Caiaphas." This marked the first archaeological evidence that the high priest Caiaphas was a real person. According to the gospels, Caiaphas presided at the Sanhedrin's trial of Jesus.

External References to Jesus and the Christian Church.

- Josephus. Born to priestly family in A.D. 37. Commanded Jewish troops in Galilee during rebellion. Surrendered, and earned favor of Emperor Vespasian. Wrote 20 books of *Antiquities of the Jews*. Refers to John the Baptist (killed by Herod) and to James, the brother of Jesus (condemned to death by stoning by the Sanhedrin). He referred to Jesus in his *Antiquities* 18:63. The standard text of Josephus reads as follows:

"About this time lived Jesus, a wise man, if indeed one ought to call him a man. For he was the achiever of extraordinary deeds and was a teacher of those who accept the truth gladly. He won over many Jews and many of the Greeks. He was the Messiah. When he was indicted by the principal men among us and Pilate condemned him to be crucified, those who had come to love him originally did not cease to do so;

for he appeared to them on the third day restored to life, as the prophets of the Deity had foretold these and countless other marvelous things about him, and the tribe of the Christians, so named after him, has not disappeared to this day." (Josephus—The Essential Works, P. L. Maier ed./trans.).

Although this passage is so worded in the Josephus manuscripts as early as the third-century church historian Eusebius, scholars have long suspected a Christian interpolation, since Josephus could hardly have believed Jesus to be the Messiah or in his resurrection and have remained, as he did, a non-Christian Jew. In 1972, however, Professor Schlomo Pines of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem announced his discovery of a different manuscript tradition of Josephus's writings in the tenth-century Melkite historian Agapius, which reads as follows:

"At this time there was a wise man called Jesus, and his conduct was good, and he was known to be virtuous. Many people among the Jews and the other nations became his disciples. Pilate condemned him to be crucified and to die. But those who had become his disciples did not abandon his discipleship. They reported that he had appeared to them three days after his crucifixion and that he was alive. Accordingly, he was perhaps the Messiah, concerning whom the prophets have reported wonders. And the tribe of the Christians, so named after him, has not disappeared to this day."

Here, clearly, is language that a Jew could have written without conversion to Christianity. (Schlomo Pines, *An Arabic Version of the Testimonium Flavianum and its Implications* [Jerusalem: Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1971.]

According to Dr. Paul Maier, professor of ancient history, "Scholars fall into three basic camps regarding Antiquities 18:63: 1) The original passage is entirely authentic—a minority position; 2) it is entirely a Christian forgery—a much smaller minority position; and 3) it contains Christian interpolations in what was Josephus's original, authentic material about Jesus—the large majority position today, particularly in view of the Agapian text (immediately above) which shows no signs of interpolation. Josephus must have mentioned Jesus in authentic core material at 18:63 since this passage is present in all Greek manuscripts of Josephus, and the Agapian version accords well with his grammar and vocabulary elsewhere. Moreover, Jesus is portrayed as a 'wise man' [sophos aner], a phrase not used by Christians but employed by Josephus for such personalities as David and Solomon in the Hebrew Bible. Furthermore, his claim that Jesus won over "many of the Greeks" is not substantiated in the New Testament, and thus hardly a Christian interpolation but rather something that Josephus would have noted in his own day. Finally, the fact that the second reference to Jesus at Antiquities 20:200, which follows, merely calls him the Christos [Messiah] without further explanation suggests that a previous, fuller identification had already taken place. Had Jesus appeared for the first time at the later point in Josephus's record, he would most probably have introduced a phrase like "...brother of a certain Jesus, who was called the Christ."

- Early Gentile writers, referred to by Christian apologists in 2nd century.
 - Thallus—wrote a history of Greece and Asia Minor in A.D. 52. Julius Africanus (221 AD), commenting on Thallus, said: "Thallus, in the third book of his histories, explains away the darkness [during the crucifixion] as an eclipse of the sun—unreasonably, as it seems to me [since the Passover took place during a full moon.]"
 - Official Roman records of the census, and Pontius Pilate's official report to the Emperor. Justin Martyr wrote his "Defense of Christianity" to Emperor Antonius Pius, referred him to Pilate's report, preserved in the archives. Tertullian, writing to Roman officials, writes with confidence that records of the Luke 1 census can still be found.
- Roman historians
 - Tacitus—Greatest Roman historian, born 52 A.D., wrote a history of the reign of Nero in 110 A.D. "...Christus, from whom they got their name, had been executed by sentence of the procurator

Pontius Pilate when Tiberias was emperor; and the pernicious superstition was checked for a short time only to break out afresh, not only in Judea, the home of the plague, but in Rome itself, .. " (*Annals* 15:44)

- Suetonius—AD. 120. In his *Life of Claudius*: "As the Jews were making disturbances at the instigation of Chrestus, he expelled them from Rome."
- Pliny the Younger—Governor of Bithynia in Asia Minor, wrote the emperor in A.D. 112 about the sect of Christians, who were in "the habit of meeting on a certain fixed day, before it was light, when they sang an anthem to Christ as God."

Note: A good web site for biblical archaeology is www.christiananswers.net.

Prophetic Evidence

Fulfilled Prophecy as Evidence for the Bible's Divine Origin

- 2,000 prophecies including some 300 prophecies and implications about the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus.
- There are no prophetic failures.
- While there are both obvious and subtle prophecies, most are very detailed and specific.
- No other religion has specific, repeated, and unfailing fulfillment of predictions many years in advance of contingent events over which the predictor had no control.
- Studies of psychics show only around 8% of their predictions come true and virtually all of these can be attributed to chance and a general knowledge of circumstances.
- Mathematicians have calculated the odds of Jesus fulfilling only 8 of the Messianic prophecies as 1 out of 10^{17} (a 1 followed by 17 zeros). This is equivalent to covering the entire state of Texas with silver dollars 2 feet deep, marking one of them, mixing them all up and having a blind-folded person select the marked one at random the first time. For more on this, see [What Are The Odds?](#)
- Fulfilled prophecy is powerful evidence that the Bible is divine rather than human in origin.
- Objection: Jesus manipulated events to fulfill prophecy. Answer: (a) Many prophecies were out of his control (ancestry, place of birth, time of death). (b) His miracles confirmed Jesus to be the Messiah. (c) There is no evidence that Jesus was a deceiver. (d) In order to manipulate all the people (including his enemies) and even his disciples to make it appear that he was the Messiah, Jesus would have needed supernatural powers. If he had such powers, he must have been the Messiah he claimed to be.

Examples of Non-Messianic Prophecies

- *The Succession of Great World Kingdoms* ([Daniel 2:37-42](#)). Even negative critics agree that Daniel foretold the governments in order of Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome.
- *Cyrus King of Persia* ([Isaiah 44:28-45:1](#)). Since Isaiah lived between about 740 and 690 BC and Cyrus did not make his proclamation for Israel to return from exile until about 536 ([Ezra 1](#)), there would have been no human way for him to know what Cyrus would be named or what Cyrus would do.
- *Israel to Be Returned to Its Land A Second Time* ([Isaiah 11:11-12](#)). The first time God reclaimed a people was from Egypt through the Exodus; the second time is from the Babylonian Exile ([Isaiah 51:9-11](#)).
- *The Closing of the Golden Gate* ([Ezekiel 44:2-3](#)). The Golden Gate is the eastern gate of Jerusalem, through which Christ made his triumphal entry on Palm Sunday before the crucifixion ([Matthew 21](#)). Ezekiel predicted its closing and in 1543 Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent closed the gate and walled it up, not knowing he was fulfilling prophecy. It remains sealed to this day exactly as the Bible predicted.
- *The Destruction of Tyre* ([Ezekiel 26:3-14](#)). The prophecy was partly fulfilled when Nebuchadnezzar destroyed the city and left it in ruins. Alexander the Great later attacked the seemingly impregnable Island of Tyre by taking the stones, dust, and timber from the ruined mainland city to build a causeway to the Island. This prophecy is comparable to saying that Chicago will be destroyed and never rebuilt.
- *The Doom of Edom (Petra)* ([Jeremiah 49:15-17](#)). Given the virtually impregnable nature of the ancient city carved out of rock and protected by a narrow passageway, this was an incredible prediction. Yet, in 636 AD it was conquered by Muslims and today stands deserted but for tourists.
- *Flourishing of the Desert in Palestine* ([Ezekiel 36:33-35](#)). Since before the turn of the twentieth century, Israel has been renovated and Israel's agriculture is flourishing.
- *Destruction of Jerusalem* ([Mark 13:1-2](#)). Fulfilled literally when the Romans completely destroyed Jerusalem and the temple buildings. According to historian and eyewitness Josephus, some of the stones were 37 feet long, 12 feet high and 18 feet wide. Stones were even pried apart to collect the gold leaf that melted from the roof when the temple was set on fire.

Examples of Messianic Prophecies

Topic	Old Testament	New Testament
Messiah to be the seed of the Woman	<u>Genesis 3:15</u>	<u>Luke 2:5-7</u> <u>Galatians 4:4</u> <u>Matthew 1:1-2</u>
Messiah to be the seed of Abraham	<u>Genesis 12:2-3, 18:18</u>	<u>Luke 3:34</u> <u>Acts 3:25</u> <u>Galatians 3:16</u>
Messiah to be of the tribe of Judah	<u>Genesis 49:10</u> <u>2 Samuel 7:16</u>	<u>Matthew 1:1-2</u> <u>Matthew 1:6, 22:42-45</u>
Messiah to be of the seed of David	<u>Psalms 132:11</u> <u>Jeremiah 23:5, 33:15</u>	<u>Luke 1:31-33</u> <u>Acts 2:29-30</u> <u>Romans 1:3</u>
Messiah to be born of a virgin	<u>Isaiah 7:14</u>	<u>Matthew 1:18-25</u> <u>Luke 1:26-38</u>
Messiah to be born in Bethlehem	<u>Micah 5:2</u>	<u>Matthew 2:1-6</u> <u>Luke 2:4-6</u>
Tribute paid to Messiah by great kings	<u>Psalms 72:10-11</u>	<u>Matthew 2:1-11</u>
Messiah to be heralded by a messenger	<u>Isaiah 40:3</u> <u>Malachi 3:1</u>	<u>Matthew 3:1-3</u>
Messiah to be the Son of God	<u>Psalms 2:2,7</u>	<u>Matthew 3:17</u> <u>Luke 1:32-33</u>
Messiah to be anointed by the Holy Spirit	<u>Isaiah 11:2</u>	<u>Matthew 3:16-17</u>
Galilee to be the first area of Messiah's ministry	<u>Isaiah 9:1-7</u>	<u>Matthew 4:12-16</u>
Messiah to be meek and mild	<u>Isaiah 40:11, 42:2-3, 53:7</u>	<u>Matthew 12:18-20, 26:62-68</u>
Messiah to minister to the Gentiles	<u>Isaiah 42:1, 49:6-8</u>	<u>Matthew 12:21</u> <u>Luke 2:28-32</u>
Messiah will perform miracles	<u>Isaiah 35:5-6</u>	<u>Matthew 9:35, 11:3-6</u> <u>John 9:6-7</u>
Messiah to be a prophet like Moses	<u>Deuteronomy 18:15-19</u>	<u>Matthew 21:11, 24:1-35</u> <u>John 1:45, 6:14</u> <u>Acts 3:20-23</u>
Messiah to enter the temple with authority	<u>Malachi 3:1-2</u>	<u>Matthew 21:12</u>
Messiah will enter Jerusalem on a donkey	<u>Zechariah 9:9-10</u>	<u>Matthew 21:1-11</u>
Messiah to be betrayed by a friend	<u>Psalms 41:9</u>	<u>John 13:18-21</u>
Messiah to be forsaken by his disciples	<u>Zechariah 13:7</u>	<u>Matthew 26:31, 56</u>
Messiah will be smitten	<u>Isaiah 50:6</u>	<u>Matthew 26:67, 27:26,30</u>
Messiah to experience crucifixion (long before crucifixion was invented)	<u>Psalms 22:15-17</u>	<u>Matthew 27:34-50</u> <u>John 19:28-30</u>
Messiah will be pierced	<u>Zechariah 12:10</u>	<u>John 19:34-37</u>

Details of Messiah's suffering and death and resulting salvation (hundreds of years before Christ!)	<u>Psalm 69:21</u> <u>Isaiah 53:2-12,</u>	<u>Matthew 26-27</u> <u>Mark 15-16</u> <u>Luke 22-23</u> <u>John 18-19</u>
Messiah to die in 33 AD	<u>Daniel 9:24-26</u>	33 AD is the widely accepted historical date of the crucifixion
Casting of lots for His garments	<u>Psalm 22:18</u>	<u>John 19:23-24</u>
Messiah to be raised from the dead	<u>Psalm 16:10</u>	<u>Acts 2:25-31, 13:32-37, 17:2-3</u>
Messiah's resurrection	<u>Job 19:25</u> <u>Psalm 16:10</u>	<u>Acts 2:30-31, 13:32-35, 17:2-3</u> <u>1 Corinthians 15:20-22</u>
Messiah to ascend to heaven	<u>Psalm 68:18</u>	<u>Luke 24:51</u> <u>Acts 1:9</u> <u>Ephesians 4:8-13</u>
Messiah to be at the right hand of God	<u>Psalm 110:1</u>	<u>Matthew 26:64</u> <u>Mark 14:62</u> <u>Romans 8:34</u> <u>Hebrews 1:3</u>
Messiah, the stone which the builders rejected, to become the head cornerstone	<u>Psalm 118:22-23</u> <u>Isaiah 8:14-15,</u> <u>28:16</u>	<u>Matthew 21:42-43</u> <u>Acts 4:11</u> <u>Romans 9:32-33</u> <u>Ephesians 2:20</u> <u>1 Peter 2:6-8</u>

Statistical Evidence

Amazingly Consistent Theme of the Bible

The Bible contains 66 books, written by approximately 40 different writers, over 1600 years, on 3 different continents, in 3 different languages, on thousands of different subjects, yet with one central theme—God's redemption of mankind from sin won for the whole world by the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Logical Consistency of the Bible

For a successful debate, show that your opponent's views are **arbitrary** or **inconsistent**, and that *your* position is consistent and not arbitrary. The Bible **is** internally consistent ("self consistent" or "logically consistent"). Some debating points:

- Life after death in heaven or hell may be, in one sense, difficult to believe, but it is entirely **internally consistent** with the rest of the Bible. If there is a truly just God, justice is only certain if there is ultimate justice. The non-biblical view, in contrast, is **inconsistent** when it holds that we came from nowhere and go to nowhere, but life is filled with meaning in between. Thus only the biblical worldview is internally consistent.
- The statement that "there are no moral absolutes" contains two mistakes:
 - The declaration itself is an absolute statement, thus it contradicts itself.
 - A person cannot live his life without moral absolutes. Examples: fairness vs. unfairness; kindness vs. hatred.
- For another example, the doctrine of original sin is consistent with the need for a savior.
- If there is an omnipotent God, the miracle of creation, as well as the other biblical miracles, is very plausible.

A logical thought progression to make sense of the Christian faith:

Is there a God? If so,

1. Is it logical to believe that God *knows* what is going on down here? If so,
2. Is it reasonable to believe that He *cares* about what is going on down here? If so,
3. Is it reasonable to believe that He cares enough to *communicate* His concerns to us? If so,
4. *How* might He communicate truth to us? Can the Bible demonstrate that it is indeed God's Word?

Geisler lists these criteria for establishing if a book was from God:

1. It would claim to be God's Word.
2. It would be historically accurate when it speaks on historical matters.
3. The authors would be trustworthy.
4. The book would be thematically unified and without contradictions.
5. We would have received accurate copies of the original manuscripts.
6. It would make statements that would reveal knowledge about the way things work beyond the knowledge of its day. (See Geisler *Encyclopedia* pages 692-693.)
7. It would make predictions about the future that could not be known through natural means.
8. The message would be unique.
9. The messengers would be confirmed by miracles.
10. The words would have a transforming power.