

The Basics of Christianity

The Inspired Word of God

II Timothy 3:14-17

INTRODUCTION:

BODY:

- I. THE INTERNAL EVIDENCE FOR THE INSPIRED WORD OF GOD
 - A. The Bible's Claim of Divine Origin

II Timothy 3:16
 - B. The Unity of the Bible
 - C. The Fulfilled Prophecy of the Bible
- II. THE EXTERNAL EVIDENCE FOR THE INSPIRED WORD OF GOD
 - A. The Bible's Indestructability
 - B. The Bible's Reliability
 - C. The Bible's Historical and Archaeological Accuracy
- III. THE DYNAMIC IMPACT OF THE INSPIRED WORD OF GOD

Hebrews 4:12-13

CONCLUSION:

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INTRODUCTION:

We are continuing with "The Basics of Christianity" series. This morning we are going to consider the Inspired Word of God.

Previously, we have looked at the major religions of the world and went through a systematic methodology in order to separate truth from error. We first asked if each of the religions were logically coherent without contradictions. Secondly, we asked if there was verifiable evidence to support the belief system. Third, we checked to see if the belief system addressed the big questions of life.

That would include the following:

1. Where did we come from?
2. How should we live?
3. What is the purpose of life?
4. Where is mankind heading?

In the end Christianity stood apart and alone from all other religions.

We also determined that despite the beliefs of postmodernism who says that all knowledge, including science, is a matter of perspective and interpretation and therefore absolute truth cannot exist, that because of the law of non-contradiction that says that something cannot be both "A" and "non-A" at the same time.

We have also learned that we can know that there is a God by looking at His creation, the laws of nature, and our ability to know good from evil by our conscience.

With those steps behind us, I would now like to look at the possibility that the Bible that we have today is actually the inspired Word of God.

If you had the opportunity to sit behind a curtain and have God, your creator, and the creator of the heavens and earth, speak directly to you, how intently would you listen?

How wonderful it is when we finally arrive to the undeniable conclusion in our life that the Bible is truly the inspired Word of God! Ponder for a moment, as we read God's Word, the Bible, how amazing is it that you can be sitting here this morning and realize that you are actually hearing God speak directly to you!

Think about that as we stand and read from the scripture this morning, because that is exactly what is happening. We are hearing the inspired Word of God!

All Stand and Read Scripture

2 Timothy 3:14-17 (NASB95)

¹⁴ You, however, continue in the things you have learned and become convinced of, knowing from whom you have learned *them*, ¹⁵ and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. ¹⁶ All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; ¹⁷ so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

Prayer

ILLUSTRATION:

The story is told of a Sunday school teacher who asked his class, “What is Faith?”

A young boy raised his hand and answered, “Oh, that’s easy. Faith is believing something you know is not true.”

Unfortunately, that little boy’s definition summarizes what many people think about faith.

For many people, to believe is to make a “blind leap of faith.” In their thinking, they have to give up the rational for the irrational. But the truth of the matter is, Christianity is a reasonable faith.

ILLUSTRATION:

C. H. Spurgeon once said after being asked if he could defend the Bible: “Defend it! I would as soon defend a lion. Let it out, it can defend itself.”

That is what we want to do today – allow the Bible to defend itself. The evidence for the authority of the Bible falls into three major categories: internal evidence, external evidence, and personal impact.

BODY:

I. The Internal Evidence for the Inspired Word of God.

A. The Bible's Claim of Divine Origin.

It might surprise you to know that there are relatively few books that actually claim divine origin. You would expect that a book written by God would claim divine origin, but just making that claim does not make it so.

The Bible claims to be divinely inspired and to contain the very words of God. Nearly 4000 times, expressions like “Thus says the Lord,” and “The word of the Lord came to me” are recorded in the Bible.

In our scripture this morning Paul speaks of the Bible being inspired by God:

2 Timothy 3:16 (NASB95)

¹⁶ All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness;

The NIV translation chose to translate the Greek word that means “inspired by God” in its more literal sense “God-breathed.”

We would not even consider the Bible to be the Word of God if it didn’t claim a divine origin.

B. The Unity of the Bible.

Chuck Missler (66-40): The great discovery is that the Bible is a message system: it's not simply 66 books penned by 40 authors over thousands of years, the Bible is an integrated whole which bears evidence of supernatural engineering in every detail.

These 40 different authors who lived in different times, wrote in 3 different languages, and were on three different continents. They also came from many different walks of life; including kings, philosophers, fisherman, tax collectors, doctors, prophets, and herdsmen.

But the perfect unity of the Bible, organized around the one theme of God’s redemption of humankind and of all creation could never have come about except by the hand of God.

ILLUSTRATION:

If you had 40 people write a book about the “**How Life Began on Earth**”, and they were not allowed to consult each other or read each other's works, would they all give a unified perspective?

If you had 40 people go to the same restaurant at the same time and afterwards each person were to write about their experience, would all of them report the same consistent experiences? Food, Service, Environment?

If you had 40 people write a paragraph on the color of the sky? You get my point?

So the unity of the Bible is just another important proof of divine inspiration. Such a miracle can only be explained by there being one divine Author, God himself, who was in control of all these human writers.

C. The Fulfilled Prophecy of the Bible.

Hundreds of prophecies of future events are recorded in the Bible – some of them were written hundreds or even a thousand years before their fulfillment.

The prophecies in the Bible are very specific and accurate.

Nostradamus claims to have made hundreds of prophecies that have come true, but if you read his prophecies, you will find them to be vague and unclear. His symbols and language can be taken to mean a number of things.

Not so with the prophecies of the Bible.

Some of the most dramatic evidence that the Bible is a supernatural book and not a collection of stories and myths, is in the realm of fulfilled Bible prophecy. It has been estimated that there are some 2500 prophecies in the Bible, almost 2000 of which have been fulfilled to the letter. Some have identified over 450 Messianic prophecies in the Old Testament that are fulfilled by Christ.

These Messianic prophecies include:

- The place of his birth (Bethlehem)
- The tribe he would be from (Judah)
- How he would be betrayed for 30 pieces of silver
- How he would die on a cross, even when this type of death was unknown at the time of the prophecy
- That his hands and feet would be pierced
- That he would be crucified between thieves
- That none of His bones would be broken
- And on and on and on.

Clearly the fulfillment of all of them by one Man would be literally impossible based on chance alone.

Let's turn our attention to the external evidence that the Bible truly is the Word of God.

II. The External Evidence for the Inspired Word of God.

A. The Bible's Indestructibility.

The Bible is the most well-known book in the history of the world, and no book has been attacked more than it. Skeptics have tried to **rid the world of the Bible**.

Efforts to destroy the Bible are well-known.

- In A.D. 303, the Roman Emperor Diocletian ordered all Bibles burned, but his effort failed.
- Voltaire, a French enlightenment writer bragged, "It took twelve men to start Christianity. One will destroy it." He also said, "In one hundred years the Bible will be a forgotten book, only to be found in museums." One hundred years later, Voltaire was dead, and his house was purchased by the Geneva Bible Society for the printing and distribution of Bibles.
- Robert Ingersoll, well-known 19th century atheist, said, "In 15 years I will have this book [the Bible] in the morgue." Fifteen years later, Ingersoll himself was in the morgue and in his estate sale a preacher bought his desk and spent his life writing sermons on it.

Because they have failed to **rid the world of the Bible**, skeptics have tried to **discredit and destroy the authority of the Bible**.

The Bible has gone through every kind of **scrutiny** possible, from archaeology, to science, to philosophy and computers, yet despite all the attacks, the Bible proves itself again and again. Especially important is that even people **contemporary with Christ** and the Apostles did not disagree with the events recorded. In fact, many of the eye witnesses to Christ's crucifixion were converted on the Day of Pentecost. If the events had not happened, they would have simply **laughed** at the Apostles.

And so the Bible's durability and indestructibility is a piece of evidence supporting its divine origin.

B. The Bible's Reliability.

Many skeptics believe that the Bible cannot be trusted because the original manuscripts – those documents actually written by Matthew, Isaiah, Paul, etc. – do not exist.

Therefore they conclude that we cannot know what the original Greek or Hebrew texts actually said because they would have been diluted over time.

What is amazing is that almost 25,000 copies of the New Testament are in existence and there is only an 80 year span between the original and the oldest copy! Furthermore, we have a **fragment** of the gospel of John that dates back to around 29 years from the original writing (John Rylands Papyri 125 A.D.).

This is extremely close to the original writing date and is simply unheard of in any other ancient writing.

The discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls in 1948, which are the oldest manuscripts of the Old Testament ever found, confirmed that the scribes who painstakingly copied the Bible did so with the utmost of care and accuracy.

The Dead Sea Scrolls manuscripts were a thousand years older than the then-oldest-known Hebrew texts of the Bible. And when they compared them they found only minor misspellings and variant words, but there was no substantial difference.

The reliability of the biblical text is a remarkable story, and the fact that the text has been so accurately preserved is another evidence of its divine origin.

C The Bible's Historical and Archaeological Accuracy.

The Bible has consistently proven to be historically correct. The more we learn of history, the more the Bible is validated.

Hundreds of statements in the Bible, which in times past have been held untrue by enemies of the Bible, have recently been proved by archaeologists.

The important thing to realize is that the Bible is historically and archaeologically reliable which is important in establishing its accuracy and divine origin.

III. The Dynamic Impact of the Inspired Word of God.

The difference that the Bible makes in the lives of those who sincerely seek to apply its message, points to its divine origin.

Hebrews 4:12-13 (NASB95)

¹² For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. ¹³ And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.

What really sets the Bible apart from any other writing is that it is a "**Living Word**". It is more than just words that can be read like an ordinary book. These words will penetrate into your soul and convict you to know and serve the Lord. The scripture was written by the Holy Spirit through his writers. When we believe the Word of God, it convicts us of our sins and causes us to realize that we need Christ and His salvation. When we accept Christ as our Savior and are baptized, we are promised that the Holy Spirit, the author of

God's Word, will dwell within us. He will guide us through our Christian life by helping us with our understanding of the scriptures and how to live a new life for Christ. It is through the Holy Spirit's guidance that we understand that none of our thoughts or secrets are hidden from God, but, as verse 13 says, "**there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him**".

We may be able to fool men, but we cannot put anything past God.

The Bible's power and authority is unlike any other book ever written. Countless lives have been transformed by the supernatural power of God's Word.

ILLUSTRATION:

Have you ever heard someone say: "I was an outcast, a wretched man, a disgrace to my race, and a nuisance to the world, until I began to study mathematics and learned the multiplication table. Since then I have found a new meaning to life. I feel like singing all day long and my soul is full of joy and peace"?

No, you have probably never heard that, but you likely have heard someone say: "I was wretched and lost; I broke my mother's heart; I was ruined, reckless, helpless, and hopeless, until I heard the words of the Bible."

Drug addicts have been cured by it, immoral people have been freed by it, hardened criminals have been reformed by it, the hopeless have been encouraged by it, sinners have been sanctified by it, and skeptics have been convinced and convicted by it.

CONCLUSION:

In **conclusion**, let me say that believing that the Bible is God's Word is somewhat like farming.

ILLUSTRATION:

A farmer wants to buy the seed, but, since he has to put so much time and effort into the planting and harvesting, he wants it to produce well. So he spends many hours researching the different dealers and their seed varieties.

The farmer can weigh the seed, smell it, cut it up and examine it under the microscope, but the only sure test that he can run is to plant the seed and see what happens.

We have examined the evidence about the Bible, but the only sure test is for you to read the Bible and try it in your life, if you sincerely do that, then **you will know** that it is the Word of God!

If you do not know Christ as your Lord and Savior, I invite you to come forward this morning and place your faith in Christ and be obedient to Him through immersion in baptism. Don't wait until you have cleaned up your life. **You don't clean yourself up to come to the Christ; you surrender yourself to Christ, to let Him clean you up!**

He is Lord.