

ABATT
Why We Can Trust the Bible
 Christian Life Assembly
 Jim Hoffman

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Why We Can Trust the Bible

- There is no more important question in the Christian world than “is the bible reliable?”.
- The reason for this is probably self-evident because all other questions that are answered using biblical grounds get their weight from an accurate and reliable biblical text.
- In other words, if the bible is not reliable then we have nothing to say about eternal things beyond our opinion.

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Why We Can Trust the Bible

- Most answers come either from an argument based on authority or one based on experience.
- The argument from authority goes something like this – “we have hundreds of years of Christian tradition that the bible is true and reliable.”
- But this argument does not work unless the person you are answering believes that our long standing traditions actually matter to them.

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Why We Can Trust the Bible

- The argument for the reliability of the bible that it is rooted in experience would go something like this, "I tried it and it works for me".
- This is the same argument that is often said of AA, "I tried it and those 12 steps really helped me".
- The problem with the arguments from authority and experience is that they are not universally accepted, and they are also not our best arguments.

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Why We Can Trust the Bible

- Here is what I believe to be our best argument.
- "The bible is a reliable collection of historical documents written down by eyewitnesses during the lifetime of other eyewitnesses. They report supernatural events that took place in fulfillment of specific prophecies and claimed that their writings are divine rather than human in origin." Voddie Baucham
- This is pretty much what Peter wrote in 2nd Peter chapter 1.

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Why We Can Trust the Bible

- 1st Peter 1:16 For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. 17 For when he received honor and glory from God the Father and the voice was borne to him by the Majestic Glory, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased," 18 we heard this voice borne from heaven, for we were with him on the holy mountain. 19 And we have the prophetic word made more sure. You will do well to pay attention to this as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. 20 First of all you must understand this, that no prophecy of scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, 21 because no prophecy ever came by the impulse of man, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God. RSV

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Why We Can Trust the Bible

- 2nd Peter 1:1 Simon Peter, a bondservant and apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who have obtained like precious faith with us by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ:
- Notice above how Peter begins his 2nd letter – he establishes that our faith is equal to what he had.
- How can that be? Peter walked with Jesus – we haven't, so how can it be that our faith is equal to his? 7

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Why We Can Trust the Bible

- Peter says even those who never walked or talked with Jesus can have a faith that is equal to the faith he had.
- **Because we have everything we need** – 2nd Peter 1:3 “His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue.”
- We have everything that really matters “all things that pertain to life and godliness”, that Peter had. 8

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Why We Can Trust the Bible

- 2nd Peter 1:12 “Therefore I intend always to remind you of **these things, though you know them and are established in the truth** that you have”. 13 I think it right, as long as I am in this body, to arouse you by way of reminder, 14 since I know that the putting off of my body will be soon, as our Lord Jesus Christ showed me. 15 **And I will see to it that after my departure you may be able at any time to recall these things.** RSV
- Peter is predicting his death and he is adamant that what he is leaving them, confidence in the holy scriptures, is what matters most to him, and ultimately to us as well. 9

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Why We Can Trust the Bible

- The “these things” Peter mentions are the scriptures that provide for us all that we need to live godly lives in this world.
- 1st Peter 1:16 “For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty.”
- Peter uses the pronoun “we” indicating that his faith is not just something he dreamed up, but one that had corroborating witnesses.

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Why We Can Trust the Bible

- Luke 1:1 Inasmuch as *many have undertaken to compile a narrative of the things which have been accomplished among us*, 2 just as they were delivered to us by those *who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word*, 3 it seemed good to me also, having followed all things closely for some time past, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, 4 that you may know the truth concerning the things of which you have been informed. RSV
- Again we see not just one man’s opinion - Luke, as a historian, is writing his own account that harmonizes with the other gospel authors with zero collaboration.

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Why We Can Trust the Bible

- The bible is not like other religious texts where one person has an experience, then writes down what happened to him, and claims authority from God for all that flows from his brain.
- The bible is a collection of historical documents written in three different languages on three different continents. (Africa, Asia, and Europe),
- 66 books, 40 authors, written in 3 different languages on 3 different continents, over a span of 1500 years that all point to the same God, the same Christ, and have a consistent theme and message.

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Why We Can Trust the Bible

- The Bible is a single collection of documents from multiple writers written at different times and places that all point to the same truth with stunning consistency.
- Compare that to the Quran where people are asked to trust Muhammad. So with Islam, their "holy text" is the work of one man.
- Mormonism – trust Joseph Smith and no one else. With Mormonism, again we have the work of one man that we are supposed follow into eternity.

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Why We Can Trust the Bible

- Many of the authors of the bible never knew each other, but all agreed on the central messages of the bible.
- Given the time span of 1500 years and given the constraints of geography, (3 continents) and the constraints of 3 languages, the possibility of a collaborative conspiracy is next to zero.
- And yet, the consistency of the scriptures could easily appear to be the supernatural work of a single author.

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Why We Can Trust the Bible

- Other texts were also written by eye witnesses –
- 1st John 1:1 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which **we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon and touched with our hands, concerning the word of life—** 2 the life was made manifest, and **we saw it, and testify to it,** and proclaim to you the eternal life which was with the Father and was made manifest to us— 3 **that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you,** so that you may have fellowship with us; and our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. RSV

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Why We Can Trust the Bible

- More of Voddie Baucham’s quote - “written down by eyewitnesses during the lifetime of other eyewitnesses” – **this means that what they wrote was falsifiable.**
- 1st Cor 15:1 Now I would remind you, brethren, in what terms I preached to you the gospel, which you received, in which you stand, 2 by which you are saved, if you hold it fast—unless you believed in vain. 3 For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, 4 that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures, 5 **and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve.** 6 **Then he appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom are still alive,** though some have fallen asleep.

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Why We Can Trust the Bible

- There were hundreds of eye witnesses that were still alive when Paul wrote 1st Corinthians.
- There were people around that could say “what Paul is writing is not true” if Paul was not telling the truth.
- **Falsifiable evidence** is the best kind of evidence because if there are eye witnesses at the time of the writing that can refute the message of the writer, the writer would have no credibility at all.

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Why We Can Trust the Bible

- What about original texts? What evidence do we have that the biblical texts are reliable?
- First of all, none of the other ancient literary works are questioned like the bible despite the fact that the bible has more evidence of its authenticity than Homer, Aristotle, and other revered works.
- No one questions Socrates and we have none of his writings – just accounts from Aristotle.

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Why We Can Trust the Bible

- We have more than 6,000 manuscripts and portions of manuscripts for the bible and some of them were written within a generation of the events they recorded.
- The early church fathers quoted the NT extensively – so much so that we could produce the entire NT, except for 11 verses, just from their quotes.
- No other writings from antiquity even come close.

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Why We Can Trust the Bible

- Why is that no one questions the works of Aristotle or Homer?
- There is little doubt about the reasons for this – the bible is under attack because if it is true then everything about us has to change.
- If the bible is reliable and true then God exists, sin exists, accountability exists, and the natural man hates all of those ideas.

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Why We Can Trust the Bible

- “They report supernatural events that took place in fulfillment of specific prophecies and claimed that their writings are divine rather than human in origin.”
Voddie Baucham
- The writers of the scriptures regularly reported miracles, the existence of Jesus of Nazareth, his death, his burial and his resurrection.
- 1st Peter 1:19 And we have the prophetic word made more sure. (by the resurrection)

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Why We Can Trust the Bible

The historical evidence for the resurrection of Christ is very good. Scholars such as William Lane Craig, J.P. Moreland, Gary Habermas, and others have done an especially good job of detailing that evidence. It is the aim of this article to offer a sort of synthesis of some of their key points and show the strength of the historical evidence for the resurrection of Christ.

A method commonly used today to determine the historicity of an event is "inference to the best explanation." William Lane Craig describes this as an approach where we "begin with the evidence available to us and then infer what would, if true, provide the best explanation of that evidence." In other words, we ought to accept an event as historical if it gives the best explanation for the evidence surrounding it.

When we look at the evidence, the truth of the resurrection emerges very clearly as the best explanation. There is no other theory that even come close to accounting for the evidence. Therefore, there is solid historical grounds for the truth that Jesus Christ rose from the dead.

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It is worth pointing out that in establishing the historicity of the resurrection, we do not need to assume that the New Testament is inspired by God or even trustworthy. While I do believe these things, we are going to focus here on three truths that even critical scholars admit. In other words, these three truths are so strong that they are accepted by serious historians of all stripes. Therefore, any theory must be able to adequately account for these data.

The three truths are:

1. The tomb in which Jesus was buried was discovered empty by a group of women on the Sunday following the crucifixion.
2. Jesus' disciples had real experiences with one whom they believed was the risen Christ.
3. As a result of the preaching of these disciples, which had the resurrection at its center, the Christian church was established and grew.

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Why We Can Trust the Bible

Virtually all scholars who deal with the resurrection, whatever their school of thought, assent to these three truths. We will see that the resurrection of Christ is the best explanation for each of them individually. But then we will see, even more significantly, that when these facts are taken together we have an even more powerful case for the resurrection--because the skeptic will not have to explain away just one historical fact, but three. These three truths create a strongly woven, three chord rope that cannot be broken.

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- And we should add this – how do we even begin to explain the behavior of Jesus’ disciples?
- Eleven men who ran when Jesus was arrested are suddenly transformed so radically that they no longer seem to value their lives.
- Peter, who denied he even knew Jesus at his trial suddenly becomes the leader of these men who are willing to die if that was the cost of preaching the gospel. (is not the resurrection the best explanation for that change?)

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Why We Can Trust the Bible

- Isaiah’s suffering servant prophecy is another example of a biblical writer recording things that would happen in the future (prophecy) with astounding accuracy.
- Isaiah 52:14 But many were amazed when they saw him. **His face was so disfigured he seemed hardly human, and from his appearance, one would scarcely know he was a man.** 15 **And he will startle many nations. Kings will stand speechless in his presence.** For they will see what they had not been told; they will understand what they had not heard about. NLT

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Why We Can Trust the Bible

- Psalm 22 is clearly a prophecy of Jesus on the cross with considerable detail about crucifixion, yet David never saw a crucifixion.
- Psalm 22:1 "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" NKJV
- Matt 27:46 And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?" that is, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" NKJV

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Why We Can Trust the Bible

- Psalm 22:7 "All those who see Me ridicule Me; They shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, 8 "He trusted in the Lord, let Him rescue Him;" NKJV **Connects with** Matt 27:43 "43 He trusted in God; let Him deliver Him now if He will have Him;" NKJV
- Psalm 22:14 I am poured out like water, And all My bones are out of joint; My heart is like wax; It has melted within Me. 15 My strength is dried up like a potsherd, And My tongue clings to My jaws; You have brought Me to the dust of death. NKJV
- This is a very apt description of what happens in crucifixion.

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Why We Can Trust the Bible

- They claimed their writings were divine –
- 1st Peter 1:20 First of all you must understand this, that no prophecy of scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, 21 because no prophecy ever came by the impulse of man, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God. RSV
- Exodus 33:11 "So the Lord spoke to Moses" – and there are many other similar verses.

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Why We Can Trust the Bible

- A common criticism is this one, "I don't believe the bible because it was written by men".
- But all of the books that people trust are also written by men! 😊
- So the "written by men" objection is not their real standard – that is their presumed "noble" defense for not believing the bible.

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Why We Can Trust the Bible

- When people claim they are "people of science" and therefore cannot accept the bible, we could say, "The bible is a collection of historical documents – not scientific ones."
- We should apply the rules for accuracy in historical documents to the bible, not rules of science. (but the truth be told, the bible has already been proven to be out in front of science)
- Historical tests of authenticity like, "66 books, 40 authors, 3 languages, 3 continents, written over a span of 1500 years containing a consistent message".

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Why We Can Trust the Bible

- People laud their intelligence when they say they don't believe the bible But in the wake of the evidence for the bible, is that intelligence or willful ignorance?
- Intelligent people say I choose to believe the bible because - ***"The bible is a reliable collection of historical documents written down by eyewitnesses during the lifetime of other eyewitnesses. They report supernatural events that took place in fulfillment of specific prophecies and claimed that their writings are divine rather than human in origin."*** Voddie Baucham

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Questions?

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