



HOW TO RESPOND TO...

The Question, "Can I Really Trust the Bible?"

Here are 10 good reasons why we can answer, "Yes!" to the question, "Can I really trust the Bible?"¹

1. Its honesty.

The Bible is painfully honest. It shows Jacob, the father of its "chosen people," to be a deceiver. It describes Moses, the lawgiver, as an insecure, reluctant leader, who, in his first attempt to come to the aid of his own people, killed a man, and then ran for life to the desert (Ex. 2-3). It portrays David not only as Israel's most loved king, general, and spiritual leader, but as one who took another man's wife and then, to cover his own sin, conspired to have her husband killed (2 Samuel 11). At one point, the Scriptures accuse the people of God, the nation of Israel, as being so bad they made Sodom and Gomorrah look good by comparison (Ezekiel 16:46-52).

2. Its Preservation.

Just as the modern state of Israel was emerging from thousands of years of dispersion, a bedouin shepherd discovered one of the most important archeological treasures of our time. In a cave of the northwest rim of the Dead Sea, a broken jar yielded documents that had been hidden for two millennia. Additional finds produced manuscripts that predated previous oldest copies by 1,000 years. One of the most important was a copy of Isaiah. It revealed a document that is essentially the same as the book of Isaiah that appears in our own Bibles.

3. Its Claims for Itself.

It's important to know what the Bible says about itself. If the authors of Scripture had not claimed to speak for God, it would be presumptuous for us to make that claim for them. A Bible that did not claim to speak on behalf of God would not have become foundational to the faith of hundreds of millions of Christians and Jews (2 Peter 1:16-21; 2 Timothy 3:16)

4. Its Endorsement by Jesus Christ

Many have spoken well of the Bible, but no endorsement is as compelling as that of Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saw the Word as truth (John 17:17, "Your word is truth."). He recommended the Bible not only by His words but by His life. In times of personal temptation, public teaching, and personal suffering, He made it clear that He believed the Old Testament Scriptures were more than a national tradition (Matthew 4:1-11; 5:17-19). He believed the Bible was a book about Himself. (John 5:39-40).

5. Its Unity

40 different authors writing over a period of 1,600 years penned the 66 books of the Bible. Four hundred silent years separated the 39 books of the Old Testament from the 27 of the New Testament. Yet, from Genesis to Revelation, they tell one unfolding story. Together they give consistent answers to the most important questions we can ask: Why are we

¹ Adapted from the booklet, "Ten Reasons to Believe in the Bible" (RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI).

here? How can we come to terms with our fears? How can we get along? How can we rise above our circumstances and keep hope alive? How can we make peace with our Maker? The Bible's consistent answers to these questions show that the Scriptures are not many books but one. See Genesis 15:6 and Romans 4:3 on the righteousness of faith. See also Genesis 2:9 and Revelation 22:2 on the tree of life.

6. Its Geographical and Historical Accuracy

Down through the ages, many have doubted the historical and geographical accuracy of the Bible. Yet modern archeologists have repeatedly unearthed evidence of the people, places, and cultures described in the Scriptures. Time after time, the descriptions in the biblical record have been shown to be more reliable than the speculations of scholars. The modern visitor to the museums and lands of the Bible cannot help but come away impressed with the real geographical and historical backdrop of the biblical text. (See Luke 1:1-4; also Acts 18:12)

7. Its Prophetic Accuracy

From the days of Moses, the Bible predicted events no one wanted to believe. Before Israel went into the Promised Land, Moses predicted that Israel would be unfaithful, that she would lose the land God was giving her, and that she would be dispersed throughout all the world, re-gathered, and then re-established (Deuteronomy 28-31). Central to Old Testament prophecy was the promise of a Messiah who would save God's people from their sins and eventually bring judgment and peace to the whole world. (See Isaiah 7:14/Luke 1:26-35; Zech. 9:9/Matthew 21:1-11; Isaiah 53:9/Matthew 27:57-60). See also Ezekiel 26 for a fulfilled prophecy on the city of Tyre.

8. Its Miracles

Israel's exodus from Egypt provided a historical basis for believing that God revealed Himself to Israel. If the Red Sea did not part as Moses said it did, the Old Testament loses its authority to speak on behalf of God. The New Testament is just as dependent upon miracles. If Jesus did not rise bodily from the dead, the apostle Paul admits that the Christian faith is built on a lie (1 Corinthians 15:14-17). To show its credibility, the New Testament names its witnesses, and did so within a time-frame that enabled those claims to be tested (1 Corinthians 15:1-8). Many of the witnesses ended up as martyrs, not for abstract moral or spiritual convictions but for their claim that Jesus had risen from the dead. Miracles attest to the divine authority of the Bible's message (Hebrews 2:1-4).

9. Its Survival

The books of Moses were written 500 years before the earliest Hindu Scriptures. Moses wrote Genesis 2,000 years before Muhammad penned the Koran. During that long history, no other book has been as loved or as hated as the Bible. No other book has been so consistently bought, studied, and quoted as this book. While millions of other titles come and go, the Bible is still the book by which all other books are measured. See Isaiah 40:8

10. Its Impact

The Bible works. It accomplishes what it sets out to do (Isaiah 55:10-11; 2 Timothy 3:14-17). The Ten Commandments have been a source of moral direction to countless numbers of people. The Psalms of David have offered comfort in times of trouble and loss. Jesus' Sermon on the Mount has given millions an ethical handbook by which to live. The changed lives of people like the apostle Paul, Augustine, Martin Luther, John Newton, Leo Tolstoy, and C. S. Lewis illustrate the difference the Bible can make. Even entire nations or tribes, like the Celts of Ireland, the Vikings of Norway, or the Auca Indians of Ecuador have been transformed by the Word of God and the unprecedented life and significance of Jesus Christ. The greatest art and music of many cultures has been in response to the Bible's stories and message.