

Is the Bible True?

Part 2 of 4 in "Can I Trust the Bible?" · What the writers claimed, and the evidence that backs them up

For prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.

2 PETER 1:21

AT A GLANCE

BIG IDEA	The Bible's writers claimed to speak for God. Fulfilled prophecy, history and archaeology, the Bible's unity, its impact on the world, and changed lives all give us good reasons to believe they were telling the truth.
SCRIPTURE	2 Peter 1:16-21 · Daniel 9:24-27 · Isaiah 53 · Micah 5:2 · Luke 1:1-4 · John 20:30-31
LENGTH	About 25 minutes
BEST FOR	High school and older middle schoolers; second talk in a four-part series
YOU WILL NEED	Bibles and a whiteboard

Start here: "The Bible is full of mistakes"

Many people repeat the idea that the Bible is outdated or full of errors, often without ever having read it. Hundreds of books have been written on the evidence for the Bible, but few people have read those either. So let's look at the evidence for ourselves.

1 The writers claimed to speak for God

Over and over, the biblical writers say they are passing on God's own words: "Thus says the LORD," "the word of the LORD came to me," "the Spirit of the LORD spoke by me" (2 Samuel 23:2). Peter says that prophecy didn't come "by the will of man," but men "spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit" (2 Peter 1:21).

That is an amazing claim. If these writers were wrong, they were either lying or deluded. But it's hard to believe that a book with the most beautiful literature and the highest moral teaching in history was written by liars or lunatics. Peter insisted, "we did not follow cunningly devised fables... but were eyewitnesses of His majesty" (2 Peter 1:16).

2 Fulfilled prophecy

The Bible contains hundreds of specific predictions, many fulfilled long after the prophet died. Here are a few about Jesus:

PROPHECY	WHAT WAS PREDICTED	FULFILLED
Micah 5:2	The Messiah would be born in Bethlehem	Matthew 2:1-6
Isaiah 7:14	He would be born of a virgin	Matthew 1:18-23
Zechariah 9:9	He would enter Jerusalem on a donkey	Matthew 21:1-9
Psalms 22:16-18	His hands and feet pierced; lots cast for His clothing	John 19:23-24, 37
Isaiah 53:5-9	He would suffer for others' sins and be buried with the rich	Matthew 27:57-60

One of the most remarkable is Daniel 9:24-27. Daniel, writing during the Persian period (about 538 B.C.), predicted that from a decree to rebuild Jerusalem until "Messiah the Prince" would be 69 "weeks" of years: 483 years. Many scholars calculate from the decree of the Persian king Artaxerxes (Nehemiah 2) and arrive at the very time of Jesus' public ministry and entry into Jerusalem.

Bible teachers count dozens, some even hundreds, of prophecies fulfilled in Jesus. Compare that with the vague and often wrong predictions of famous fortune-tellers and psychics. They are not in the same category.

3 History and archaeology

Luke says he wrote "having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first" (Luke 1:3, see vv. 1-4). Again and again, archaeology has confirmed the people, places, and customs the Bible describes: for example, the Pool of Siloam (John 9:7), an inscription naming Pontius Pilate, and the "House of David" inscription mentioning Israel's royal family.

Nelson Glueck, one of the most respected archaeologists of Israel in the twentieth century, wrote: "It may be stated categorically that no archaeological discovery has ever controverted a Biblical reference" (*Rivers in the Desert*, 1959). He added that biblical descriptions had often led archaeologists to important discoveries.

A NOTE ON SCIENCE

The Bible isn't a science textbook, and it describes nature in everyday language. Still, it contains striking statements: the earth "hangs" on nothing (Job 26:7); stars too many to count (Jeremiah 33:22), when ancient astronomers listed only a few thousand; water returning in a cycle (Ecclesiastes 1:7); and "the life of the flesh is in the blood" (Leviticus 17:11). Use these as conversation starters, not as the main proof.

4 One book from many writers

Sixty-six books, about 40 writers, roughly 1,500 years, and yet one consistent message: God's work of creating and redeeming all things through His Son, Jesus Christ. None of the writers knew their work would become part of a single book, yet each fits perfectly into the whole. (We explored this in Part 1.)

5 Its effect on the world

The Bible is the best-selling book of all time and has been translated, in whole or in part, into thousands of languages. It has shaped laws, hospitals, schools, art, music, and movements to end slavery and care for the poor. It appeals to scholars and children, kings and peasants, in every culture where it goes. No other book has had that kind of lasting effect.

6 Changed lives

The final evidence is personal. Millions of people, past and present, have discovered for themselves that the Bible's promises are true, its advice is wise, its warnings are right, and its message of salvation meets their deepest needs. John says he wrote his Gospel "that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name" (John 20:31). The best way to test the Bible is to read it and trust the Jesus it reveals.

Next time: Is the Bible *accurate*?

TALK IT OVER

1. Why is it significant that the Bible's writers claimed to speak for God?
2. Which fulfilled prophecy impresses you most? Why?
3. Why does it matter that archaeology keeps confirming the Bible's history?
4. How would you respond to a friend who says, "The Bible is just a book written by men"?
5. Have you seen the Bible change someone's life, maybe your own? How?

TAKE IT HOME

Read Isaiah 53 this week, written about 700 years before Jesus. Then read Matthew 27. Write down every connection you find. Share one with a friend who has questions about the Bible.

Read it for yourself, and meet the Jesus it reveals.

From fifty years of youth ministry by **Ron Whittam**. Share freely with your students and leaders. · The Youth Ministry Living Room · qrprogramming.com/livingroom

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