

6 Bible Is the Word of God

How do you know the Bible is true? This question is not new. Humanity's first temptation began with an attack on God's Word. The devil, in the form of a serpent, challenged Eve, "Did God really say. . . ?" (Genesis 3:1). Today, the devil presents similar doubts.

But God's Word is our defense against the devil. When Jesus was tempted by Satan, Jesus' defense against the enemy was the Word. We also use the Word to help others who are assailed with doubts and fears. And we use God's Word to guide those who sincerely question and seek after God. Peter advises, "In your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect" (1 Peter 3:15).

In the last two lessons, we learned about the content of the books of the Bible. Now let us discuss why we believe the Bible to be God's Word.

The Plan

- A. Effects of Scripture
- B. Variety and Unity of Scripture
- C. Inerrancy of Scripture
- D. Discoveries About Scripture
- E. Excellence in Scripture
- F. Name of Author in Scripture
- G. Completion of Prophecy in Scripture
- H. Elimination of Alternatives in Scripture
- I. Survival of Scripture

The Goals

1. Show how fulfilled promises of the Scripture are an evidence that the Bible is of God.
2. Describe how the concepts of variety and unity can be applied to Scripture.
3. Identify two evidences that show the inerrancy of Scripture.
4. Explain how students of various sciences are realizing the accuracy of the Bible.
5. Show examples of moral excellence in literary Scripture.
6. Give examples of internal evidence that God is the ultimate author of the Bible.
7. Identify one way prophecies were given, and state conditions under which they are to be judged.
8. State reasons for believing the Bible is inspired by God.
9. Identify time factors that confirm the Bible's authenticity.

The word *evidence* means “something which proves or shows clearly that a thing is true or false.” We will study nine of the many evidences that prove the Bible to be the true Word

of God. To help us remember these evidences, we will use an acrostic from the letters of the word *EVIDENCES*.

Effects

Variety and Unity

Inerrancy

Discoveries

Excellence

Name of Author

Completion of Prophecy

Elimination of Alternatives

Survival

A. EFFECTS OF SCRIPTURE

Goal 1. Show how fulfilled promises of the Scripture are an evidence that the Bible is of God.

The supernatural effects of the Bible are evidences of its supernatural origin. The fulfillment of its promises proves that these are true and authentic. Miraculous healings, deliverance from drugs and alcoholism, the transformation of lives, and millions of answers to prayer are all evidence that God made the promises in the Bible.

Application

1 A survey showed that over two generations, Christians had more family unity and economic stability than non-Christians. On the basis of that evidence, complete the following statement. The effect of the Bible as it changes lives for the better verifies that the Bible is

- a)** God's Book through which He works.
 - b)** a clever fraud that deceives people.
 - c)** a book of advanced psychology.
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B. VARIETY AND UNITY OF SCRIPTURE

Goal 2. Describe how the concepts of variety and unity can be applied to Scripture.

Imagine forty men writing the Bible: doctors of law and medicine, fishermen, kings, farmers, poets, soldiers, businessmen, and shepherds. They wrote over a period of sixteen hundred years—Moses wrote the Law fifteen hundred years before Christ; John wrote Revelation one hundred years after the birth of Christ. It would seem that the various backgrounds and the wide range of time and location of the biblical authors would prevent unity or harmony in their books. But the unity of theme and harmony of teaching by such a variety of writers is evidence that they received their inspiration from the same source—God.

Application

- 2** (Circle the correct completions to the following sentence.)
The words *variety* and *unity* can be applied to Scripture because
- a) the Book was inspired by one person, God.
 - b) it is important to vary the theme and unity.
 - c) a variety of writers wrote on a unified theme.
 - d) men of different backgrounds often think exactly the same.
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C. INERRANCY OF SCRIPTURE

Goal 3. Identify two evidences that show the inerrancy of Scripture.

The Bible's *inerrancy*, or freedom from mistakes, includes its historical accuracy in events, people, places, genealogies, social customs, and political developments.

Textbooks have to be changed as knowledge increases and mistaken ideas are discarded. But not the Bible. Its writers were exposed to the mistaken beliefs popular during their times, but God kept them from putting any of these errors in

the Bible. He kept it free from error, and its advice is practical today. Although no two persons think identically, God also kept these writers from contradicting each other as they presented different phases of their theme.

Writers of secular history may purposely hide the guilt of their leaders or their nations. But the Bible is impartial and accurate, showing facts as they were. The Bible records not only the uprightness of a people, but their failure and sin as well. The Bible is written that we may learn from the mistakes of others. Since the Bible does not try to hide anything, its inerrancy shines through.

Application

- 3** As Hebrew history, the Bible records the sins and punishment of the Hebrew nation and of its heroes. This is
- a)** characteristic of histories because nations want to hear the truth of their failures.
 - b)** evidence of the Bible's inerrancy and shows that it was written from God's viewpoint.
 - c)** only to show the Hebrew nation deserved to be punished.
- 4** One evidence of inerrancy in the Bible is that the writers
- a)** included the popular beliefs of their time.
 - b)** consulted other writings to avoid mistakes.
 - c)** were kept by God from writing contradictions.

D. DISCOVERIES ABOUT SCRIPTURE

Goal 4. Explain how students of various sciences are realizing the accuracy of the Bible.

Archaeology, the science that studies ancient cultures, has discovered manuscripts and monuments which prove biblical records are true.

For instance, Sargon, mentioned in Isaiah 20:1, was thought of as a legend by critics of the Bible. But his palace was discovered

by a French archaeologist in 1843. Isaiah 20:1 tells the story of Sargon conquering Ashdod, the Philistine city. This very story was found painted on one of the walls of Sargon's palace!

Scoffers can no longer laugh at historical accounts in the Bible because too many of them have been proven through archaeological discoveries.

Philology is the science of languages. By assessing language—the way words are used and spelled—philologists have verified that Bible prophecies were predicted before the events took place. One example found in the Dead Sea Scrolls, discovered in the 1940's, gave positive proof that the prophecies about the captivity were written before it happened.

Other sciences are also discovering how true the Bible is. Men exploring for oil have based their findings on biblical history; medical doctors have learned from the health laws given to the Jewish people. Hearing of more discoveries in the future would not surprise believers because the Bible is God's Word. We know it does not need to be proven, but for the doubter there is ample evidence of its authenticity.

Application

5 (Circle the letter that best completes the following sentence.)

The authenticity of the Bible has been further confirmed by archaeologists and philologists through their

- a)** debates.
- b)** speculations.
- c)** scientific discoveries.

6 For years philologists thought that all languages of the world stemmed from four basic languages. Later the number was reduced to two. Their latest conclusion should not surprise you. On the basis of Genesis 11:1, what do you think they discovered?

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E. EXCELLENCE IN SCRIPTURE

Goal 5. Show examples of moral excellence in literary Scripture.


A book that is inspired by an all-wise, holy, and loving God should *excel* all other books in its moral teaching. The Bible does. The simple expression of its stories invites children to read it. At the same time brilliant scholars cannot fully comprehend the depths of its truths. If you read the Bible hundreds of times, you will still find something new to appreciate—something you never saw before. God continues to speak to you through His Book.

The laws Moses received from God were far superior to any others of that day. In the centuries that have followed, many countries have based their statutes on those given so long ago.

The Bible's literary excellence has been recognized by scholars in universities. The teachings of its proverbs, the uplifting of its psalms, and the honesty of its history are still reaching people today and being used as examples of what good literature should contain.

The excellence of the Bible, so superior to anything else produced, also leads us to believe that its concepts are from God.

Application

- 7** Which qualities point to the excellence of Scripture?
- a)** Superior moral teaching
 - b)** Precise word definitions
 - c)** Relevance to all intellectual levels
 - d)** Fine leather binding
 - e)** Laws that are applicable today
 - f)** Literary excellence
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F. NAME OF AUTHOR IN SCRIPTURE

Goal 6. Give examples of internal evidence that God is the ultimate author of the Bible.

The Bible names God as its author and tells how He inspired it. Second Timothy 3:16 says, “All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness.”

Application

- 8** Which Scriptures indicate that God is the author of the Bible? Look up each one in your Bible.
- a) Exodus 24:12
 - b) Deuteronomy 5:31
 - c) Malachi 4:4
 - d) 2 Timothy 3:16
 - e) Revelation 1:1
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G. COMPLETION OF PROPHECY IN SCRIPTURE

Goal 7. Identify one way prophecies were given, and state conditions under which they are to be judged.

As in a moving picture, the prophets of the Bible described the rise and fall of empires, the destruction and rebuilding of Jerusalem, and other future events. The things they saw and wrote down were prophecies, or the telling of what would happen in the future. The completion or fulfillment of the prophecies points to their inspiration.

But it is more than just fulfillment that proves a prophecy is inspired of God. The Bible prophets were devout men of God. Many of the prophecies for people were warnings of punishment for their bad ways but also promises that if they changed, they would not be punished. All their prophecies came true. Bible prophecies are evidence that the Bible is the inspired

Word of God, not only because they came true but because they always pointed people to a closer relationship with God.

Application

9 Read Obadiah 1:1; Micah 1:1; Nahum 1:1; and Habakkuk 1:1; 2:2. The authors say their prophecies came to them through a

- a) strong impression.
- b) vision that God showed them of the future.
- c) study of the world conditions and probable events.

10 Read Matthew 1:22; 2:4–6, 16–18; 4:12–16; 8:16–17; Isaiah 53; Acts 2:14–21, 31; 3:18. There are certain conditions that prophecies should fulfill if we are to consider them inspired of God. Which of the following statements should be TRUE if the prophecy is from God?

- a) The prophet should charge money to tell the future.
 - b) A prophecy should come true.
 - c) The prophet should be a devout, godly person.
 - d) The prophecy must be consistent with God's character.
 - e) The prophecy should move people to seek God.
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H. ELIMINATION OF ALTERNATIVES IN SCRIPTURE

Goal 8. State reasons for believing the Bible is inspired by God.

There are three possibilities, or alternatives, in deciding what the writers of the Bible were like:

1. Men writing their own ideas
2. Men inspired by Satan who told lies
3. Men inspired by God to share the truth

First, the Bible could not have come from self-deluded minds, for its wisdom and inerrancy indicate superior,

nonhuman thought. Furthermore, sinful men would not willingly have condemned their own sin and promoted the concept of a holy, unseen God who imposes His standards on humanity.

Second, the Bible combats evil, condemns Satan, and predicts his final failure and punishment. Satan could not have inspired the writing of the Bible because he would not promote good and condemn evil as the Bible does.

Also, the impossibility of humanity's foreseeing the future accurately makes us rule out self-proclaimed prophets without supernatural inspiration. The accurate fulfillment of Bible prophecy eliminates the possibility of either good, bad, or deluded men promoting their own ideas.

By the logical process of the elimination of alternatives, we arrive at the conclusion that men inspired by God were most likely the writers of the Bible.

Application

11 Which statements are TRUE of why we believe the Bible to be God-inspired?

- a)** Deluded men would not condemn sin and promote holiness.
 - b)** Accurate fulfillment of Bible prophecy indicates supernatural inspiration.
 - c)** Satan would not inspire writers to condemn him.
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I. SURVIVAL OF SCRIPTURE

Goal 9. Identify time factors that confirm the Bible's authenticity.

The Bible's survival shows God's care for His Word. Parts of the Bible are at least thirty-five hundred years old. The newest parts are over nineteen hundred years old.

Time is the worst enemy of most books. They become out-of-date and old-fashioned, lose their popularity, and then

disappear. Not so with the Bible. The fact that the Bible, as old as it is, has the solution for twenty-first century problems is one evidence that the Bible is truly God's Word. It has stood the test of time.

Famous French writer Voltaire (1694–1778) predicted that within one hundred years his words would be read everywhere and the Bible would be found only in museums. But the Bible is read more widely now than ever.

No book has been copied, translated, and printed more carefully than the Bible. In ancient times, before there were printing presses, the copier had to throw away the entire page and begin again if he made one mistake. Today, scholars work on every translation and printing to make sure it is accurate and free from error.

Some kings have tried to destroy every Bible in their countries and have sentenced its readers to death. Critics have attacked it savagely. But the Bible outlives its enemies. First Peter 1:24–25 affirms, “All men are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of the Lord stands forever.” And this is the word that was preached to you.”

Application

12 Which statements are indications that the Bible has stood the test of time?

- a)** It is applicable to us today.
- b)** It has been a bestseller over hundreds of years.
- c)** It is often leather-bound.
- d)** It could never be destroyed.



Check Your Answers

- 1 a) God's Book through which He works.
- 8 Each of these Scriptures show God is the author.
- 2 a) the Book was inspired by one person, God.
c) a variety of writers wrote on a unified theme.
- 9 b) vision that God showed them of the future.
- 3 b) evidence of the Bible's inerrancy and shows that it was written from God's viewpoint.
- 4 c) were kept by God from writing contradictions.
- 10 Statements b), c), d), and e) are true.
- 5 c) scientific discoveries.
- 11 All the statements are true.
- 6 That at first all the people of the world had one language.
- 12 a) It is applicable to us today.
b) It has been a best seller for hundreds of years.
d) It could never be destroyed.
- 7 a) Superior moral teaching
c) Relevance to all intellectual levels
e) Laws that are applicable today
f) Literary excellence

CONGRATULATIONS

You have finished this course. We hope that it has been a great help to you. Remember to complete the second Unit Evaluation and return the answer sheet to your instructor.

