



The Reliability of Scripture

Dave Steane

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What People Have Said...

"Since no daily responses are given from heaven, and the Scriptures are the only records in which God has been pleased to consign his truth to perpetual remembrance, the full authority which they ought to possess with the faithful is not recognised, unless they are believed to have come from heaven, as directly as if God had been heard giving utterance to them."

John Calvin



What People Have Said...

"The Bible is alive, it speaks to me; it has feet, it runs after me; it has hands, it lays hold of me. A simple layman armed with Scripture is to be believed above a pope or a cardinal without it."

Martin Luther

What People Have Said...



"Take all that you can of this book upon reason, and the balance on faith, and you will live and die a happier man."

Abraham Lincoln



What People Have Said...

"The Bible is very easy to understand. But we Christians are a bunch of scheming swindlers. We pretend to be unable to understand it because we know very well that the minute we understand, we are obliged to act accordingly."

Soren Kierkegaard

What People Have Said...



"If your woman picks your ducks, and she cooks and carries her Bible... now there's the complete package of womanhood."

Phil Robertson

What the Bible Says...



Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.

Psalm 119:105

What the Bible Says...



The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God stands forever.

Isaiah 40:8



What the Bible Says...

All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

2 Timothy 3:16



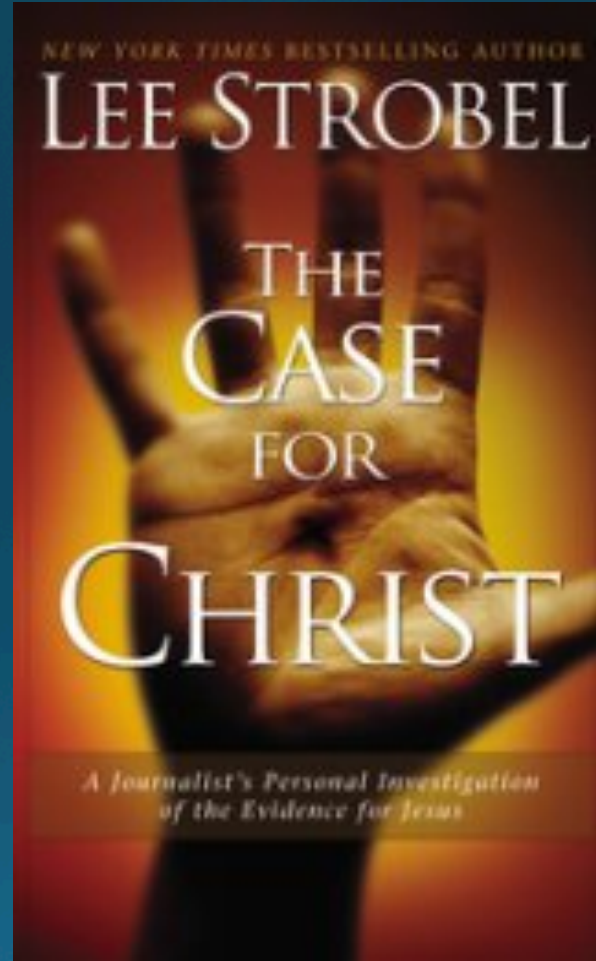
What the Bible Says...

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.

Hebrews 4:12



Is the Bible Reliable?





Case for Christ

Video Clip #1

What is the Bible?

- *Biblia = "the books"*
- *Canon = "rule" or "measuring stick"*
- *A collection of sacred texts for Jews and Christians*
- *66 different books: 39 OT, 27 NT*
- *40 different authors; 3 different languages*
- *Written over 1,600 years*
- *Single theme: God's redemption of humanity*

What is the Bible?

- 5 Literary Genres:
 - *History & Narratives*
 - *Poetry & Wisdom*
 - *Prophecy & Apocalyptic*
 - *Gospels*
 - *Letters*

What is the Bible?

- Interpretation Considerations
 - *Interpret according to genre*
 - *Interpret according to context*
 - *Interpret according to "whole council of God"*
 - *Interpret according to the plain text*
 - *Interpret according to the rule of faith*
 - *Discern between contextual imperatives and timeless imperatives*

How Did the Bible Come to Be?

- *1400–400 BC - Books of the Hebrew Old Testament written*
- *250–200 BC - The Septuagint, a popular Greek translation of the Old Testament, produced*
- *A.D. 45–96 AD - Books of the Greek New Testament written*

How Did the Bible Come to Be?

- *90 and 118 AD - Councils of Jamnia give final affirmation to the Old Testament canon (39 books)*
- *140-150 AD - Marcion's heretical "New Testament" incites orthodox Christians to establish a NT canon*
- *303-306 AD - Diocletian's persecution includes confiscating and destroying New Testament Scriptures*

How Did the Bible Come to Be?

- *367 AD - Athanasius' Festal Letter lists complete New Testament canon (27 books) for the first time*
- *397 AD - Council of Carthage establishes orthodox New Testament canon (27 books)*

Criteria for NT Canon Inclusion

- *Books must have apostolic authority; either Apostles themselves or by faithful followers*
- *Book's message must conform to the Christian rule of faith; consistent with the Christian tradition*
- *Book must be accepted and used by the Christian church*



Manuscripts & External Validation



Case for Christ Video Clip #2

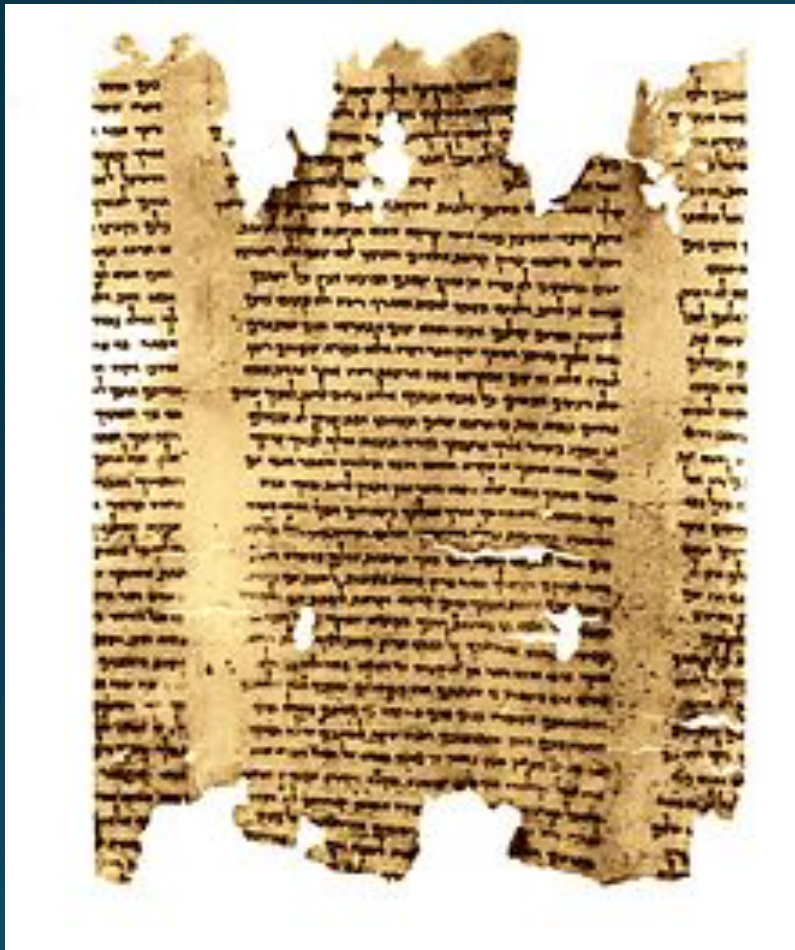
Manuscripts

- *24,633 manuscript copies of NT, dated 100-300 years after the originals were composed*
- *Other ancient documents: Caesar 10 copies, 1,000 year gap; Tacitus 20 copies, 1,000 year gap; Plato 7 copies, 1,200 year gap; Aristotle 49 copies, 1,100 year gap*

The Dead Sea Scrolls



The Dead Sea Scrolls



The Dead Sea Scrolls

- *Written and hidden by Qumran Essenes.*
- *Located in Qumran, NW bank of Dead Sea*
- *Discovered in 1947 by Bedouin shepherd boy*
- *Dated from 3rd century BC to 1st century AD*
- *Every OT book except Esther*
- *Predates previous oldest copies by 1,000 years*
- *95% word for word identity*



Some Messianic Prophecies Fulfilled

- *Messiah to be born of a virgin: Isaiah 7:14, Matt 1:18ff*
- *Messiah to be born in Bethlehem, Micah 5:2, Matt 2:1ff*
- *Messiah to be betrayed by friend, Psalm 41:9, John 13:18ff*
- *Messiah's suffering and death, Isaiah 53:2ff, John 18-19*
- *Messiah's resurrection, Job 19:25/Psalm 16:10, Acts 2:30-31*
- *Messiah prophesizes Jerusalem's destruction, Mark 13*
- *Jerusalem destroyed by Romans in 70 AD*



Messianic Prophecies Fulfilled

- *Mathematicians have calculated the odds of Jesus fulfilling only 8 Messianic prophecies as 1 in 10^{17}*
- *Jesus fulfilled 353 prophecies*

Evidence of Reliability

- *OT/NT prophecies fulfilled in scripture and world history*
- *Later OT prophets quote OT Law as authoritative*
- *Jesus and Apostles quoted OT as authoritative*
- *NT authors cite each other as authoritative*
- *Very few contradictions in eye-witness accounts*
- *Jesus taught disciples 40 days after resurrection*
- *11 of 12 Apostles martyred for truth of the Gospel*
- *Gospels and Epistles written by eye-witnesses*



Verdict & Conclusions



Case for Christ

Video Clip #3

Affirmations



"There is no body of ancient literature in the world which enjoys such a wealth of good attestation as the New Testament."

F.F. Bruce



Affirmations

"If we compare the present state of the New Testament text with that of any other ancient writing, we must declare it to be marvelously correct. The New Testament is unrivaled among ancient writings in the purity of its text as actually transmitted and kept in use."

B.B. Warfield

The Power of the Holy Spirit



- *Martin Luther's Conversion*
- *John Wesley's Conversion*



*For I am not ashamed of the gospel,
for it is the power of God for salvation
to everyone who believes,
to the Jew first and also to the Greek.*

Romans 1:16



Small Group Discussion Questions:

1. *Where do you go to find direction and truth for your life?*
2. *What are some of your favorite books/passages in the Bible?*
3. *Has God ever spoken to you through reading the Bible?*
4. *To what extent is your life shaped by the Bible?*
5. *What new insights did you get from today's presentation?*
6. *Are there any actions for you to take?*



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