

## ATTACKS ON THE INSPIRATION & AUTHENTICITY OF THE BIBLE

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### WHO WROTE IT ? ? ?

Christianity believes and teaches that the Bible alone is the revealed Word of God. Even though it was written by men, the ultimate author was God Almighty. This claim was not invented by the Church but is the claim the Bible makes about itself.

***"The word of the Lord endures forever", I Peter 1:25. "All Scripture is God-breathed", II Timothy 3:16. "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit", II Peter 1:21.***

Over 2,000 times in the Old Testament alone are clauses such as ***"And God spoke to Moses," "the word of the Lord came unto Jonah,"*** and ***"God said."*** Moreover, the Bible claims to be a record of the words and deeds of God, viewing itself as God's Word.

The mere fact that the Bible claims to be the Word of God does not prove that it is such, for there are other books that make similar claims. The difference is that the scriptures contain indisputable evidence that they are the Word of God.

One reason the Bible is different from other books is its **UNITY**. Although this book was composed by men, its unity betrays the hand of the Almighty. The Bible was not written in one generation but over a period of about 1,500 years by more than 40 different human authors. These authors came from a variety of backgrounds, including Joshua who was a military general, Daniel who was a prime minister, Peter was a fisherman, and Nehemiah was a cupbearer. They had different educations and cultures.

The authors of the various books wrote in different places, such as the wilderness (Moses), prison (Paul), and Patmos (John's exile). The biblical writings were composed on three different continents: Africa, Asia, and Europe. It was written in three different languages: Hebrew, Aramaic, and Ionic, Doric, Athenian, Classical, and Koine Greek.

The contents of the Bible deal with hundreds of subjects, many controversial. Yet, the Bible is unified. From beginning to end, there's one unfolding story of God's plan of salvation for mankind. This salvation is through the person of Jesus Christ, **John 14:6**. Jesus Himself testified that He was the theme of the entire Bible. And yet there is complete unity or harmony that cannot be explained by coincidence or collusion. The unity of the Bible is a strong argument in favor of its divine inspiration.

The unity of the scriptures is only one reason among many that supports the Bible's claim to be the divine Word of God. Other support that can be explained in detail is the testimony of the early Church, the witness of history (fulfilled prophecies), archaeology, and the evidence of changed lives throughout the centuries, to name just a few.

Concerning Prophecy: ***Isaiah 46:9-10 - "Remember the former things long past, for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is no one like Me, 10) declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things which have not been done [prophecy], saying, 'My purpose will be established, and I will accomplish all My good pleasure'; (also Isa. 48:3 & 5)***

The Bible is unique. No other book has any such credentials. No other book even comes close. *"England has two books, the Bible and Shakespeare. England made Shakespeare, but the Bible made England."* (Victor Hugo, cited by Mead, Encyclopedia of Religious Quotations, p. 49).

### THE PROBLEM OF CHANGES MADE TO THE BIBLE OVER TIME:

A common misconception is that the text of the Bible is not possibly the original because zealous monks throughout Church history made changes to it. An altered text would do grave damage to its credibility as being the revelation of God.

Fortunately, there is plenty of evidence that it is. Three different types are used to evaluate New Testament text: 1) the Greek manuscripts, 2) the various translations or versions of the New Testament, and 3) the writings of the Church fathers.

The New Testament was originally composed in the Greek languages. There are approximately 5,500 copies in existence that contain all or part of the New Testament. Although we do not possess the originals, copies exist from a very early date.

The New Testament was written from about A.D. 50 to 90. The earliest fragment dates about A.D. 120 with about fifty other fragments dating within **150-200 years** from the time of composition.

Two major manuscripts are Codex Vaticanus (A.D. 325) and Codex Sinaiticus (A.D. 350), a complete copy dated within 250 years of the time of composition. This may seem like a long time span, but it is minimal compared to most ancient works.

The earliest copy of Caesar's *The Gallic Wars* dates **1,000 years** after it was written, and the first complete copy of the *Odyssey* by Homer dates **2,200 years** after it was written. The interval between the writing of the N.T. and earliest copies compared to other ancient works is much closer in time to the original.

The 5,500 copies are far and away the most we have of any ancient works. We only have a handful of manuscripts of other ancient writings: Catullus' 3 copies, the earliest being **1,600 years** after he wrote; Herodotus' 8 copies **1,300 years** later.

Not only do N.T. documents have more manuscript evidence and close time intervals between originals and copies, but they were translated into several other languages at an early date. Translation of a document into another language was rare in the ancient world, so this is an added plus for the New Testament. The number of copies of the versions is in excess of 18,000, with possibly as many as 25,000. This is further evidence that helps us establish the New Testament text.

Sir Frederic Kenyon, former director and principal librarian of the British Museum, was one of the foremost experts on ancient manuscripts and their authority. Shortly before his death, he wrote this concerning the New Testament:

"The interval between the dates of original composition of the New Testament and the earliest extant evidence becomes so small as to be in fact negligible, and the last foundation for any doubt that the Scriptures have come down to us substantially as they were written has now been removed. Both the authenticity and the general integrity of the books of the New Testament may be regarded as finally established." *The Bible and Archaeology*, pp. 288-89.

Commentaries and letters, etc., quote the biblical text such that it could have been reproduced just from them and give us other witnesses to the text of the New Testament. John Burgon has catalogued more than 86,000 citations by the early church fathers who cite different parts of the New Testament. Evidence for the reliability of N.T. text is greater than any other ancient writings !

Evidence for our New Testament writings is so much greater than evidence for classical writings and authors whose authenticity few dare question that had the New Testament been secular in nature, its authenticity would **never** be doubted. Its authenticity is truly divine because it is divine.

## **DEAD SEA SCROLLS**

With the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls in caves along the northwest corner of the Dead Sea, the world now has manuscripts of Old Testament books 1,000 years older than any previously in existence. Before the discovery of these scrolls, the oldest complete copy of the Old Testament in Hebrew was Codex Babylonius Petropolitanus from A.D. 1008, more than 1,400 years after the Old Testament was completed. Fragments from the Dead Sea Scrolls closed the gap by a thousand years, leaving only 400 years between the originals and copies, and left the world waiting to see. Had the text been transmitted accurately? The answer is a resounding YES !

Among the fragments discovered are complete copies or parts of every Old Testament book except Esther, and the variations in the text after a thousand years of copying are minimal. Anyone saying the Dead Sea Scrolls cast doubt on the Bible's reliability is Dead wrong.

"The Old Testament books from Qumran are those which we find in our Bibles. Minor textual variants occur as they do in any document which depends on hand copies for multiplication, but the biblical text may be regarded as essentially reliable" (*The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Bible*, Charles F. Pfeiffer, Baker Book House, 1967, p. 114).

## **THE PROBLEM OF CONTRADICTIONS IN THE BIBLE.**

When facing possible contradictions, it is of the highest importance to remember that two statements may differ from each other without being contradictory. Some fail to make a distinction between **contradiction** and **difference**.

For example, the case of the blind men at Jericho. Matthew relates how two blind men met Jesus, while both Mark and Luke mention only one. However, neither of these statements denies the others but rather they are complementary.

Suppose you were talking to the mayor of your city and the chief of police at city hall. Later, you see your friend, Jim, and tell him you talked to the mayor today. An hour later, you see your friend, John, and tell him you talked to both the mayor and the chief of police. When your friends compare notes, there is a seeming contradiction. But there is no contradiction. If you had told Jim that you talked *only* to the mayor, you would have contradicted that statement by what you told John. The statements you actually made to Jim and John are different, but not contradictory. Such are many statements made in the Bible.

Many think they find errors in passages when it is they who have not read them correctly. Sometimes two passages appear to be contradictory because the translation is not as accurate as it could be. **A knowledge of the original languages of the Bible can immediately solve these difficulties**, for both Greek and Hebrew, as all languages do, have peculiarities that make them difficult to render into English and other languages.

A classic example concerns the accounts of Paul's conversion as recorded in the Book of Acts. **Acts 9:7 - *The men which journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man.*** While **Acts 22:9 says - *And they that were with me saw indeed the light, and were afraid; but they heard not the voice of him that spake to me.***

These statements seem contradictory with one saying Paul's companions heard a voice, while the other account says that no voice was heard. However, a knowledge of Greek solves this difficulty. As the Greek scholar, W. F. Arndt, explains:

"The construction of the verb '**to hear**' (AKOUI) is not the same in both accounts. In **Acts 9:7** it is used with the genitive, in **Acts 22:9** with the accusative. The construction with the genitive expresses that something is being heard or that certain sounds reach the ear; nothing is indicated as to whether a person understands what he hears or not.

"The construction with the accusative, however, describes a hearing which includes mental apprehension of the message spoken. From this, it becomes evident that the two passages are not contradictory. "

**Acts 22:9** does not deny Paul's associates heard certain sounds but says they did not hear so as to understand what was being said.