

How do you know the Bible is true?

Dennis Poulette - June 3, 2018

Introduction

What does it mean for something to be true?

“Based on a ‘true story’.”

- Based on something that ACTUALLY HAPPENED.
- How do we know something ACTUALLY HAPPENED?
 - You saw it happen. You were THERE.
 - Someone else saw it happen and recorded it? <—even then you could have some doubts, right?
 - ◊ Did man land on the moon?
 - ◊ Did Han shoot first?
 - ◊ Who was the first president of the United States?

Witnesses to the truth of the Bible:

The Bible itself

- It's Unity (2000 years; 40 authors; 3 continents)
 - One unified Message
 - ◊ From Genesis to Revelation, we see man's repeated rebellion against his holy Creator. God made a perfect world, but mankind has continually rejected His authority and

sought to decide truth for himself. Nevertheless, God promised to extend His love, grace, and mercy to unworthy people who deserved to be cast into the lake of fire for all eternity.

- ◊ Creation: Genesis 1:1; John 1:12; Mark 10:6)
- ◊ Flood: Gen 7:7; 2 Peter 3:6; Matt 24:38
- ◊ Resurrection of Jesus: Psalm 16:10; 1 Corinthians 15:4; John 2:19
- ◊ The Bible's message runs throughout the entire scope of the books, from Genesis to Revelation. The entire Bible points to Jesus.
- It's Claim
 - ◊ After all, how would we know that a book is inspired by God unless it claimed to be? Think about it: how do you know who wrote a particular book? The book itself usually states who the author is. Most people are willing to accept what a book says about itself unless they have good evidence to the contrary.¹ The writers of the Bible considered it to be true.
 - ◊ "Knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit." - 2 Peter 1:20-21
 - ◊ "But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it 15 and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work." - 2 Timothy 3:16-17
 - ◊ "And we also thank God continually because, when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as a human word, but as it actually is, the word of God, which is indeed at work in you who believe." - 1 Thessalonians 2:13
 - ◊ Later in the New Testament, the apostle Paul quoted the Gospel of Luke as "Scripture," on par with the inspired writings of Moses (1 Timothy 5:18, citing both Deuteronomy 25:4 and Luke 10:7).

History and Archaeology

- Thoughts about Archaeology

¹ Answers in Genesis - <https://answersingenesis.org/is-the-bible-true/how-do-we-know-that-the-bible-is-true/>

- Few believe that miracles like Moses' burning bush or Jesus' resurrection will ever be proven scientifically; they are, after all, supernatural events
 - ◊ Few doubt that the characters in the latter part of the Old Testament and most of the New--Nebuchadnezzar, Jeremiah, Jesus, Peter--really existed.
 - ◊ In archaeology, the absence of evidence is not evidence of absence.
 - ◊ In other words, "Archaeology throws light on the Bible. It has no business trying to prove it."
 - ◊ We don't rely on archaeology to prove to us that the Bible is true.
- Archaeology and the Bible (There are many archeological discoveries that tell us about the stories in the Bible):
 - ◊ **David and His Kingdom:** 1993 discovery of ancient inscription dated from 9th century BC that talks about the "House of David" --‘proving’ that he was more than a legend (which has been a popular argument because of the prominence of David in Scripture).
 - ◊ **Old Testament as sacred text:** Two scrolls found in Jerusalem from around 600BC that include parts of the book of Numbers—showing that parts of the OT was considered sacred text before many even thought it existed.
 - ◊ **Nation of Israel:** Inscription around 1200 BC from Egypt that refers to Israelites as a distinct nation.
 - ◊ **Special Note:** NOT ALL OF THE OLD TESTAMENT HAS ARCHAEOLOGICAL DISCOVERIES THAT BACK UP THE TRUTH OF THE BIBLE.

Scientific Proofs

Remember...the Bible is not a science book, but it does mention science. Many of the scientific truths mentioned in the Bible were not widespread at the time of their writings. For example:

- Shape of the earth (Is. 40:22) - Written 700 BC, although most believed it was flat...200 years later, Pythagorus theorized that the earth was round.
 - Gravity (Job 26:7) - Written around 700 BC; Isaac Newton came around in the 1600-1700s.
 - Atmospheric Circulation (Ec 1:6) - Written between 450 BC and 180; in 1753 William Hadley started describing them in science.
 - Ocean currents (Psalm 8:8) - written between 1400-400 BC; in 1847, Matthew Fontaine Maury began charting the currents of the oceans.

Jesus and His Resurrection

- Ultimately, we believe the Bible because Jesus believed the Bible, and we believe Jesus because he rose from the dead.²
- The fact is, we have far more sources for Jesus of Nazareth than we do for many historical figures in the first century. We have at least 18. Twelve of those are non-Christian sources.
- There's more evidence Jesus existed than Julius Caesar. Does anyone doubt Caesar existed?
- Gary Habermas has popularized the so-called minimal facts argument for the resurrection. The minimal facts are those things that are accepted by nearly all New Testament scholars. The minimal facts are:
 - Jesus died by crucifixion.
 - Jesus' disciples believed that he rose and appeared to them.
 - The church persecutor Paul was suddenly changed.
 - The skeptic James, brother of Jesus, was suddenly changed.
 - The tomb was empty.” ² These facts are nearly universally accepted by New Testament scholars, including liberals
- Many other evidences could be given for the resurrection of Jesus. Thinking about the methods of history, one must understand that there is a reason why Americans accept the first President of the United States as George Washington and not Spongebob Squarepants. History backs up the claim that Washington was the first President. In like manner, history backs up the reality of Jesus's resurrection.

Conclusion

Questions for discussion:

1. Have you ever really thought about this?
2. What role does faith play? What about the Holy Spirit?

² 4 Tips for Defending the Reliability of the Bible <https://www.crossway.org/articles/4-tips-for-defending-the-reliability-of-the-bible-2/>