

WAS THE BIBLE WRITTEN BY THREE DRUNKEN GUYS IN A BAR?

[While holding up the Bible:] What is it that I'm holding here in my hand? That's right it's the Bible—the Living Word of God. Historically, it has been held in high spiritual regard in our country. For example, consider these quotes from three of our most noted presidents. Abraham Lincoln once said that, *"All things desirable to men are contained in the Bible."* And, Ronald Reagan affirmed his faith that the Bible is God's inspired Word when he stated: *"I never had any doubt about it being of divine origin . . . Point out to me any similar collection of writings that has lasted for as many thousands of years and is still a best-seller, worldwide. It had to be of divine origin."*¹ And finally, Theodore Roosevelt contended that, *"A thorough knowledge of the Bible is worth more than a college education."* (That college education, by the way, will cost you over \$84,000,² whereas I can get you a good Bible for about ten bucks—one might get you a job, but the other can lead to eternal life: You figure out the cost-benefit analysis on that!) And yet, in recent years, the Bible has taken a back-seat in our society, even among Christians. A survey taken by the PEW Research Center not long ago found that only 4 out of 10 Christians believe that the Bible is the Word of God and should be taken literally. The remaining 60% believe that either it can't be interpreted literally, or that it was written solely by the whimsical musings of mere men, without divine inspiration, or they are simply altogether ignorant on the subject and express no opinion at all.³ That's a sad state of affairs when Christians can't even agree what the Bible is, or where it came from.

What if some atheist came along and tried to debunk the Bible? And, knowing that you are a Christian, they ask you: *"How do you know that the Bible wasn't written by three drunken guys in a bar?"* How would you respond to that? Now, I know that that question sounds ridiculous, but the premise behind it belongs to a mindset held by many in our society who believe that the Bible is a forgery, filled with fiction, superstition and outdated moral standards. In fact, considering the present lack of morality in our country, if it had been written by three drunken guys in a bar, its reputation might even be elevated in the eyes of many Americans. So, again, what do you say to such people? The Word of God is one of the lynch pins of our faith and we must be equipped to give a true Christian answer to such wrong-headed opinions. So, this morning, I want to give you 6 reasons that you can share with others to assure them that the Bible is the living word of Almighty God—the Maker of the Universe—and directly inspired by Him. As such, it is completely trustworthy—and it must be read; it must be understood and it must be obeyed. So what are these 6 reasons that we can bank on show us that?

First of all, Christians can know that the Bible is God's inspired Holy Word⁴ for the good and sufficient reason that the Scriptures themselves are self-authenticating and affirm that fact. For example, referring to the Old Testament covering all the Law and the Prophets, Paul proclaims in Romans 3:2 that, **"The Jews were entrusted with the whole revelation of God."** Romans 3:2 (NLT2) Covering both the Old and New Testaments, Paul further states that: **"All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right."** 2 Timothy 3:16 (NLT2) Referring to the Bible as a whole in Galatians 3:10, he affirms that we are to **"observe and obey all the commands that are written in God's Book of the Law."**⁵ And, Paul could truly say that because these commandments of the Bible are, in fact, God's very Words.⁶ And we have this on the highest authority of all when we consider the words of Jesus Himself, for He called the Bible the **"Word of God"**⁷ and referred to its changeless nature when He said that the **"Scripture cannot be broken."** John 10:35 (ESV) Now, this is important to us as Christians because we believe that Jesus is the Son of God. So, when Jesus proclaims these Words of the Bible to be authentic, we need to take that very seriously. And hopefully, you do. But, an atheist, an agnostic or an unbeliever who has adopted a false world view isn't going to be convinced by this reason alone. So we need to move on to those other 5 reasons that prove the Bible is, in fact, God's Holy Word—and that it didn't originate from a bar room drinking binge (to use our atheist's analogy).

The second reason that we can know the Bible came directly from God and is completely trustworthy is derived from the accuracy of the prophecies found in the Bible. The amazing accuracy of these prophecies confirm that the Bible must have a supernatural origin—and that origin is God.⁸ Hundreds of years before Jesus was born, note all of these prophecies about his birth and ministry, each of which was spot on. For example, the Prophet Jeremiah predicted that Jesus would be born of the ancestral line of David⁹, and the Prophet Micah prophesied that the Baby Jesus would be born in the City of Bethlehem.¹⁰ The Prophet Isaiah made what seemed to be an impossible prediction when he indicated that Jesus would be born of a virgin—and that is exactly what happened.¹¹ The Prophet Malachi foretold that Jesus' ministry would be preceded by a great messenger—the one we now know to be John the Baptist.¹² And not only does the Bible have amazing predictions about Jesus' birth and ministry, but it provides a detailed description of Jesus' final days before the crucifixion with uncanny accuracy.

For instance, about 550 years before Jesus hung on the Cross, Zechariah gave multiple prophecies citing specific things that would occur during the Passion Week preceding Jesus' death. He predicted that Jesus would enter Jerusalem for that final time riding on the colt of donkey—and that's what Jesus did.¹³

He forecast that Jesus would be betrayed by a friend¹⁴, and more precisely, for the price of 30 pieces of silver.¹⁵ Zechariah even said that this “*friend*” would realize his great sin and return the money to the Temple and end up throwing those coins of death on the floor.¹⁶ All this happened just as Zechariah said—not to mention an additional prophesy provided by Jeremiah that affirms this same prediction. (See: [Jeremiah 32:6-14](#).)

And if you need more, then read Psalm 22 in its entirety, especially this part which says: ¹⁶ **“My enemies surround me like a pack of dogs; an evil gang closes in on me. They have pierced my hands and feet. ¹⁷ I can count all my bones. My enemies stare at me and gloat. ¹⁸ They divide my garments among themselves and throw dice for my clothing.”** Psalm 22:16-18 (NLT2) If someone reads this passage and can’t see the nails being driven into Jesus’ hands and feet, or the Roman soldiers gambling over his meager clothes—well, they might as well be blind.¹⁷ And, do you know what the most amazing thing is about Psalm 22? It was written about 1,000 years before Jesus death¹⁸, and about 900 years before Roman-styled crucifixion was even invented.¹⁹

What are the odds of all of these prophecies being fulfilled by the birth, life and death of one man—the One we know to be Jesus Christ? Using modern statistical analysis, Peter Stoner, in his book, *Science Speaks*, took these prophecies and calculated the probability for their fulfillment. And, do you know what he found the odds to be?—1 chance in 10 to the 17th power [1 in 10¹⁷]. That’s one chance in a number so large that it’s expressed by the numeral 1 with 17 zeroes after it! To give a little perspective to the odds of these biblical prophecies coming true let me give you a comparison. Let’s say you had in 10 to the 17th power [10¹⁷] in silver dollars. And you took all those silver dollars and spread them all out over the entire land surface of the State of Texas—they would cover Texas to the depth of 2 feet! And, if you took just one of those silver dollars and painted it blood-red to represent all of these prophecies about Jesus’ death and then stirred that gigantic mass of silver dollars up with a colossal spoon and had a blind-folded man reach into the pile and pull out one coin—what are the chances he’d pull out that blood-red coin? That’s the same chance of all these Biblical prophecies becoming a reality. And yet, that is exactly what happened! All of them were fulfilled just as the Bible said they would!

With such an extraordinarily, high degree of prophetic accuracy, how could anyone come to any other conclusion but that the Bible is the inspired Word of God? The biblical expert, Norm Geisler, sums it up well when he states: **“Other books claim divine inspiration, such as the Koran, The Book of Mormon, and parts of the Hindu Veda. But none of those books contain predictive prophecy. As a result, fulfilled**

prophecy is a strong indication of the unique, divine authority of the Bible."²⁰ He's so very right—no other book can make such a claim!

The third reason that we trust the reliability of the Bible is that what it has to say is confirmed by modern day archeology. For example, in the Old Testament, Isaiah makes reference to King Sargon of Assyria.²¹ The Book of Genesis, and elsewhere in the Old Testament, mentions the ancient people known as the Hittites.²² The Book of Daniel makes reference to the Babylonian King known as Belshazzar.²³ For years, many secular historians rolled their eyes whenever the Old Testament texts mentioned King Sargon, or the Hittites, or even King Belshazzar. These historians argued that the Bible was in error to mention them because they contended that these people were just myths or legends. But, archaeological discoveries have proven that each of these biblical references is 100% correct and that these people actually did walk the pages of history.²⁴ In fact, Josh McDowell points out: "There are literally thousands of archeological discoveries that confirm the truth of what is presented in the Bible. And not one single find has refuted anything taught in the Bible."²⁵ Yes, archeology proves the Bible to be completely accurate!

Now this fourth reason we can trust the Bible really makes it really hard on those *"three drunken guys in a bar"*—as far as their claim to authorship of the Bible might go. You see, if three drunken guys had written the Bible, I would expect that there would have been more than a few errors, typos and inconsistencies in their texts. But, when you look for such errors in the Bible, as compared to other ancient secular writings, any typos and clerical mistakes are few and far between. So why would that be important? Well, it's important because many people have the false impression that what we have as the written words in our Bibles today might have changed over the years from the original Scriptures when God first inspired their production. These skeptics claim that there is no way that we can be sure that what we have today are the same Words of God that were originally handed down. But, they are dead wrong. And they are dead wrong because they are ignorant of the amazing spiritual guidance provided by the Holy Spirit to the original writers—men like Moses, the Prophets themselves, the Gospel writers, along with Paul and the other biblical writers. They wrote what God laid upon their hearts just as clearly as God dictated it to them. And thereafter, the system used to copy these sacred texts and pass them along over the centuries was practically fail-safe. Such errors as may exist in the biblical texts are wholly insignificant, and have nothing to do with the actual content of God's message.

For example, those ancient scribes who would copy the texts of the Bible by hand were scrupulous in making certain that they copied every letter of every word correctly. The biblical scholar, F. F. Bruce, tells us that they worked "with the greatest imaginable reverence, and devised a complicated system of safeguards

against scribal slips. They counted, for example, the number of times each letter in the alphabet occurs in each book; they pointed out the middle letter of the Pentateuch and the middle letter of the whole Hebrew Bible, and made even more detailed calculations than these. "Everything countable seems to [have been] counted."²⁶ In other words, if your copy came up with too many or too few letters for the overall word-count, they'd take it out and throw it in the trash. And if that happened too many times—well, the worst of these scribes assigned to copying the biblical texts might unfortunately find themselves unemployed. And worst yet, they might themselves commiserating with those three drunken guys in the bar.

Another thing that many people don't realize is that you can tell if an ancient text of any particular document is accurate by comparing it to copies of that same document that may have been handed down over time. In other words, if you were fortunate enough to find 50 copies of any ancient document, then you could compare them for consistency. If you found that 49 of them were exactly alike, but that one of them had some different wording, then it's a pretty good chance that that one is in error, and you could eliminate it. So, the more ancient copies that you have, the better your chance to get at what the original version actually said. Well, how does the New Testament of the Bible stack up with other ancient texts in this regard? Using this criteria, it is safe to say that the words found in our Bibles today are virtually identical to what the original writers composed when the New Testament was first written. Again, listen to what Norm Geisler tells us: "There are more early Greek manuscripts for the New Testament than for any book from the ancient world. Many [ancient] classics survive on only a handful of manuscripts, some even have only two."²⁷ [For instance, there are only 49 copies of Aristotle's works, and just 7 copies of one of Plato's most famous works.²⁸ So, for purposes of comparison, how many original manuscripts of the New Testament texts do we have from ancient times?] Geisler continues and answers: "Yet the New Testament has 5,366 Greek manuscripts dating all the way back to just after the end of the first century when the books were originally written. The discovery of the Dead Sea scrolls confirmed the accuracy of the Old Testament manuscripts. And the recent discovery of thousands of tablets at Ebla support the historical nature of the early chapters of Genesis."²⁹ You see—if people can't trust the Bible, then you can't trust any other ancient writings either. So just go on and throw all the works of Homer, Aristotle and Plato out the window, because the Bible puts all of them to shame—both with respect to authenticity, and from a spiritual standpoint as well.

The fifth reason that you can trust in the Bible is simply this: **IT'S COMPLETELY TRUE!** It's both historically and spiritually true. Now those three drunken guys would tell you otherwise. They'd insist that the Bible is just a bunch of fairy tales—like *Little Red Riding Hood*, or one of *Aesop's fables*. To those who

claim that the Bible is a fairy tale, they simply have failed to delve into the personalities of the people described in the Bible. Fairy tales have clear black and white villains and heroes. The villains are thoroughly bad, and the heroes are completely good. But, with the exception of Jesus Christ, the narrative of the Bible gives us anything but perfect heroes. And to the extent there are heroes, they have noticeable flaws. Moses was a murderer. Abraham and Jacob were both deceivers at times. Isaac displayed flawed leadership in his family in showing favoritism to one son over another. Gideon was a coward with wavering faith, and an idol maker to boot. Samson was utterly flawed for both indifference to God and for making so many bad decisions in life. Jonah was a disobedient cry-baby. David was an adulterer who plotted and carried out an assassination. Peter denied his Lord three times. Paul imprisoned and killed innocent people. Listen folks—if you are into fairy tales with fairy tale characters, then you won't like the Bible one little bit. The Bible is no fairy tale, and all its stories do not have fairy tale endings. And, I think that we can all agree that people don't die for fairy tales. Nobody is going to voluntarily submit to a firing squad, a noose, a Jihadist's sword, or be hung on a cross because they believe in *Little Red Riding Hood*. But, Jesus' disciples and the rest of the early church martyrs died because they believed the Truth as stated in God's Holy Scriptures—which is our the Bible. All I can say is this: Anyone who reads the Bible and thinks that it falls within the genre of fairy tales either has half a brain or has been spending way too much time in a bar with those three drunken guys.

There are so many other reasons that I could give to show you that the Bible is something that comes directly from the Mind of God. But in the interest of time, let me give you a sixth reason, and we'll end with that. Think about this. The hands that held the chisels, quills and pens that inscribed the words we now find in the Bible were human hands. They were the hands of Moses, the Prophets, the Disciples, Paul, and all of the other people who were the biblical writers. Yet, those hands were guided letter by letter, word by word, sentence by sentence by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. And while the Bible was written by various different people, those individuals could no more claim to be the authors of the Bible than a printing press could claim to be the author of the Bible that I am holding in my hand. Yes, they mechanically wrote the Words down on paper, but the Words came to them directly from God. Why do I say this?

Well, when we consider the great diversity of sources from which the Bible emerges, yet observe the incredible unity of the spiritual message that the Bible provides, there is no way to explain how this can be except that it was wrought by the Hand of God. There is no other book ever written like it. It was the product of about 35 different people acting under God's inspiration who wrote in three different languages

(Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek) over a period of about sixteen hundred years (c. 1500 B.C. to c. 100 A.D.). And these people who God used to write the Bible came from all kinds of different backgrounds. Some were kings, shepherds, farmers, fishermen, a doctor—and my goodness, even a tax collector and, of all things, a lawyer, were thrown in the mix for good measure. And yet, out of all this great diversity and vast passage of time, the Bible yields one central and unchanging message that has been true from the beginning of time and continues to be true today. And that message is this: We are all broken people, so badly in need of healing, and sinners who are so sadly in need of redemption. And yet, despite our sorry state, God still loves us. And so He sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to die for us. And God raised Him from the dead so that you and I, and those three drunken guys in a bar, can be forgiven, and live with God in His Kingdom forever.³⁰ *That is the message of the Bible.*³¹ *And it is absolutely true. Believe it!*

Let us pray.

Forest Hill Baptist Church
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Darvin Satterwhite, Pastor
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¹ Ronald Wilson Reagan (1911-2019) Edythe Draper, *Draper's Book of Quotations for the Christian World*, (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1992), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, p, 35-37.

² Researchers have found that the average cost of college for the 2017–2018 school year was \$20,770 for public schools, in-state (4 years x \$20,779 = \$83,080) and \$46,950 for nonprofit private schools, only including tuition, fees, and room and board. “Average Cost of College in America: 2019 Report,” www.valuepenguin.com.

³ A. W. Geiger, “5 facts on how Americans view the Bible and other religious texts,” www.pewresearch.org (April 2014).

⁴ Norman Geisler, “How Can We Know the Bible Is Reliable?” LaVonne Neff et al. Ed., *Practical Christianity*, (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1987), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, 384-385.

⁵ Galatians 3:10 (NLT2) Cursed is everyone who does not observe and obey all the commands that are written in God’s Book of the Law.

⁶ Luke 11:28 (NLT2) [Jesus said:] “But even more blessed are all who hear the word of God and put it into practice.”

⁷ Luke 11:28 (NLT2) Jesus replied, “But even more blessed are all who hear the word of God and put it into practice.”

⁸ Norman Geisler, “How Can We Know the Bible Is Reliable?” LaVonne Neff et al. Ed., *Practical Christianity*, (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1987), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, 384-385.

⁹ Jeremiah 30:9 (NLT2) For my people will serve the LORD their God and their king descended from David—the king I will raise up for them.

¹⁰ Micah 5:2 (HCSB) Bethlehem Ephrathah, you are small among the clans of Judah; One will come from you to be ruler over Israel for Me. His origin is from antiquity, from eternity.

¹¹ Isaiah 7:14 (NASB) Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel.

¹² Malachi 3:1 (NLT2) “Look! I am sending my messenger, and he will prepare the way before me. Then the Lord you are seeking will suddenly come to his Temple. The messenger of the covenant, whom you look for so eagerly, is surely coming,” says the LORD of Heaven’s Armies. William MacDonald explains: “God next answers the impious challenge of the previous verse. He will send His messenger, a promise that had an early and partial fulfillment in John the Baptist, but awaits a later and complete fulfillment when Elijah (4:5) will prepare the way of the Lord,... the Messenger of the covenant whom they desired (irony). The irony here is that when He later arrived (His First Advent), the nation of Israel did not delight in Him but crucified Him instead.” William MacDonald,

Believer's Bible Commentary: A Thorough, Yet Easy-to-Read Bible Commentary That Turns Complicated Theology Into Practical Understanding, ed. Arthur Farstad, (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1995), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, 1176.

¹³ Zechariah 9:9 (NKJV) Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you; He is just and having salvation, Lowly and riding on a donkey, A colt, the foal of a donkey. Matthew 21:4-5 (TEV) ⁴ This happened in order to make come true what the prophet had said: ⁵ "Tell the city of Zion, Look, your king is coming to you! He is humble and rides on a donkey and on a colt, the foal of a donkey."

¹⁴ Zechariah 13:6 (NIV) "If someone asks him, 'What are these wounds on your body?' he will answer, 'The wounds I was given at the house of my friends.'

¹⁵ Zechariah 11:12 (NASB) I said to them, "If it is good in your sight, give me my wages; but if not, never mind!" So they weighed out thirty shekels of silver as my wages. (See also, Exodus 21:32 (NASB) if the ox gores a male or female slave, the owner shall give his or her master thirty shekels of silver, and the ox shall be stoned."

Matthew 26:15 (NASB) "What are you willing to give me to betray Him to you?" And they weighed out thirty pieces of silver to him."

¹⁶ Zechariah 11:13 (NASB) Then the LORD said to me, "Throw it to the potter, that magnificent price at which I was valued by them." So I took the thirty shekels of silver and threw them to the potter in the house of the LORD. Matthew 27:3-10 (NASB) ³ Then when Judas, who had betrayed Him, saw that He had been condemned, he felt remorse and returned the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, ⁴ saying, "I have sinned by betraying innocent blood." But they said, "What is that to us? See to that yourself!"

⁵ And he threw the pieces of silver into the temple sanctuary and departed; and he went away and hanged himself. ⁶ The chief priests took the pieces of silver and said, "It is not lawful to put them into the temple treasury, since it is the price of blood." ⁷ And they conferred together and with the money bought the Potter's Field as a burial place for strangers. ⁸ For this reason that field has been called the Field of Blood to this day. ⁹ Then that which was spoken through Jeremiah the prophet was fulfilled: "AND THEY TOOK THE THIRTY PIECES OF SILVER, THE PRICE OF THE ONE WHOSE PRICE HAD BEEN SET by the sons of Israel; ¹⁰ AND THEY GAVE THEM FOR THE POTTER'S FIELD, AS THE LORD DIRECTED ME." (See: Jeremiah 32:6-14.)

¹⁷ Matthew 27:35 (NLT2) After they had nailed him to the cross, the soldiers gambled for his clothes by throwing dice.

¹⁸ "Psalm 22 foreshadowed the crucifixion of Jesus," aboutbibleprophecy.com; David Guzik, "Study Guide for Psalm 22, www.blueletterbible.org.

¹⁹ Charles Colson, "Why I Trust the Bible," LaVonne Neff et al., Ed., *Practical Christianity*, (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1987), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, 385-387.

²⁰ Josh McDowell, "The Uniqueness of the Bible," *The New Evidence that Demands a Verdict*, Thomas Nelson: Nashville (1999) p. 13.

²¹ Isaiah 20:1 (NLT2) In the year when King Sargon of Assyria sent his commander in chief to capture the Philistine city of Ashdod . . .

²² Genesis 10:15 (NLT2) Canaan was also the ancestor of the Hittites. 1 Kings 9:20 (NLT2) There were still some people living in the land who were not Israelites, including Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites.

²³ Daniel 5:1 (NLT2) Many years later King Belshazzar gave a great feast for 1,000 of his nobles, and he drank wine with them.

²⁴ Josh McDowell, "The Uniqueness of the Bible," *The New Evidence that Demands a Verdict*, Thomas Nelson: Nashville (1999) p. 93.

²⁵ Norman Geisler, "How Can We Know the Bible Is Reliable?" LaVonne Neff et al. Ed., *Practical Christianity*, (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1987), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, 384-385.

²⁶ Josh McDowell, "The Uniqueness of the Bible," *The New Evidence that Demands a Verdict*, Thomas Nelson: Nashville (1999) p. 75.

²⁷ Norm Geisler, LaVonne Neff et al., *Practical Christianity*, (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1987), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, 384-385.

²⁸ Doug Powell, Holman Quick Source Guide to Christian Apologetics, "Is the New Testament Reliable?" Holman: Nashville, (2006), p. 157

²⁹ Norm Geisler, LaVonne Neff et al., *Practical Christianity*, (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1987), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, 384-385.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ John 3:16 (NKJV) For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. Romans 5:8 (NLT2) But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners. Romans 10:9-10 (NLT2) ⁹ If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰ For it is by believing in your heart that you are made right with God, and it is by confessing with your mouth that you are saved.