



# Songtime

MANY VOICES ONE MESSAGE



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**Songtime  
Resource  
Topic:**

Can We Trust  
the Bible?

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## *Can We Trust the Bible?*

Can we trust the Bible? Is it really from God or is it *merely* a book written by man? Other religions claim they have books from God, how can we know which one to accept? Can people living in the 21st century reasonably base their lives on a book written so long ago?

What would lead someone to follow the Bible? This material is offered to help you understand why you *can* trust the Bible. It is easy to recognize that the Bible is a special and unique book. Consider the following seven points.

### **1. It gives clear answers to tough questions:**

- a. Where does mankind come from?
- b. Why do we exist?
- c. How did we get in the mess we are in?
- d. Where are we going?
- e. How do we get out of the mess we are in?
- f. Is there a God?
- g. If there is a God, does He have a plan for us?
- h. Is there any hope for life after the grave?

Many people ask questions like these. I would challenge someone to find another book that is so consistent and clear in answering these universal questions.

### **2. Repeated and consistent claim to be God's Word.**

- a. Old Testament writers at least 3, 000 times referred to their writings as the very word of God. (Ex. 17:13-16; II Sam. 23:2; Ez. 10:2,33,45; Hag. 1:7.)
- b. New Testament witness:  
 II Timothy 3:16 — "All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness..."  
 I Cor. 2:13 — "...in which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words."  
 II Peter 1:19-21 — "And so we have the prophetic word made more sure, to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts. But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God."

c. What the Bible says...God says and vice-versa.

**God said**

Gen. 12:3  
Ex. 9:6

**“Scripture said”**

Gal. 3:8  
Rom. 9:17

**Bible said**

Gen. 2:24  
Ps. 95:7  
Ps. 2:1  
Isa. 55:3  
Ps. 16:10  
Ps. 2:7  
Ps. 97:7  
Ps. 104:4

**“God said”**

Matt. 19:4,5  
Heb. 3:7  
Acts 4:24-25  
Acts 13:34  
Acts 13:35  
Heb. 1:5  
Heb. 1:6  
Heb. 1:7

\*This repeated claim is worthy of careful consideration. The internal claim of the Bible is either true or false.

**3. The diversity and unity of the Bible.**

The Bible is consistent in its teaching regarding controversial topics like God, Man, Sin, Love...

— The Bible was written by some 35 authors from 3 different continents. The human authors differed in languages, life backgrounds, and cultures. They wrote during different moods, and economic situations. Yet, we see a surprising unity on many controversial subjects. This is not true of other religious books such as the Koran or the Book of Mormon.

“The Koran is really the product of one man, Muhammad, whose fragmented writings were gathered after his death into a single book exasperatingly lacking in arrangement. The so-called sacred books of other religions, including the Book of Mormon, assume much less the character of a unified book than does the Bible, and their mythological features, questionable historical particulars, and inconsistencies of religious perspective should put us on guard against speaking of “the Bible of man kind.” —*Expositors Bible Commentary*, Vol. 1 by Carl F.H. Henry, p.4

**4. The textual preservation and duration of the Bible.**

God has preserved a completely trustworthy text. Other ancient documents that most people trust have far less textual support than the Bible!

e.g. 5366 New Testament manuscripts  
63 copies of Homer’s *Illiad*

Objective Proof?

Is there proof from the surviving manuscripts of Scripture that these sixty-six books have been transmitted to us with such a high degree of accuracy as to assure us that the information contained in the originals has been perfectly preserved? *The answer is an unqualified yes.*

In fact, it has long been recognized by the foremost specialists in textual criticism that if any decently attested variant were taken up from the apparatus at the bottom of the page and were substituted for the accepted reading of the standard text, there would in no case be a single, significant alteration in doctrine or message. This can only be explained as a result of a special measure of control exercised by the God who inspired the original manuscripts of Scripture so as to insure their preservation for the benefit of His people. A degree of deviation so serious as to effect the sense would issue in failure to achieve the purpose for which the revelation was originally given: that men might be assured of God’s holiness and grace, and that they might know of His will for their salvation.

—Gleason Archer, *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties*

## 5. The theme of the Bible.

“Jesus Christ” -(Messiah) Immanuel (God with us)  
 —promised and predicted in the Old Testament  
 —provided in the New Testament  
 —Old Testament says—He is coming  
 —Gospels say —He is come  
 —Epistles say —He is coming again

## 6. How Jesus viewed the Scriptures.

Note: A critical question concerning scripture is how Christ viewed it:

- a) What Jesus taught about the Old Testament
- 1) Authority — Matthew 22:43
  - 2) Reliability — Matthew 26:54
  - 3) Finality — Matthew 4:4,7,10
  - 4) Sufficiency — Luke 16:31
  - 5) Indestructibility — Matthew 5:17-18
  - 6) Unity — Luke 24:27,44
  - 7) Clarity — Luke 24:27
  - 8) Historicity — Matthew 12:40
  - 9) Facticity — (scientifically) — Matthew 19:2-5
  - 10) Inerrancy — Matthew 22:29; John 3:12; 17:17
  - 11) Infallibility — John 10:35

see also: Luke 16:16, 17; Matt. 24:15; Luke 17:27; Mark 7:10; Mark 12:36;  
 Luke 10:12

- b) Jesus promised the New Testament  
 John 14:25-26; 16:13; Matt. 16:19; Acts 1:1; Heb.2:3
- c) Jesus confirmed the passages that critics reject
1. The creation account — Luke 11:51; Mt. 19:4,5
  2. Noah and the flood — Mt. 34:37-39
  3. Sodom and Gomorrah — Luke 10:12
  4. Jonah and the great fish — Mt. 12:39-41
  5. Mosaic authorship — Mk. 7:10; Jn. 7:19
  6. Unity of Isaiah — Jn. 12:38-41; Prophecy — Lk. 4:16-21
  7. Moses at the burning bush —Mt. 22:32
  8. Feeding of manna to the Israelites — John 6:49
  9. The repentance of Ninevah — Mt. 12:41
  10. Daniel’s prophecy

Please note that Jesus would not simply confirm these truths in an effort to accommodate popular views of the day.  
 (Mt. 5:21-22, 27-28, 31-32; 15:1-9; 22:29; 23:1ff; Jn.2:13; 3:10)

“Nothing could be clearer than that our divine Savior believed in the literal truthfulness of the entire Old Testament record, whether those accounts dealt with doctrinal matters, matters of science, or history. He who refuses to go along with the Lord in this judgment stands guilty of asserting that God can err (since Jesus is God as well as Man.) and that the sovereign Creator (John 1:1-3) stands in need of instruction and correction by the finite wisdom of man.”

—Gleason Archer, p.25

- d) Jesus made amazing personal claims:  
 Jesus Christ claimed that whatever He taught came from God with absolute and final authority.

- Matthew 11:27 — “All things have been delivered to Me by My Father.”
- Matthew 24:35 — “Heaven and earth will pass away but My word will not pass away.”
- Matthew 28:18 — “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.”
- Matthew 7:24-26 — Man’s destiny hinges on response to Christ’s words.
- John 12:48 — Christ said that His words would judge men on the last day.
- Matthew 5:21 — Christ put His words on an equal basis with the authority of the Old Testament and furthered its teaching.
- John 8:26-28 — Jesus said that His teaching came from the Father.
- John 5:24 — Jesus claimed that His words gave eternal life.
- Matthew 28:18; John 9:38 — Jesus accepted the acclaims of Deity and allowed men to worship Him.
- John 14:6 — Jesus said that He was the only way to come to God.

\*Such absolute authoritative statements are either true or false. To accept them necessitates rejection of other religions beliefs that are contradictory to them.

7. **The fulfilled prophecy of the Bible.**

The details of fulfilled prophecy cause the Bible to stand alone in its uniqueness (Acts 10:43; Ps. 40:7; Heb10:7).

“The most amazing drama that was ever presented to the mind of man— a drama written in prophecy in the Old Testament— is the narrative of Jesus the Christ. One outstanding fact, among many, completely isolates Him. It is this: that one man only in the history of the world has had explicit details given beforehand of His birth. Life, death and resurrection; that these details are in documents given to the public centuries before He appeared, and that no one challenges, or can challenge, that these documents were widely circulated long before His birth; and that anyone and everyone can compare for him self/herself the actual records of His life with those ancient documents, and find that they match one another perfectly. The challenge of this pure miracle is that it happened concerning one man in the whole history of the world.

— (D.M. Panton)

## Two Key Texts on the Origin of the Bible

### I. **The Origin of the Bible:**

The word “Bible” is derived from the Greek word *biblos* which means book, and is used in reference to the thirty-nine Old Testament and twenty-seven New Testament books of Scripture. The sixty-six books of the Bible are God’s revelation to man. This truth may be understood through careful examination of key passages of Scripture. Further verification of the Divine origin of the Bible is established in Jesus Christ’s view of Scripture.

A. **Key passages:** The Bible gives clear testimony to its own origin. This internal witness should not be lightly set aside. Consider the following concerning the origin of Scripture.

#### 1. **II Timothy 3:16-17**

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

The apostle Paul had reminded Timothy of his previous training in the Scripture from childhood (vv.14-15). In v. 15 the apostle identifies the Scriptures as “sacred” (i.e. holy) in association with God (cf. Isa. 40:25; 57:15). In the same verse he indicates the central purpose of Scripture: “Which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.” Christ is the central person in Scripture (Lk. 24:25-27; 24:46-47; John 5:39, 46; Acts 17:2-3) and the Scriptures have a certain innate ability to make one wise unto salvation. Having mentioned the Scriptures, the apostle takes the opportunity to restate two basic facts about all Scripture: a) their divine origin and b) their specific usefulness (vv.16,17).

a. **Their divine origin:** (v.16) “All Scripture is God breathed.” George W. Knight III writes: “This is another way of saying that Scripture is God’s word (cf. Jesus’ use of ‘Scripture’ and ‘Word of God’ in apposition to each other in Jn.10:35). The same thing is also said when the NT uses ‘God says’ for what is found in Scripture, whether the words were originally spoken by God or not and when Paul insists that the message he speaks consists of words taught by God’s Spirit (1 Cor. 2:12-13; cf. Heb. 3:7; Acts 1:16; II Pet. 1:21)” (p. 447, *N.I.G.T.C. Commentary on the Pastorals*).

#### **Old Testament Writings as statements from God**

Matthew 19:4-5 w/ Gen. 2:24

Acts 4:25 w/ Ps. 2:1-2

Rom. 9:17 w/ Ex. 9:16

Heb. 1:7 w/ Ps.104:4

In origin and character Scripture is God-breathed. In extent, it refers to “all” Scripture. The word “Scripture” may refer to the O.T. writings as in v.15 “sacred writings” (i.e. holy scripture) or to an enlargement from that to include NT writings as well.

It is significant that the apostle Peter includes the writings of Paul in the category of Scripture (cf. II Pet. 3:15-16). Knight writes that: “Paul insisted that his letters be read (1Thess. 5:27), exchanged (Col. 4:16), obeyed (e.g. 1 Cor. 14:37; II Thess. 2:15) and

identified the words he used to communicate the gospel message as ‘those taught by the Spirit’ (1 Cor. 2:13). In this letter Paul has praised Timothy for following his teaching (v.10), has urged Timothy to continue in what he has learned from Paul (v.14), has commanded Timothy to retain ‘the standard of sound words’ that he has heard from Paul (1:13), has commanded him to entrust what he has heard from Paul to faithful men so that they could teach others (2:2), and has insisted that Timothy handle accurately ‘the word of truth’ (2:15). After his remarks on ‘all Scripture’ he will urge Timothy to ‘preach the word’ (4:2), i.e., proclaim the apostolic message about which Paul has said so much in this letter”

(P. 448, N.I.G.T.C., *The Pastorals*).

Notice the inclusion of other parts of the Bible under the title “Scripture”: Luke 24:25-27, 44-45 — Moses, Prophets, Psalms; John 10:34-35 w/Ps. 82:6 — Law, Psalms; II Peter 1:19-21 — prophecy.

- b. **Their specific usefulness (vv.16-17).** The usefulness of Scripture extends beyond “giving wisdom that leads to salvation” (v. 15). In vv. 16-17 the divine origin of Scripture points to their usefulness in all areas of life under God. The apostle reveals positive and negative uses in the following pattern:

**Positive:** Teaching (Instruction cf. Rom. 15:4; II Tim. 2:19)

**Negative:** Reproof (rebuking error cf. II Tim 4:2; Titus 1:9)

**Negative:** Correction (setting right with reference to conduct)

**Positive:** Training in righteousness (right conduct in keeping with the teaching)

The New English Bible paraphrases this: “for teaching the truth, refuting error, for reformation of manner and discipline in right living.” Knight points out that the first pair deals with belief and the second with action. (Ibid., p.449)

Note: By virtue of their origin, the Scriptures are the final standard for faith and practice. Every believer is to be subjected to the authority of the Word of God which is powerful and able to judge the motives and intentions of the heart (Heb. 4:12). The authoritative place of the Scripture is especially seen in relation to the way the NT writers applied the OT to their readers (Lk. 16:29-31; Rom. 15:4; 1 Cor. 10; Heb. 12:5-6 w/ Prov. 3:11-12). On authority see also (1 Cor. 4:6; 1 Thess. 5:12; II Thess. 3:14; II Tim. 3:16-4:2; II Pet. 3:1-2).

Yet, as Dr. John Bright has written, “We do not worship a book. On the contrary, the sole authority to whom the Christian submits himself, is God— the God who, according to the Scripture, worked his redemptive purpose in Israel and, in the fullness of time, revealed himself in Jesus Christ. The Christian’s God is the Creator and Lord of all things, and is the Lord also of Scripture. He existed before there was a Bible, and quite independently of it. He performed his work of creation when no man was there to record it. He gave his covenant law at Sinai, and that law had authority in Israel before the Pentateuch was written. He did his saving work in Jesus Christ, who

came, did mighty works, died, and rose again, and this would be just as true had the Gospels never been penned. The Bible, therefore, derives its authority from God; it does not have authority of itself, but rather by virtue of the God to whom it witnesses and who speaks in its pages. The God of the Bible is the Christians' supreme authority in all senses of the word.

2. **II Peter 1:19-21**

“And so we have the prophetic word made more sure, to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts. But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.” (NASB)

The major theme of II Peter is the danger presented to the church by false teachers. In v. 19-21, the apostle identifies Scripture as the ultimate source of stability and confidence for the believer, as well as, the needed antidote to heretical teaching (2:1). In v. 19, Peter encourages his readers to pay attention to the prophetic word (OT), which he identifies as a more certain source of revelation and guidance than even his own witness of Jesus' transfiguration (v. 16-18). Peter goes on to provide the two-fold basis for the absolute reliability of Scripture's teachings.

a. **Negatively — The source of Scripture is not human** (v.20).

In verse 20, Peter is addressing the question of the origin of scriptural revelation. He asserts that it is not a matter of one's (the prophet's) own interpretation. In other words, the prophets did not “put their own spin” on what they saw or heard. They did not “interpret” with their own limited human minds what God said or showed them. Peter is probably countering the false teacher's charge that the Scriptures are merely human myths, much like they discounted his report of Jesus' transfiguration as “cleverly devised tales” (v.16). Many today adopt the same perspective toward the Bible's authority. In v. 21a, Peter puts added stress on his denial of a merely human thought process in the formation of Scripture: “For no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will...”

b. **Positively — The source of Scripture is Divine** (v.21).

Though Peter acknowledges a human element in the writing of Scripture (“Men...spoke”), his focal point is the motivation and source of their speaking: “men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.” Peter teaches that it was not the prophet's will, but God's Spirit actually “moving” (guiding, superintending) the human agents which produced Scripture. Therefore, when men spoke, God spoke. Scripture is the communication of God's truth to us, arriving through the agency of human writers and speakers who were so guided by the Holy Spirit that they reported exactly what God intended. (See Jer. 1:9; Num. 22:38). To assert, as many do today, that “the Bible is just a book written by men”, is to wrongly assume that there is no process by which a sovereign God could use fallible man to convey infallible truth. II Peter 1:21 reveals such a process, though some of the technical details remain a mystery to finite minds.