



The Validity of the Bible

I. TEXTUAL EVIDENCE

A. FOR THE OLD TESTAMENT...

1. The Massoretic Text (900 A.D.)

- a. Earliest complete text of Hebrew OT, copied by Jewish scribes called the Massorettes**
- b. Comparison with earlier Greek and Latin versions**
 - 1) Reveal very careful copying**
 - 2) With little deviation during the thousand years from 100 B.C. to 900 A.D.**

2. The Dead Sea Scrolls (150 B.C. - 70 A.D.)

- a. Discovered in 1947, containing copies of OT books dating back to 100 B.C.**
- b. Compared with the "Massoretic Text" of 900 A.D., they confirm the careful copying of Jewish scribes for over 1000 years!**

3. The Septuagint version of the OT (200 B.C.)

- a. A Greek translation of the OT, done in 200 B.C. by 70 scholars**
- b. It also confirms the accuracy of the copyists who gave us the Massoretic Text**

B. FOR THE NEW TESTAMENT...

1. The number of the manuscripts

- a. Over 4,000 Greek manuscripts**
- b. 13,000 copies of portions of the N.T. in Greek**

2. The location of the manuscripts

- a. Found in various places: Egypt, Palestine, Syria, Turkey, Greece, Italy**
- b. Making collusion very difficult (not one church or religion contains them all)**

3. The date of the manuscripts

- a. Several papyri fragments have been dated to within 50-100 years of the original**
- b. We have several nearly complete N.T. Greek manuscripts within 300-400 years**
 - 1) Codex Sinaiticus, found near Mt. Sinai**
 - 2) Codex Alexandrinus, found near Alexandria in Egypt**
 - 3) Codex Vaticanus, located at the Vatican in Rome**

4. The variations of the manuscripts

- a. The vast majority are very minor (spelling, differences in phraseology, etc.; modern translations often note the differences in footnotes)**
- b. Only 1/2 of one percent is in question (compared to 5 percent for the Iliad, an epic poem written by Homer, a Greek poet)**

5. Other translations of the manuscripts

- a. More than 1,000 copies and fragments in Syriac, Coptic, Armenian, Gothic, Ethiopic**
- b. 8,000 copies of the Latin Vulgate, some almost dating back to Jerome's original translation (ca. 400 A.D.)**

6. Writings of the early "church fathers" (100-400 A.D.)

- a. Early religious leaders who left 1000s of quotations of the NT in their writings**
- b. Even if all the NT manuscripts and translations were to disappear overnight, it would be possible to reconstruct the NT from their quotations, with the exception of 15-20 verses**

Conclusion:

Sufficient evidence to show the Greek text of the NT has been faithfully preserved, without the possibility of collusion or corruption by any one religious party or faction.



II. CANONICITY (Canon – “rule” or “standard”)

OLD TESTAMENT

A. RECOGNIZED BY JESUS...

1. Anyone who accepts the authority of Jesus will accept what He acknowledged as Scripture

a. He pointed people to the Scriptures - cf. Jn 5:39

b. He spoke of the faithfulness of Scripture - cf. Jn 10:35

2. Jesus recognized three major divisions of the OT, which included 39 books. (Lk 24:44 – Law of Moses, the Prophets, Psalms)

B. RECOGNIZED BY THE APOSTLES...

1. Paul acknowledged the Hebrew canon

- a. As written for our learning - Ro 15:4**
- b. As written for our admonition - 1Co 10:11**
- c. As profitable for doctrine, etc.- 2Ti 3:14-17**

2. The apostles frequently quoted from those books

- a. In their gospels - e.g., Mt 1:22-23; 2:17-18; Jn 12:37-41**
- b. In their efforts to evangelize - e.g., Ac 17:2-3**
- c. In their epistles - e.g., Ro 3:9-10; 4:3; 1Pe 2:6**

THE NEW TESTAMENT

A. THE EARLY CHURCH ADOPTED APOSTOLIC WRITINGS AS CANONICAL...

1. They continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine - Ac 2:42;

cf. 2Pe 3:2; Jude 17

2. They received their words as the God's words - 1Th 2:13; 1Co 14:37

3. Paul quoted the gospel of Luke as Scripture - 1Ti 5:18; cf. Lk.10:7

4. Paul's letters were designed to be circulated among the churches - Col 4:16

5. Peter equated Paul's letters with "Scripture" - 2Pe 3:15-16

-- The church accepted the apostles' writings because to accept their teaching was to accept Jesus Himself - cf. Jn 13:20

B. THE CRITERIA FOR ACCEPTING A BOOK AS CANONICAL...

1. Written by an apostle (e.g., Matthew, John, Paul, Peter)

2. Written by a close associate of an apostle (Mark, Luke, James, Jude)

- Thus the writing had to be "apostolic" in addition to showing evidence of inspiration

III. INSPIRATION BY GOD

1. Christians accept as their "canon" the 66 books of the Bible...

- 39 books of the Old Testament, 27 books of the New Testament

2. They view the Bible as "inspired" of God...

a. Literally, "God-breathed" (Gr., theopneustos)

b. Scriptures were given by the Holy Spirit, not simply the words of men

3. The Bible claims such inspiration...

a. It speaks of scripture inspired of God - 2Ti 3:16-17

b. It tells of men speaking as they were moved by the Holy Spirit

- 2Pe 1:20-21

c. It contains claims by those who spoke words revealed by the Spirit

- 1Co 2:9-13

EVIDENCE OF INSPIRATION

A. THE BIBLE CONTAINS 66 BOOKS, WRITTEN...

- 1. Over a 1600 year span**
- 2. Over a period of 40 generations**
- 3. By approximately 40 authors from every walk of life**
- 4. In different places**
- 5. At different times**
- 6. During different moods**
- 7. On three continents: Asia - Africa - Europe**
- 8. In three languages: Hebrew - Aramaic - Greek**
- 9. Which subject matter includes hundreds of controversial topics**
(such as the origin of man and the universe, the nature of God, the nature of sin and man's redemption)

B. HARMONY AND CONTINUITY

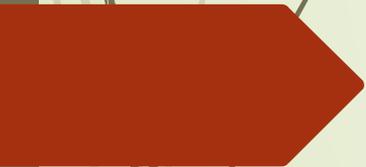
Compare the continuity of the Bible with any other writings of man

a. Imagine what you would have if you just took ten authors...

1) From one walk of life, one generation, one place, one time, one mood one continent, one language

2) Speaking on one controversial subject

b. Will there be harmony?



C. FULFILLED PROPHECIES

- 1. The fall of Babylon, written two hundred years before it occurred - Isa 13:17-22**
- 2. The fall of Egypt, that it would be destroyed more by civil war than by outside forces - Isa 19:1-4**
- 3. The fall of Nineveh, with its utter desolation - Zeph 2:13-15**
- 4. The fall of Tyre, with its becoming a place for the spreading of nests - Ezek 26:1-5**

5. There are the prophecies concerning Christ - cf. Lk 24:44-45

a. 332 prophecies fulfilled in Christ

b. Mathematical probability that all fulfilled in one person by chance alone = 84 times ten to the 123rd power (84 followed by 123 zeroes)

6. Prophecies by Christ, such as the destruction of Jerusalem

a. Foretold in Matthew 24, Mark 13, Luke 21

b. Fulfilled in A.D. 70, when Rome destroyed Jerusalem