

The Authenticity of the Bible (Continued)

5-19-19

1. What is history and how did we get it? Ancient written records are compared and archeological discoveries are analyzed and studied vis-à-vis the written records of antiquity.

1.1 To determine what is history versus fiction the following tests are used for written records:

- Oldest documents take precedence (those nearest the event)
- The number of documents available
- The number of mistakes in the various manuscripts and the substance of the errors
- The time interval between the event and the document

1.2 In summary, various external evidences such as established contemporaneous events, rulers, names of cities, civilizations known to exist at the time and archaeological records are compared and analyzed and conclusions drawn and codified.

1.3 Although the Bible is not a history book, the historical facts found in the Bible are remarkably accurate.

2. Last week we spent a great deal of time reviewing how we arrived at the Bible; all of which confirmed the historicity of the Scripture.

3. Scientific data, studied last week, also provided evidence of Scriptural authenticity. Eight phenomena were reviewed, the last one being; that air has weight.

4. There are many prophecies which Jesus fulfilled. Let's take a look at sixteen such prophecies.

4.1 that Jesus would be born in Bethlehem

Mic 5:2 But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.
4.2 that Jesus would be born of a virgin

Isa 7:14 Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

4.3 that Jesus would be believed on by gentiles

Gen 12:3 And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.

Isa 65:1 I am sought of them that asked not for me; I am found of them that sought me not: I said, Behold me, behold me, unto a nation that was not called by my name.

4.4 that Jesus would teach by parables

Psa 78:2 I will open my mouth in a parable: I will utter dark sayings of old:

Mat 13:34 All these things spake Jesus unto the multitude in parables; and without a parable spake he not unto them:

Mat 13:35 That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world.

Mat 13:36 Then Jesus sent the multitude away, and went into the house: and his disciples came unto him, saying, Declare unto us the parable of the tares of the field.

4.5 that Jesus would perform miracles

Isa 35:3 Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees.

Isa 35:4 Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with recompense; he will come and save you.

Isa 35:5 Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped.

Mat 9:35 And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people.

4.6 that Jesus' disciples would forsake Him

Zec 13:7 Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the LORD of hosts: smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered: and I will turn mine hand upon the little ones.

Mar 14:49 I was daily with you in the temple teaching, and ye took me not: but the scriptures must be fulfilled.

Mar 14:50 And they all forsook him, and fled.

4.7 that Jesus would be betrayed for 30 pieces of silver, the price of a slave, and that the money would be used to purchase a "potter's field"

Zec 11:13 And the LORD said unto me, Cast it unto the potter: a goodly price that I was prised at of them. And I took the thirty pieces of silver, and cast them to the potter in the house of the LORD.

Mat 27:8 Wherefore that field was called, The field of blood, unto this day.

Mat 27:9 Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying, And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was valued, whom they of the children of Israel did value;

4.8 that Jesus would be rejected, despised and bear our sorrows and transgressions

Isa 53:2 For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him.

Isa 53:3 He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

Isa 53:4 Surely, he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

Isa 53:5 But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

Isa 53:6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

4.9 Jesus Himself predicted He would be crucified and die on the cross

Mat 20:18 Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests and unto the scribes, and they shall condemn him to death,

Mat 20:19 And shall deliver him to the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify him: and the third day he shall rise again.

Mat 27:32 And as they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name: him they compelled to bear his cross.

Mat 27:33 And when they were come unto a place called Golgotha, that is to say, a place of a skull,

Mat 27:34 They gave him vinegar to drink mingled with gall: and when he had tasted thereof, he would not drink.

Mat 27:35 And they crucified him, and parted his garments, casting lots: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots.

Mat 27:36 And sitting down they watched him there;

Mat 27:37 And set up over his head his accusation written, THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS.

Mat 27:38 Then were there two thieves crucified with him, one on the right hand, and another on the left.

Mat 27:39 And they that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads,

Mat 27:40 And saying, Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself. If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross.

4.10 that the sun would go down and there would be darkness from 12:00 noon to 3:00 P.M.

Amo 8:9 And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord GOD, that I will cause the sun to go down at noon, and I will darken the earth in the clear day:

Mat 27:45 Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour.

4.11 that Jesus would be resurrected

Hos 6:2 After two days will he revive us: in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight.

Mat 16:21 From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day.

Mat 26:32 But after I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee.

4.12 that Jesus' bones would not be broken

Psa 34:20 He keepeth all his bones: not one of them is broken.

Joh 19:33 But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs:

4.13 that Jesus' side would be pierced

Zec 12:10 And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.

Joh 19:34 But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water.

4.14 that Jesus would be thirsty and be given gall and vinegar to drink

Psa 69:21 They gave me also gall for my meat; and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.

Psa 22:15 My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws; and thou hast brought me into the dust of death.

Joh 19:28 After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst.

Joh 19:29 Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar: and they filled a sponge with vinegar, and put it upon hyssop, and put it to his mouth.

4.15 that they would divide His garments and cast lots for them

Psa 22:18 They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture.

Joh 19:23 Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments, and made four parts, to every soldier a part; and also his coat: now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout.

Joh 19:24 They said therefore among themselves, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be: that the scripture might be fulfilled, which saith, They parted my raiment among them, and for my vesture they did cast lots. These things therefore the soldiers did.

4.16 that Jesus' body would not decay

Psa 16:10 For thou wilt not leave my soul in Sheol; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.

Acts 2:26 Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope:

Acts 2:27 Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.

5. There are so many other prophecies documenting the authenticity of the Bible. I have only provided a few of more than 300 remarkable prophecies fulfilled by Jesus.

6. We have looked at some of the documentation authenticating the Bible. So how did the early church determine what was real and what was not real. A point or two about the process will help.

7. Canonicity:

7.1 A tremendous mass of literature appeared in the first three or four centuries. Much of which claimed to be authoritative and inspired.

7.2 Something had to be done to determine which material should be included in the Canon.

7.3. The early Church fathers agreed upon five criteria to determine what material was to be included.

Was the book of Divine origin: that is to say, does the book in its entirety purport to be from God?

Was its claim to inspiration adequately sustained by the awareness of the writers that this was indeed sacred Scripture - in other words by internal evidence the writers in their sacred work believed they were providing the Canon.

Documentation by quotation; for example, The New Testament contains numerous quotations from the Old Testament made by not only Jesus Christ but by virtually every writer of Scripture.

The law of public or official action as in the case of the Old Testament, was there a record of the priest reading from it in public; such reading would serve to document the authenticity of the book being examined.

External evidence was used in the sense that the Masoretic copyist only preserved for us that which all of Israel seemed to know as the Canon.

8. From the *Grolier Encyclopedia* and *The World Book* we find a rather unbiased description of what is known as the pseudepigrapha and The Apocrypha.

Grolier Encyclopedia

“The word pseudepigrapha means, "books with false titles;" this refers to books similar in type to those of the Bible whose authors gave them the names of persons of a much earlier period in order to enhance their authority. The best known are 3 and 4 Esdras and the Prayer of Manasses, which are included in the Apocrypha.

“The term is applied to many Jewish and Jewish-Christian books written in the period B.C. 200 to 200 A.D. ... Fragments of the Damascus Document have been found among the Dead Sea Scrolls ... The pseudepigrapha are important for they throw light on Judaism and early Christianity ...

“The Apocrypha are books of the Old Testament included in Roman and Orthodox Catholic Bibles as deuterocanonical (added to the earlier canon), but excluded from the Hebrew Bible and from most Protestant Bibles. It is not certain why the term Apocrypha (hidden things) was originally applied to them but they were considered less authoritative than the other Biblical books because of the relatively late origin (300 B.C. to A.D.100)...”

The World Book

"The Apocrypha includes the first and second books of Esdras, Tobit, additions to the book of Esther, the Wisdom of Solomon, the Wisdom of Jesus the Son of Sirach, Judith, Baruch, the Song of the Three Children, Susanna and the Elders, Bel and the Dragon, the Prayer of Manasses and the 1st and 2nd books of Maccabees ... "The Apocrypha is an important source for Jewish history and religious developments in the 1st and 2nd centuries B.C."

9. There are many other pseudepigrapha such as the *Book of Mormons* and devotional and prayer books of Christian Science denomination which are accepted by some as biblical. There are also other Orthodox Catholic books accepted in their faith as supplemental to the Bible although rejected by the early Roman Catholic Church.

10. Paul inspired by the Holy Spirit anticipated this problem and made a rather sarcastic remark in Gal 1:8 and 9.

Gal 1:8 But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.
Gal 1:9 As we said before, so say I now again, if any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.

11. If you consider the copies available, age and accuracy of the documents it becomes quite obvious that we have the inspired Word of God preserved for us and need no extra-biblical revelation.

12. Flavius Josephus was an unbeliever who in *Contra Apion* described the sacred "*Books of the Jew.*" Clearly canonicity was an accepted part of Jewish History. Not surprisingly Josephus tells us (without any axe to grind) that the Old Testament is the Canon and has no need for pseudepigrapha.

13. Col. R. B. Thieme in his book *Canonicity* writes concerning the Apocrypha.

"The Rejection of the Apocrypha

1. The Apocrypha was never in the Hebrew Canon. Every card-indexing of the Canon of Scripture in the ancient world listed only ... the Old Testament, but it excluded the Apocrypha.

2. Neither Jesus Christ nor any of the New Testament writers ever quoted from the Apocrypha. Never even once.

3. Josephus expressly excluded them from his list of sacred scripture in his book. He explained that these books were excluded from the Canon because they were spurious.

4. These Apocryphal books were never asserted to be divinely inspired or to possess divine authority in their contents.

5. No mention of the Apocrypha was made in any catalogue of canonical books in the first four centuries A.D. It was not until the 5th century A.D. that a well-known organization slipped them into the catalogue.

6. No Prophets were connected with these writings. Each Old Testament book was written by a man who was a prophet either by office or by gift or both.

7. These books contained many historical, geographical and chronological errors. They so distorted and contradicted Old Testament narratives that in order to accept the Apocrypha one had to reject the Old Testament.

8. The Apocrypha teaches doctrines and upholds practices which are contrary to the Canon of Scriptures!

9. The Col. continues listing contrary practices found:

Prayers and offerings for the dead

In 2Ma 12:41-46, not only are prayers offered for the dead, but monetary offerings are brought on their behalf and even recommended! I am quoting from the Douay version ... of the Old Testament, which is a revised version of the Vulgate: 'It is therefore a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from sin...'

Suicide Justified

2Ma 14:41-46 deals with a revolt against the "Syrians," led by the Maccabean brothers ... the Apocrypha justifies this suicide and calls it a noble death.

Atonement and Salvation by Almsgiving

At least two of the books of the Apocrypha state that sins may be atoned for and salvation may be obtained by giving large donations.

Cruelty to Slaves Justified

In Ecc 33:25-29 we read that the best way to treat a slave is to pile the work on him, and that, if need be, cruelty to slaves is fully justified ...

The Doctrine of Emanations

This is a cosmological concept characteristic of ... Gnosticism. It explains the world as an "outflowing" from one absolute source but never uses the word God ...

The preexistence of souls

The Apocrypha claims that the soul, as well as the body is produced in procreation ... We know that ultimately only God can give soul-life."

Other fallacies in the Apocrypha ... hatred of Samaritans ... lying is sanctioned ... incantations are encouraged ... assassination is suggested ... seven angels are said to have the power of intercession ... purgatory is mentioned ..."

9.1 Interestingly, neither the Roman or Greek Orthodox Church accepts all of the theology of the Apocrypha but rather they have chosen to pick and choose and have therefore no absolute standard or Canon.

9.2 Much of that taught in the Apocrypha is vehemently opposed to sound Catholic teaching and many of the early Church Fathers without question considered the Apocrypha as questionable and not to be considered as equal with the Bible. There has been far less controversy with reference to what represents the New Testament.

10. Criteria for New Testament Canonicity can be summarized:

- Apostolicity - every Book must be written by an Apostle or someone close to an Apostle
- Reception by the early local Churches as being authentic
- Consistency - doctrines in the book must be consistent with extant Christian teaching
- Each Book must give either internal or external evidence of Divine inspiration

10.1 The Church Councils finally resolved all question as to what constituted our New Testament.

- a. Council of Laodicia-336 A.D.
- b. Council of Damascus-382 A.D.
- c. Council of Carthage-397 A.D.
- d. Council of Hippo-419 A.D.

10.2 The Council of Laodicia recognized and accepted all books of the New Testament except Revelation however the next three councils included the Revelation into the Canon.

10.3 The question of Canonicity never came up again until the rise of liberalism in the nineteenth century which led to our twentieth century modernism.

11. In closing I want to read in part a sermon given by James Kennedy entitled THE ANVIL.

“If the Bible had not been written many critics would have been out of work. It is the most attacked book written. Years ago I saw a painting of a very large anvil and around the anvil on the floor lay scattered many shattered, smashed hammers and underneath was written the words ‘the Word of God endureth forever.’ The anvil is an appropriate metaphor for the Word of God which like the anvil has endured the attacks of numerous skeptics and unbelievers and yet still stands unscathed in spite of the onslaught of the ages. Hammer away ye hostile hands your hammers break, God's anvil stands.” The Word of the Lord endureth forever.

“God in a supernatural way has sustained His Word down through the centuries against the attacks of all ranks and classes of men. Numerous kings with the scepter of state in one hand have taken up the hammer of unbelief and with the other they attempted with all their power of government itself to smash the anvil of God. The cases are numerous:

“One of the early ones involved Herod sometimes called the Great. He gathered together the wise men to find out where the Messiah should be born. Their reply, ‘it is written in the prophet, thou Bethlehem Ephratah though thou be least among the tribes of Judah yet out of thee shall He come forth to me who shall rule my people Israel. Whose goings forth has been from old, even from everlasting.’ Thus said the Prophet, thus declared the Word of God.’

“Then King Herod took up the hammer of his might and sent forth his soldiers to destroy that promise and nullify the prophecy. They killed all of the children two years old and younger in all of the environs of Bethlehem. And the King said he had brought to naught the prophecy of the Word of God. But God had warned Joseph in a dream. He took the child and his mother and fled into Egypt and so the prophecy came to pass. The Word of God was fulfilled. He that was to rule His people came forth out of Bethlehem after all.

“Another king 400 years later, Constantine the Great made Rome a Christian Empire; at his death his nephew Julian, later to be known as Julian the Apostate, rose to the throne. He was determined to reestablish the pagan religions of Rome and set out to study the Scripture and with his army to disprove Christianity by disproving its prophecies, by bringing them to naught.

“When he saw the prophecy concerning the destruction of the Temple he determined that he would build the Temple, again disproving the Scripture. He sent forth the money and the men to do just that; but there was a great earthquake that destroyed the work before it was hardly started. Undaunted, he started again, but this time from fissures in the earth there came forth great clouds of gas which were ignited in great explosions, terrifying the men. His men fled from the scene refusing to return in spite of all the inducements offered. Hammer away ye hostile hands your hammers break, God's anvil stands.

“Hitler who called himself a complete pagan and Mussolini who declared the church would soon cease to exist, set themselves obstinately against Christ's Church and the Word of God. Hitler determined to uproot Christianity root and branch. Hitler's charred body was discovered in a bunker. Mussolini hung by his feet in the town square. The Word of God goes on today. The Word of the Lord endureth forever.

“Many of those breaking their hammers against the anvil were changed into avid defenders of the very Word they hated. One such man was the brilliant and erudite Sir William Michael Ramsey, Oxford trained, born into a house of skepticism and atheism, his parents were wealthy unbelievers. He was determined that he would see the Word of God demolished. Unlike the philosophers who discoursed and made claims, he would use his training as an archaeologist to prove the Bible was the product of ambitious monks of the second and third century. After much study he determined the achilles heel of the New Testament was the book of Acts because it included detailed accounts of Paul's missionary journeys with the names of places throughout the Roman world.

“The critical world waited expectantly. Even some Christians were fearful of his findings. Beginning in 1881, he labored indefatigably for 15 years following the routes laid out by Luke. In 1896, he produced his work *Saint Paul, Roman Citizen, World Traveler*. “Much to the dismay of those scholars who waited for his finding. He said he had found Luke to be an astonishingly accurate guide for his journeys and when he had followed his instructions he had turned up the evidence which proved him right. For forty years he continued his excavations and writings all to the increasing chagrin of the unbelieving world. He found Luke to be accurate in the minutest detail. Ramsey committed his life to the Christ of the Scriptures which he had found to be unfailingly sure.

“Colonel Robert Ingersoll was a famous skeptic and unbeliever early in this century. He met a General on the train as he was traveling to one of his many speaking engagements against the Bible. As they discussed theology, he told the General, ‘you have great literary skills. Why don't you use these skills to demolish the myth and uncover the truth about this Jesus and show Him as the man among men.’ The general decided to take up the challenge and began his research.

“As he searched he found himself astonished that this peasant from Nazareth from which no good thing could come, having never attended school, never earned any degrees, walked upon a mountain and delivers the most astounding sermon on human ethics the world has ever seen. This general considered, how can He know these things? His amazement increased until there at the cross he received the Lord as His Savior. The General's name was Lou Wallace, a hero of the Civil war and the author of Ben Hur.

“A school devoted to skepticism of the Word was established in the early nineteenth century. They were determined to demolish all traditional views of the Bible. They said it was quite obvious Moses could not possibly have written the Pentateuch because writing had not been invented in Moses' day. About the time the school really got going so also developed the science of archaeology. The spade of the archaeologist became the bane of the school of higher criticism. The postulation concerning the incipience of writing post- dating Moses was soon disproved. According to several digs writing was found to have predated Moses by 1500 years, thus shattering the notion that Moses could not write.

“The Empire of Assyria with its capital of Nineveh was believed to never have existed except in the mythological Bible. None of the secular historians had written about Assyria. An archaeologist named Layard went to Masul where in an ancient dig he found a brick with the name Sargon. He sent it to the museum in Paris where it was declared to be fraudulent because the empire never existed. Layard later dug up the whole city of Nineveh and discovered thousands of inscriptions detailing the history of Assyria. The Hittites mentioned over 40 times in the Bible were believed to be mythical. In 1906, Hugo Winkler uncovered in central Turkey the city of Burgoscoi which turned out to be the capital of the empire of the Hittites.

“The story about Jericho and Joshua was a nice laughable story that made a nice song but it was not believed. Professor John Startang in 1930 spent 6 years uncovering one layer after another until he reached the time of Joshua. The story of Joshua, even to the detail of the walls falling inside out was proven as fact, furthermore the city was burned as the Old Testament declares. The birth of Jesus was a familiar target. Luke was a frequent target of several critics. Scholars said there was no such thing as a census required by Rome. People were not required to return to their ancestral homes said the critics. A papyrus was discovered which said, ‘because of the approaching census it is necessary that all those residing for any cause away from their homes should prepare at once to return to their own governments in order that they may complete the family registration of the enrollment and that the tilled lands may return to those belonging to them.’”

12. In conclusion, we have seen overwhelming data supporting the authenticity of both the Old and New Testaments and yet there are those today who very subjectively dismiss the historical accuracy of these books. Though the Old and New Testaments are not history books per se, their contents meet the tests of history and stand head and shoulders above any other documents which claim to be historically accurate.

End Lesson

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