

IS THE BIBLE THE WORD OF GOD?

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For many hundreds of years now the Bible has been proclaimed to be the Word of God. Many religions have been established with it; great nations have used it as the basis for the laws of their legal systems. Entire cultures and individuals have used it, to a greater or lesser degree, as a guide for their lives.

But today the world is turning against the Bible. Its authenticity is questioned; it's derisively described as the superstitious ramblings of ancient teachers; its moral laws are considered outdated and oppressive. Even many of those who call it the Word of God hardly bother to live according to its principles. In much of the world where it once held sway, it has fallen into disregard and insignificance.

But does a change in attitudes necessarily mean that the Bible is not what it claims to be—the very Word of God? Is it really so difficult to believe there is a creator God who wants to reveal himself to man through a permanent resource? The purpose of this article is to encourage the undecided to consider the likelihood that the Bible is God's message to man.

It's Reasonable to Believe That God Has Revealed Himself in a General Way

It's only natural to ask where did we come from and why are we here? In view of current scientific thought, it's also fair to ask is it really possible that we are here by mere happenstance? Even the Big Bang Theory is based upon a previously existing, enormous hoard of basic matter that would without aid morph into a life producing universe.

In 1905, Albert Einstein announced that mass and energy are equivalent. If all mass is a form of energy, where did all the energy of the entire universe come from? That energy must have come from something of even greater power. That power would be God.

The universe is intricately and minutely ordered. How likely is it that that order came about unaided? This defies the laws of physics: things wear out; they never continuously improve apart from outside aid. Is it fair to cast aside the laws of physics just to do away with God? Science teaches that our solar system is located in the perfect place for safety within our galaxy, and the Earth is situated in the best place to support life within the solar system. Move us elsewhere in our galaxy or solar system and life becomes unsustainable. All things must be in order for the sake of life on Earth. A well-organized universe demands a powerful, intelligent creator.

Contemporary scientists insist that all life began in simplicity and then advanced in complexity. If so, early life would have been blind to light because it began without sight. How likely is it that an unseeing, single-cell creature would begin to develop, over the course of millions of years, a complex system of converting reflected light into usable images within its own mind? For most of the process, the necessary components would have been completely useless. Doesn't any exceedingly complex system require an exceedingly intelligent designer?

Why does man stand so far above the animals he shares the world with? Man alone is able to reason. He is able to formulate predetermined plans for the future. He is able to begin with nothing and engineer a complex mechanical design like a robotical machine to do his work. Doesn't that suggest that man might have been patterned by an intelligent, creative being as well? Creativity, whether it be mechanical or artistic, requires intelligent design in our world.

How did life begin? Science admits that they have no idea, and can only speculate that it might have been through chemical reaction or possibly a bolt of lightning, among many other things. Lightning only destroys, and chemical reaction, even when carefully guided by man's intelligence, has never initiated life. We can't even begin to resurrect life once original life has truly departed. Common sense says it takes a powerful, living being to give life; after all, life always comes from life in our world.

Morality is another interesting subject. Man is a moral creature. Without being taught, everyone knows that theft is wrong. Anyone who has been stolen from knows innately that they have been wronged. The thief doesn't generally steal openly: he tries to hide his immoral deeds. Societies have always considered things like theft, murder, rape to be immoral. Animals have no such misgivings about morality. If we are descended from animals, why aren't we amoral like our suggested progenitors? Why has man always organized himself into societies with do's and don'ts? Right and wrong must be an innate part of man's nature.

Man also has an innate understanding of the concept of justice. The victim of theft wants his goods back—it's only right. He may even wish to exercise vengeance on the thief; punishment has always been associated with justice. Throughout the history of man, rules have been made and rule-breakers have been punished. Isn't it likely that a moral creator would pattern his creatures after Himself, and instill within them at least some of his own morality?

Contemporary science insists there is no god. Yet again, history shows societies have always manifested belief in a god, and devised their own ways to worship him. If man is descended from animals, why would he have a belief in god at all? However, if he is the product of a creator God, is it unreasonable to think that the creator would instill into his creatures the desire to know and worship their creator? That would explain the universal belief and worship evidenced in this world.

All these things considered together suggest that it is completely reasonable to believe that God has revealed Himself to mankind in a general way. Together it says there is a God, but we don't know that God. It says that we are far removed from that God and have no access to Him. It says that we are similar to Him, but very inferior. It teaches that we are moral beings, but shows that we are guilty of being immoral and are worthy of just punishment.

We need to ask: why do we not know God? How can we learn of Him? How can we find Him? Why does it seem that we so far removed from Him? Is there any real hope for answers?

It's Reasonable to Believe That God Has Revealed Himself in a Special Way

Would God create the universe, and then create man only to abandon him? Would God instill into man a basic knowledge of his Creator, but leave him forever in ignorant darkness? That seems unreasonable. If God wanted to truly reveal Himself to man, He would do it in a very practical, very specific, very special way. He could record everything man needed to know by recording it in book form. That way, it would be usable, portable, reproducible, translatable, and permanent.

That book is called the Bible. Through the Bible, God reveals Himself to man. Through it, God answers the questions that man ought to ask and much more; it is literally everything man needs to know about God.

Is there a God? The Bible doesn't try to prove the existence of God; general revelation does much of that. It merely declares the fact of God: Genesis 1:1 simply says, "In the beginning God..."

What does the Bible claim for itself? It claims to be God's own words for man: Hebrews 1:1 & 2 say, "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son..." Jeremiah 30:2 says, "Thus speaketh the LORD God of Israel, saying, Write thee all the words that I have spoken unto thee in a book." 2 Timothy 3:16 says, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God..." In 2 Samuel 23:2, King David said, "The Spirit of the LORD spake by me, and his word was in my tongue." God spoke His words through men, and recorded His words through men. Because God is the author and recorder of the Bible, there is no possibility of error. Christ said of the Bible in John 17:17, "thy word is truth."

It also claims to be complete in itself, and warns against any adding to it or taking from it: Revelation 22:18-19 says, "For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book."

Where did we come from? The Bible says in Genesis 1:1, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." Genesis 1:27 says, "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them."

Why am I Here? In Deuteronomy 6:5, the Bible says, "And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might." Deuteronomy 10:12 says, "And now, Israel, what doth the LORD thy God require of thee, but to fear the LORD thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the LORD thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul." Deuteronomy 30:20 says, "That thou mayest love the LORD thy God, and that thou mayest obey his voice, and that thou mayest cleave unto him: for he is thy life, and the length of thy days." John 3:16 begins "For God so loved the world..." Man was originally created to love God, to fellowship with God, and to be loved of God.

Why do we not know God, and why does it seem that we are so far removed from Him? The problem lies within man himself. Although he was created for fellowship with God, man has broken that fellowship through sin. The Bible, in Romans 3:10, says, "As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one." It also says in Romans 3:23, "For all have

sinned, and come short of the glory of God.” And why are we so far removed from God? In Isaiah 59:2, the Bible says, “But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.” The reason for the separation is plain and painfully concise. God is the standard, and we are to match that standard: 1 Peter 1:16 says, “Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.” Because we are sinners, we are not holy.

It’s reasonable to ask, what does all this mean to me? Remember that man is a moral being because God is moral. Man has a sense of justice because he was created by a God of justice. In Psalms 89:14, the Bible says, “Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne....” Notice that justice is linked with judgment. Genesis 18:25 asks, “Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?” God is that judge, and one day he shall judge all the earth. The Bible says in Matthew 12:36, “That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.” Hebrews 9:27 says, “And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.” Revelation 20:12 says, “And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.” Verse 15 adds, “And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.” God is the God of just punishment.

It’s reasonable to ask: Is there no hope? It’s true; there would be no hope whatsoever, except that God Himself provided that hope. Remember the love of God? The Bible says in John 3:16, “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” It then goes on to say in verses 17 and 18, “For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.”

Because of God’s love for man, He sent His son, Christ, to be born as the perfect, sinless man, in order to represent man and suffer man’s punishment of death. The Bible says in Romans 5:8, “But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” God demands that sinners repent of their sins, and receive Christ as their Lord and Saviour. Christ Himself said in Luke 13:3, “I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.” To repent of sin means to begin seeing sin as God sees it, something repugnant, repulsive, and hated. It involves a change of attitude and mind toward sin, and a turning from it. To repent means to depart from and forsake sin, while simultaneously receiving Christ as Saviour. God’s message to sinful man, found in John 17:3, is “And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.” Christ is the only hope for sinful man. God can only be known through His Son. This is God’s recorded message for man.

It’s Reasonable to Believe That the Bible is Truly God’s Revelation of Himself to Mankind

It’s popular today to scoff at the Bible and at those who believe it. The Bible is ridiculed as not only being outdated, but hopelessly inaccurate in every way. Those who believe the Bible are scorned as ignorant and uneducated. But is the Bible hopelessly inaccurate? It may surprise some to learn that the Bible is very accurate. Whatever topic it deals with, the Bible never contradicts the truth.

Archaeological evidence shows that the Bible is always reliable on the historical and cultural events of which it speaks. The people, places and events of the Bible are real. The Hittite nation (Genesis 15:20) was once thought to be a Biblical legend. Archaeologists originally believed that there was no Assyrian king named Sargon (Isaiah 20:1), or Belshazzar (Daniel 5:1), a king of Babylon. Yet the Bible is proven accurate by continuous discovery.

The Bible is in agreement with paleontology. The book of Job describes huge creatures that could only be dinosaurs (Job 40:15-24 & 41).

The Bible is in agreement with astronomy. The Bible describes the stars as too numerous to count (Jeremiah 33:22). Each star is said to be unique (1st Corinthians 15:41). The suspension of the Earth in space is spoken of in Job 26:7.

The Bible is consistent with geology and geophysics. It shows that the Earth is spherical (Isaiah 40:22), and when one part of the world is hidden in darkness, the opposite is in daylight (Luke 17:30-35); this shows the rotation of the Earth. The Bible speaks of the mountains and valleys of the ocean floor (Jonah 2:6 & 2nd Samuel 22:16). It speaks of the ocean currents (Psalm 8:8) and the Earth’s wind patterns (Ecclesiastes 1:6). It describes the hydrologic cycle of rain (Psalm 135:7). It even mentions that air has weight (Job 28:5).

The Bible is consistent with biology. The Bible teaches that the “the life of the flesh is in the blood” (Leviticus 17:11). This was discovered by William Harvey in 1616, some 3000 years behind the Bible. Acts 17:25-26 shows that there is a genetic unity of mankind. The Bible also describes the elements of man’s flesh (Genesis 2:7).

The Bible is consistent on many, many levels in spite of being written over the course of 1600 years by more than 40 different writers. It has a consistent, unified theme where God, His holiness and love are revealed; man's sinfulness and hopelessness are exposed; and God's work of redemption through the sacrifice of His Son is proclaimed.

The result of Bible belief can be seen in dramatically changed lives. There are countless testimonies of people who have been delivered from the darkest, most hopeless situations through the salvation of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. They have been rescued from the ruin of overpowering sin, vice, drug addiction, and the brink of suicide. God has revealed Himself to man through the Bible, because it is the Word of God.

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