

SESSION 5:

THE RELIABILITY OF THE BIBLE

"I choose to believe the Bible because it is a reliable collection of historical documents, written by eyewitnesses during the lifetime of other eyewitnesses, reporting supernatural events that took place in fulfillment of specific prophecies and claimed their writings are Divine and not of human origin." -Voddie Baucham

I. INTRODUCTION

Christians uphold the Bible as the Word of God, _____ by the Holy Spirit while written by human authors.

The question is, what reasons do we have to _____ what the Bible has to say about itself, or anything else?

II. THE HISTORICAL REASONS

The historical evidence for the Bible points to its unique _____.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE BIBLE

The Bible was written by more than _____ authors, in _____ languages, on _____ continents, over the course of _____ centuries.

Yet the literary quality, theological depth, and cultural impact of the Bible is unrivaled.

A writing project this monumental requires a _____ superintendent.

EYEWITNESSES IN THE BIBLE

Throughout its history, the Bible was written by _____ during the lifetime of other eyewitnesses.

In 1 Corinthians 15, Paul discusses the resurrection of Jesus and points to the eyewitness testimony of hundreds who were alive to read his account.

As miraculous as many Biblical events are, they could have been easily refuted by eyewitnesses claiming the contrary.

ARCHAEOLOGY AND THE BIBLE

Since the late 1800s, archaeology has yielded _____ of discoveries that pertain to the Biblical narrative, many of which have revealed information previously contained only in the Bible.

- Skeptics point to names and terms that were thought to be younger than the Bible suggests. However, many of these names and terms were discovered on tablets found in the Ebla Archive, dating 800 years before Moses.
- For centuries skeptics pointed to the Hittite nation as a Biblical legend, demonstrating its unreliability. Then, in the late 19th century the Hittite capital of Carchemish was discovered.

III. THE TEXTUAL REASONS

The manuscript evidence for the Bible points to its undeniable _____.

OLD TESTAMENT AUTHENTICITY

Jewish _____ over the centuries were notorious for their meticulous care for the text of the Old Testament.

- The materials used were highly regulated, as well as the clothes the scribes wore while copying.
- Spacing between characters and words were measured by a standard thread, and columns were measured by character count.
- If even a single letter was out of place or missing, the manuscript was burned.

Autographs – the original writings
Manuscripts – handwritten copies
Extant Manuscripts – handwritten copies that still exist

The Dead Sea Scrolls demonstrate the reliability of Old Testament scribes, by proving textual _____ between manuscripts over the centuries.

Prior to the discovery, the oldest Old Testament extant manuscript dated to AD 1000; but the discovery of an entire manuscript of Isaiah dated to 100 BC bridged that gap.

NEW TESTAMENT AUTHENTICITY

The New Testament is in a league of its own in comparison to other ancient documents, considering the _____ of manuscripts and the _____ between the original writing and the earliest manuscripts.

	Original	Earliest Copy	Interval	Number	Accuracy
Caesar	100-44 BC	AD 900	1,000 years	251	---
Homer	800 BC	400 BC	400 years	1,757	95%
New Testament	AD 40-100	AD 125	25 years	5,800	99.8%

If we consider the text of the New Testament as unreliable, then no ancient text can be considered _____.

Even if we did not have the wealth of manuscripts, we could reconstruct the entire New Testament except for eleven verses, using the writings of the early church fathers.

IV. THE PERSONAL REASONS

The personal evidence for the Bible points to its unabated _____.

All the evidence in the world cannot change a person's heart, yet no other book has had such an individual and cultural impact across history.

The Bible is authoritative in its assertions about all _____, so we should not be surprised that it is effective in its assertions about _____.

The countless lives that have been _____ by the Bible is a powerful witness to its reliability.