

***This File Contains The Following Articles:***

The Bible Stands Alone

Archaeology and History Attest to the Reliability of the Bible

The Dead Sea Scrolls -  
“The greatest manuscript  
discovery of all times.”

What Makes The Bible So Special?

# The Bible Stands Alone

Compiled by Justin and Jordan Drake

In 1889 a schoolteacher told a ten-year-old boy, “You will never amount to very much.” That boy was Albert Einstein. In 1954 a music manager told a young singer, “You ought to go back to driving a truck.” That singer was Elvis Presley. In 1962 a record company told a group of singers, “We don’t like your sound. Groups with guitars are definitely on their way out.” They said that to the Beatles. Man is prone to make mistakes. Those who reject the Bible should take the time to look at the evidence before they come to a verdict.

**1. It is unique in its continuity.** If just 10 people today are picked who were from the same place, born around the same time, spoke the same language, and made about the same amount of money, and were asked to write on just one controversial subject, they would have trouble agreeing with each other. But the Bible stands alone. It was written over a period of 1600 years by more than 40 writers from all walks of life. Some were fishermen; some were politicians. Others were generals or kings, shepherds or historians. They were from 3 different continents, and wrote in three different languages. They wrote on hundreds of controversial subjects yet they wrote with agreement and harmony. They wrote in dungeons, in temples, on beaches, and on hillsides, during peacetime and during war. Yet their words sound like they came from the same source. So even though 10 people today couldn’t write on one controversial subject and agree, God picked 40 different people to write the Bible - and it stands the test of time.

**2. It is unique in its circulation.** The invention of the printing press in 1450 made it possible to print books in large quantities. The first book printed was the Bible. Since then, the Bible has been read by more people and printed more times than any other book in history. By 1930, over one billion Bibles had been distributed by Bible societies around the world. By 1977, Bible societies alone were printing over 200 million Bibles each year, and this number doesn’t include

the many other Bible publishers. No one who is interested in knowing the truth can ignore such an important book.

**3. It is unique in its translation.** The Bible has been translated into over 1,400 languages. No other book even comes close.

**4. It is unique in its survival.** In ancient times, books were copied by hand onto manuscripts which were made from parchment and would decay over time. Ancient books are available today only because someone made copies of the originals to preserve them. For example, the original writings of Julius Caesar are no longer around. We know what he wrote only by the copies we have. Only 10 copies still exist, and they were made 1,000 years after he died. Only 600 copies of Homer’s *The Iliad* exist, made 1,300 years after the originals were written. No other book has as many copies of the ancient manuscripts as the Bible. In fact, there are over 24,000 copies of New Testament manuscripts, some written within 35 years of the writer’s death.

**5. It is unique in withstanding attack.** No other book has been so attacked throughout history as the Bible. In A.D. 300 the Roman emperor Diocletian ordered every Bible burned because he thought that by destroying the Scriptures he could destroy Christianity. Anyone caught with a Bible would be executed. But just 25 years later, the Roman emperor Constantine ordered that 50 perfect copies of the Bible be made at government expense. The French philosopher Voltaire, a skeptic who destroyed the faith of many people, boasted that within 100 years of his death, the Bible would disappear from the face of the earth. Voltaire died in 1728, but the Bible lives on. The irony of history is that 50 years after his death, the Geneva Bible Society moved into his former house and used his printing presses to print thousands of Bibles.

The Bible has also survived criticism. No book has been more attacked for its accuracy. And yet archeologists are proving every year that the Bible’s detailed descriptions of historic events are correct.

# Archaeology and History Attest to the Reliability of the Bible

By Richard M. Fales, Ph.D.

No other ancient book is questioned or maligned like the Bible. Critics looking for the fly-speck in the masterpiece allege that there was a long span between the time the events in the New Testament occurred and when they were recorded. They claim another gap exists archaeologically between the earliest copies made and the autographs of the New Testament. In reality, the alleged spaces and so-called gaps exist only in the minds of the critics.

**Manuscript Evidence.** Aristotle's *Ode to Poetics* was written between 384 and 322 B.C. The earliest copy of this work is dated A.D. 1100, and there are only forty-nine extant manuscripts. The gap between the original writing and the earliest copy is 1,400 years. There are only seven extant manuscripts of Plato's *Tetralogies*, written 427-347 B.C. The earliest copy is A.D. 900 - a gap of over 1,200 years. What about the New Testament? Jesus was crucified in A.D. 30. The New Testament was written between A.D. 48 and 95. The oldest manuscripts date to the last quarter of the first century, and the second oldest A.D. 125. This gives us a narrow gap of thirty-five to forty years from the originals written by the apostles.

From the early centuries, we have some 5,300 Greek manuscripts of the New Testament. Altogether, including Syriac, Latin, Coptic, and Aramaic, we have a whopping 24,633 texts of the New Testament to confirm the wording of the

Scriptures. So the bottom line is, there was no great period between the events of the New Testament and the New Testament writings. Nor is there a great time lapse between the original writings and the oldest copies. With the great body of manuscript evidence, it can be proved, beyond a doubt, that the New Testament says exactly the same things today as it originally did nearly 2,000 years ago.

**Corroborating Writings.** Critics also charge that there are no ancient writings about Jesus outside the New Testament. This is another ridiculous claim. Writings confirming His birth, ministry, death, and resurrection include Flavius Josephus (A.D. 93), the Babylonian Talmud (A.D. 70-200), Pliny the Younger's letter to the Emperor Trajan (approx. A.D. 100), the *Annals of Tacitus* (A.D. 115-117), *Mara Bar Serapion* (sometime after A.D. 73), and *Suetonius' Life of Claudius and Life of Nero* (A.D. 120). Another point of contention arises when Bible critics have knowingly or unknowingly misled people by implying that Old and New Testament books were either excluded from or added into the canon of Scripture at the great ecumenical councils of A.D. 336, 382, 397, and 419. In fact, one result of these gatherings was to confirm the Church's belief that the books already in the Bible were divinely inspired. Therefore, the Church, at these meetings, neither added to or took away from the books of the Bible. At that time, the thirty-nine Old Testament books had already been accepted, and the New Testament, as it was written, simply grew up with the ancient Church. Each document, being accepted as it was penned in the first century, was then

passed on to Christians of the next century. So, this foolishness about the Roman Emperor Constantine dropping books from the Bible is simply uneducated rumor.

**Fulfilled Prophecies.** Prophecies from the Old and New Testaments that have been fulfilled also add credibility to the Bible. The Scriptures predicted the rise and fall of great empires like Greece and Rome (Daniel 2:39,40), and foretold the destruction of cities like Tyre and Sidon (Isaiah 23). Tyre's demise is recorded by ancient historians, who tell how Alexander the Great lay siege to the city for seven months. King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon had failed in a 13 year attempt to capture the seacoast city and completely destroy its inhabitants. During the siege of 573 B.C., much of the population of Tyre moved to its new island home approximately half a mile from the land city. Here it remained surrounded by walls as high as 150 feet until judgement fell in 332 B.C. with the arrival of Alexander the Great. In the seven-month siege, he fulfilled the remainder of the prophecies (Zechariah 9:4; Ezekiel 26:12) concerning the city at sea by completely destroying Tyre, killing 8,000 of its inhabitants and selling 30,000 of its population into slavery. To reach the island, he scraped up the dust and

rubble of the old land city of Tyre, just like the Bible predicted, and cast them into the sea, building a 200-foot-wide causeway out to the island.

Alexander's death and the murder of his two sons was also foretold in the Scripture. Another startling prophecy was Jesus' detailed prediction of Jerusalem's destruction, and the further spreading of the Jewish diaspora throughout the world, which is recorded in Luke 21. In A.D. 70, not only was Jerusalem destroyed by Titus, the future Emperor of Rome, but another prediction of Jesus Christ in Matthew 24:1-2 came to pass - the complete destruction of the temple of God.

**Messianic Prophecies.** In the Book Daniel, the Bible prophesied the coming of the one and only Jewish Messiah prior to the temple's demise. The Old Testament prophets declared He would be born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2) to a virgin (Isaiah 7:14), be betrayed for thirty pieces of silver (Zechariah 11:12-13), die by crucifixion (Psalm 22), and be buried in a rich man's tomb (Isaiah 53:9). There was only one person who fits all of the messianic prophecies of the Old Testament who lived before A.D. 70: Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of Mary.

Yes, the Bible is an amazing book.

From The Evidence Bible - Irrefutable evidence for the thinking mind, Compiled by Ray Comfort

See also "WEBSITES FOR BIBLICAL RELIABILITY" for websites as:

[www.apologeticspress.org](http://www.apologeticspress.org) - Apologetics Press - over 1000 articles on topics as: accuracy of Biblical genealogies, situation ethics, answers to atheistic arguments against the Bible, alleged Biblical contradictions, etc. [www.christiananswers.net](http://www.christiananswers.net) - many Questions answered about Biblical reliability (truth, infallibility & accurateness of the Bible), how evolution & archaeology & astronomy relate to the Biblical reliability, etc.

# The Dead Sea Scrolls - “The greatest manuscript discovery of all times.”

By William F. Albright

The discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls (DSS) at Qumran in 1949 had significant effects in corroborating evidence for the Scriptures. The ancient texts, found hidden in pots in cliff-top caves by a monastic religious community, confirm the reliability of the Old Testament text. These texts, which were copied and studied by the Essenes, include one complete Old Testament book (Isaiah) and thousands of fragments, representing every Old Testament book except Ester.

The manuscripts date from the third century B.C. to the first century A.D. and give the earliest window found so far into the texts of the Old Testament books and their predictive prophecies. The Qumran texts have become an important witness for the divine origin of the Bible, providing further evidence against the criticism of such crucial books as Daniel and Isaiah.

**Dating the Manuscripts.** Carbon-14 dating is a reliable form of scientific dating when applied to uncontaminated material several thousand years old. Results indicated an age of 1917 years with a 200-year (10 percent) variant.

Paleography (ancient writing forms) and orthography (spelling) indicated that some manuscripts were inscribed before 100 B.C. There can happily not be the slightest doubt in the world about the genuineness of the manuscript.

**Archaeological Dating.** Collaborative evidence for an early date came from archaeology. Pottery accompanying the manuscripts was late Hellenistic ( c. 150-63 B.C.) And Early Roman ( c. 63 B.C. to A.D. 100). Coins found in the monastery ruins proved by their inscriptions to have been minted between 135 B.C. and A.D. 135. The weave and pattern of the cloth

supported an early date. There is no reasonable doubt that the Qumran manuscripts came from the century before Christ and the first century A.D.

**Significance of the Dating.** Previous to the DSS, the earliest known manuscript of the Old Testament was the Masoretic Text (A.D. 900) and two others (dating about A.D. 1000) from which, for example, the King James version of the Old Testament derived its translation. Perhaps most would have considered the Masoretic text as a very late text and therefore questioned the reliability of the Old Testament wholesale. The Dead Sea Scrolls eclipse these texts by 1,000 years and provide little reason to question their reliability, and further, present only confidence for the text. The beauty of the Dead Sea Scrolls lies in the close match they have with the Masoretic text demonstrable evidence of reliability and preservation of the authentic text through the centuries. So the discovery of the DSS provides evidence for the following:

- 1) Confirmation of the Hebrew Text
- 2) Support for the Masoretic Text
- 3) Support for the Greek translation of the Hebrew Text (the Septuagint). Since the New Testament often quotes from the Greek Old Testament, the DSS furnish the reader with further confidence for the Masoretic texts in this area where it can be tested.

(Generated from *Norman Geisler, Dead Sea Scrolls, Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics*)

## “Didn’t men write the Bible?”

Absolutely. When you write a letter, do you write the letter, or does the pen? Obviously you do; the pen is merely the instrument you use. God used men as instruments to write His letter to humanity. They ranged from kings to common fishermen, but the 66 books of the Bible were all given by inspiration of God. Proof that this Book is supernatural can be seen with a quick study of its prophecies.

# What Makes The Bible So Special?

Christianity believes and teaches that the Bible alone is the revealed Word of God. Even though it was written by men, the ultimate author was God Almighty. This claim was not invented by the Church, but is the claim the Bible makes for itself.

“The word of the Lord endures forever” (1 Peter 1:25, The Modern Language Bible). “All Scripture is God-breathed” (2 Timothy 3:16, MLB). “For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost” (2 Peter 1:21, KJV).

Over 2,000 times in the Old Testament alone there are clauses such as, “And God spoke to Moses,” “the word of the Lord came unto Jonah,” and “God said.” Moreover, the Bible claims to be a record of the words and deeds of God, thus the Bible views itself as God’s Word.

The mere fact that the Bible claims to be the Word of God does not prove that it is such, for there are other books that make similar claims. The difference is that the Scriptures contain convincing evidence as being the Word of God.

One reason that the Bible is different from other books is its unity. Although this book was composed by men, its unity reveals the hand of the Almighty. The Bible was written over a period of about 1,500 years by more than forty different human authors. These authors came from a variety of backgrounds, including Joshua (a military general), Daniel (a prime minister), Peter (a fisherman), and Nehemiah (a cupbearer).

The authors of the various books wrote in different places, such as the wilderness (Moses), prison (Paul), exile on the Isle of Patmos (John). The biblical writings were composed on three different continents (Africa, Asia, and Europe), and in three different languages (Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek).

The contents of the Bible deal with many controversial subjects. Yet, the Bible is a unit. From beginning to end, there’s one unfolding story of God’s plan of salvation for mankind. This salvation is through the person of Jesus Christ (John 14:6). Jesus Himself testified that He was the theme of the entire Bible.

“Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me. ... For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?” (John 5:39, 46, 47 KJV).

Jesus said in another place: “And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself” (Luke 24:27 KJV; see also Luke 24:44).

The Old Testament is the **preparation** (Isaiah 40:3). The Gospels are the **manifestation** (John 1:29). The Book of Acts is the **propagation** (Acts 1:8). The Epistles give the **explanation** (Colossians 1:27). The Book of Revelation is the **consummation** (Revelation 1:7). The Bible is all about Jesus. (Emphasis added)

The entire Bible is a unity with each part needing the others to be complete. Dr. W.F. Albright puts it this way: “To the

writers of the New Testament, the Hebrew Bible was Holy Scripture and they were the direct heirs of its prophets. It is, accordingly, quite impossible to understand the New Testament without recognizing that its purpose was to supplement and explain the Hebrew Bible.

“Any attempt to go back to the sources of Christianity without accepting the entire Bible as our guide is thus doomed to failure” (cited by Roger T. Foster and V. Paul Marston, *That’s a Good Question*, p. 67).

Lest anyone think this isn’t something marvelous, we’d like to give you this challenge. Find ten people from your local area having similar backgrounds, who speak the same language, and all are from basically the same culture. Then separate them and ask them to write their opinion on only one controversial subject, such as the meaning of life.

When they have finished, compare the conclusions of these ten writers. Do they agree with each other? Of course not. But the Bible did not consist of merely ten authors, but forty. It was not written in one generation, but over a period of 1,500 years; not by authors with the same education, culture, and language, but with vastly different education, many different cultures, from three continents and three different languages, and finally not just one subject but hundreds.

And yet the Bible is a unity. There is complete harmony, which cannot be explained by coincidence or collusion. The unity of the Bible is a strong argument in favor of its divine inspiration.

The unity of the Scriptures is only one reason among many which supports the Bible’s claim to be the divine Word of

God. Others which could be explained in detail are the testimony of the early church, the witness of history and archaeology, and the evidence of changed lives throughout the centuries, to name but a few.

These factors led the great archaeologist, W.F. Albright, to conclude, “The Bible towers in content above all earlier religious literature; and it towers just as impressively over all subsequent literature in the direct simplicity of its message and the catholicity of its appeal to men of all lands and times” (*The Christian Century*, November 1958).

The Bible is special. It is unique. No other book has any such credentials. No other book even comes close. “England has two books, the Bible and Shakespeare. England made Shakespeare, but the Bible made England” (Victor Hugo).

This article is from *Answers To Tough Questions skeptics ask about the Christian faith*, by Josh McDowell and Don Stewart

#### ADDITIONAL REFERENCE SOURCES

- Geisler, Norman and William Nix. *A General Introduction to the Bible*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1973.
- McDowell, Josh. *Evidence That Demands a Verdict*. Rev. Ed. San Bernardino, Calif.: Here’s Life Pubs., 1979.
- Stewart, Don, au., Josh McDowell, ser. Ed. *Family Handbook of Christian Knowledge, The Bible*. San Bernardino, Calif.: Here’s Life Pubs., 1983.
- Stewart, Don, au., Josh McDowell, ser. Ed. *Family Handbook of Christian Knowledge, The Creation*. San Bernardino, Calif.: Here’s Life Pubs., 1985.