

Is My Bible Authentic?

Where my Bible came from...

1. God's Truth

2. Revelation/ Inspiration

The Holy Spirit inspired imperfect people with unique personalities to convey God's perfect truth through the written word for the purpose of salvation and then, life transformation.

Implications of Inspiration: BIBLE > My Feelings, BIBLE > My Intellect, BIBLE > My Experience, BIBLE > Culture Consensus

3. Writers Pen Original Manuscripts

While we do not have the original, the number of consistent copies closest to the original text gives us confidence

Book	Time Gap in years (written vs. earliest)	Number of Earliest
Homer's <i>The Illiad</i>	400	643
Plato's <i>Republic</i>	1,300	7
Caesar's <i>Gallic Wars</i>	1,000	10
Pliny's <i>Natural History</i>	750	7
NT	Within 100	5,366

4. Canonization

Recognition of inspired Christian writings

Canonization Considerations

1. Was the author a trustworthy prophet of God?
2. Was the writer confirmed by acts of God?
3. Did the message tell the truth about God?
4. Does it come with the power of God?
5. Was it universally accepted by the Church?
6. NT: Is there a direct connection to Jesus or the apostles?

Test Rule: "If in doubt, throw it out."

5. 66 Book Collection

OT: Full and in circulation as early as 140 years BC

Considered authoritative by NT writers and Jesus Himself.

NT: Recognized some time before AD 400 when the church found itself with the 66 books that make up the Bible as we know it today.

6. Textual Criticism

Studying manuscripts to discern what was written originally

7. Greek and Hebrew Bibles

Differences have to do with the manuscripts known at the time of compilation and the philosophy of the selection of manuscripts

8. Translation

Differences have to do with the manuscripts known at the time of translation, the selection of manuscripts, translation and interpretative choices of the translator, the dialect of the translator, and the philosophy of translation

9. My English Translation

Despite minor differences, message/meaning is completely consistent

Is My Bible Accurate?

• Internal Claims

2 Timothy 3:16a- All Scripture is inspired by God...

2 Peter 1:20–21- First of all, you should know this: No prophecy of Scripture comes from one's own interpretation, because no prophecy ever came by the will of man; instead, men spoke from God as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.

Luke 24:44- Then He told them, "These are My words that I spoke to you while I was still with you—that everything written about Me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms must be fulfilled."

• Early Church Tradition

Is the belief in the reliability of God's Word new?

1. Irenaeus (130-202)- "We have known the method of our salvation by no other means than those by whom the gospel came to us; which gospel they truly preached; but afterward, by the will of God, they delivered to us in the Scriptures, to be for the future the foundation and pillar of our faith," (Adv. H. 3:1).

2. Clement of Alexandria (150?-213?)- "They that are ready to spend their time in the best things will not give over seeking for truth until they have found the demonstration from the Scriptures themselves," (Stromata 7:16:3).

3. Origen (185?-252)- "No man ought, for the confirmation of doctrines, to use books which are not canonized Scriptures," (Tract. 26 in Matt.).

4. St. Cyprian of Carthage (200?-258)- "For those things are to be done which are there written . . . If it be commanded in the gospels or the epistles and Acts of the Apostles, then let this holy tradition be observed," (Cyprian of Carthage, Ep. 74 ad Pompeium).

- **Fulfilled Prophecy**

The Bible is the only religious document in existence that provides more than 2000 prophecies that validate its historical claims. These prophecies deal with Jesus, Israel, other nations (e.g., Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome), cities (e.g., Tyre), and even people (e.g., Nebuchadnezzar and Cyrus). No other religion in the world has prophecy been fulfilled so completely and so accurately as that recorded in the Bible.

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- **Historical/ Archeological Confirmation**

Psalm 85:11- Truth will spring up from the earth, and righteousness will look down from heaven.

- 1. Cultural discoveries**

- Barren Sarah gives servant Hagar to Abram common practice
- 10 plagues of Egypt correspond to 10 Egyptian gods of the day

- 2. Evidence found of rulers thought to be Biblical legends**

- Assyrian King Sargon

Isaiah 20:1- In the year that the chief commander, sent by Sargon king of Assyria, came to Ashdod and attacked and captured it—

- Babylon's splendor under Nebuchadnezzar

Daniel 4:30- the king exclaimed, "Is this not Babylon the Great that I have built by my vast power to be a royal residence and to display my majestic glory?"

- 3. Biblical events confirmed**

- Prophecy written years earlier of Babylon's walls falling
- Quirinius census evidence found

- 4. Biblical timeline affirmed**

- Samaritan governor Sanballat thought later than Nehemiah

- 5. Biblical manuscripts found**

- Dead Sea Scrolls contained parts of every OT book but Esther
- 1000 years earlier than any other, yet consistent
- Most controversial parts of the Bible in scholarly communities (Pentateuch, Ezra/Nehemiah, Luke) have been confirmed by credible scholars

Objections: Epic of Gilgamesh and other flood narratives

- Makes sense if all were traced back to Noah

- **Consistency of Message**

- **There's GREAT diversity in the Bible.**

- Different generations
 - Written over a 2,000-year span.
 - Different authors with different personalities
 - Written by more than 40 authors, from all walks of life—educated and uneducated, Jews and Gentiles.
 - Peter: fisherman
 - Amos: herdsman
 - Joshua: general
 - Luke: doctor
 - Solomon: king
 - Matthew: tax collector
 - Paul: Pharisee/tentmaker

- Most of them didn't even know each other.

- Different languages
 - Hebrew (Old Testament)
 - Aramaic (Parts of Ezra and Daniel)
 - Greek (New Testament)
 - Different readers in different situations
 - Different ruling authorities and political climates.
 - Different genres of literature and writing styles
 - Different moods and tones
 - From times of joy to the depths of sadness
 - Different themes and subthemes

- **There's GREATER unity in the Bible.**

- Consistent moral teachings
 - Prophecies don't conflict with one another
 - Consistent theological themes
 - One unfolding story: God's love for his people and God's work to redeem through His son, Jesus Christ.

Is My Bible Authoritative?

2 Timothy 3:16–17- All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for rebuking, for correcting, for training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

Psalms 119:41–48- Let Your faithful love come to me, LORD, Your salvation, as You promised. Then I can answer the one who taunts me, for I trust in Your word. Never take the word of truth from my mouth, for I hope in Your judgments. I will always obey Your instruction, forever and ever. I will walk freely in an open place because I seek Your precepts. I will speak of Your decrees before kings and not be ashamed. I delight in Your commands, which I love. I will lift up my hands to Your commands, which I love, and will meditate on Your statutes.

Psalms 119:105- Your word is a lamp for my feet and a light on my path.

Hebrews 4:12- For the word of God is living and effective and sharper than any double-edged sword, penetrating as far as the separation of soul and spirit, joints and marrow. It is able to judge the ideas and thoughts of the heart.