

Doctrine of the Bible

Is the Bible Inspired by God?

1. Because of two hundred years of Higher Criticism and Lower Criticism of the Bible, because other religious books claim to be inspired, why should anyone trust the Bible, or take it more seriously than the others?
2. Many people take the Bible by faith, but that does not satisfy the desire of the inquiring mind to know why it should be taken by faith.
3. There is a compelling rationale basis to believe that the Bible is the Word of God.
4. The beginning point for believing the Bible, is the Word of God is Jesus Christ.
5. The four gospels tell the life of Christ. The Bible is a historical book. It may or may not be correct, but it is a historical document worthy of examining, which Higher Criticism has done.

Special Note.

Will Durant comments. "In the enthusiasm of its discoveries the Higher Criticism has applied to the New Testament tests of authenticity so severe that by them a hundred ancient worthies- e.g., Hammurabi, David, Socrates- would fade into legend. Despite the prejudices and theological preconceptions of the evangelists, they record many incidents that mere inventors would have concealed- the competition of the apostles for high places in the Kingdom, their flight after Jesus' arrest, Peter's denial, the failure of Christ to work miracles in Galilee, the references of some auditors to his possible insanity, his early uncertainty as to his mission, his confessions of ignorance as to the future, his moments of bitterness, his despairing cry on the cross; no one reading these scenes can doubt the reality of the figure behind them. That a few simple men should in one generation have invented so powerful and appealing a personality, so lofty an ethic and so inspiring a vision of human brotherhood, would be a miracle far more incredible than any recorded in the Gospels. After two centuries of Higher Criticism the outlines of the life, character, and teaching of Christ, remain reasonably clear, and constitute the most fascinating feature in the history of Western man."

6. The Bible is proved to be historically reliable as it speaks about the life of Christ. Very few scholars deny the historicity of Christ. In history people wrote about their religious leaders. What was written is subject to examination with a view to being verified or discredited.

Special Note.

Earliest Non-Christian Evidence

What evidence is there for Christ's existence? The earliest non-Christian reference occurs in Josephus' Antiquities of the Jews (A.D. 93?): At that time lived Jesus, a holy man, if man he may be called, for he performed wonderful works, and taught men, and joyfully received the truth. And he was followed by many Jews and many Greeks. He was the Messiah.

Earliest Mention of Christ in Pagan Literature

The oldest known mention of Christ in pagan literature is in a letter of the younger Pliny (ca. 110), asking the advice of Trajan on the treatment of Christians.

Five years later Tacitus described Nero's persecution of the Chrestiani in Rome, and pictured them as already (A.D. 64) numbering adherents throughout the Empire; the paragraph is so Tacitean in style, force, and prejudice that of all Biblical critics only Drews questions its authenticity.

Suetonius (ca. 125) mentions the same persecution, and reports Claudius' banishment (ca. 52) of "Jews who, stirred up by Christ [impulsore Chresto], were causing public disturbances," the passage accords well with the Acts of the Apostles, which mentions a decree of Claudius that "the Jews should leave Rome."

These references prove the existence of Christians rather than of Christ; but unless we assume the latter we are driven to the improbable hypothesis that Jesus was invented in one generation; moreover, we must suppose that the Christian community in Rome had been established some years before 52, to merit the attention of an imperial decree.

About the middle of this first century a pagan named Thallus, in a fragment preserved by Julius Africanus, argued that the abnormal darkness alleged to have accompanied the death of Christ was a purely natural phenomenon and coincidence; the argument took the existence of Christ for granted. The denial of that existence seems never to have occurred even to the bitterest gentile or Jewish opponents of nascent Christianity.

Earliest Christian Evidence for Christ

The Christian evidence for Christ begins with the letters ascribed to Saint Paul. Some of these are of uncertain authorship; several, antedating A.D. 64, are almost universally accounted as substantially genuine. No one has questioned the existence of Paul, or his repeated meetings with Peter, James, and John; and Paul enviously admits that these men had known Christ in the flesh. The accepted epistles frequently refer to the Last Supper and the crucifixion" (Will Durant, *Jesus: 4 B.C., - A. D. 30*, Chapter XXVI from the third volume of the *Story of Civilization: Caesar and Christ*).

7. Because Jesus lived, it is said He performed miracles. Is it true? Do miracles occur? Did they occur?
8. If it is conceded that, however unlikely, a miracle can occur, then the next point can be made. Jesus cannot be separated from His miracles, according to the record.
9. Once it is conceded that Jesus lived, that miracles were associated with Him, and are part of the historical record, then it must be proven by the skeptic that miracles did not happen.

10. It is important to remember that miracles are not native to the devil, Moses, or any other creature. Creatures, in and of themselves cannot perform miracles. Only God can give power to perform miracles.
11. Only God can, and does, perform miracles. So, did Jesus perform miracles, and if He did, how did He do them?
12. The historical record is that miracles were performed by Jesus and his contemporaries thought He was sent from God because He could do miracles.
- *John 3:1 There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: 2 The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.*
13. Jesus is an authoritative messenger. As such, Jesus taught the Old Testament, the Bible is the Word of God. Jesus believed in the Law and the Prophets.
- *Matthew 19:4 And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, 5 And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? 6 Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.*
 - *Luke 4:4 And Jesus answered him, saying, It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.*
 - *Luke 24:27 And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.*
14. Because Jesus taught the Bible was the Word of God, and because Jesus was recognized as an authoritative messenger, then part of His authorized message was that the Bible is the Word of God.
15. In His human nature, is it possible that Jesus did not know everything? As a man, Jesus did not know everything. If a man does not know everything, why should He be trusted? It could be argued that Jesus simply learned, and articulated the belief of His day, that the Bible was the Word of God.
16. The answer is this. At this point all that is needed is for Jesus to be an honest man. As an honest man, Jesus knew His limitations. As an honest man, Jesus would not have pontificated and spoken about things He knew were questionable at best.

Special Note.

An honest man, would not say the Bible was the Word of God unless there was evidence for it. An honest man would say that the Bible being the Word of God is the tradition of the Jews, and I am compelled to go with it. But Jesus did not do that. He said that the Bible is the Word of God and, either He knowingly lied, either He was knowingly dishonest knowing His own limitations, or He spoke the truth. Jesus said Moses was the author of the Pentateuch. He said that Scripture was spoken by Isaiah the prophet.

17. Jesus was not an honest man if He acceded something that does not have evidence. To believe something, there must be compelling evidence for it.
18. There is more to Jesus than His humanity. There is His divinity. In His divinity, Jesus could not have been wrong.
 - *John 14:8 Philip saith unto him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us. 9 Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?*
19. The argument began with a reliable Bible. It moved to a historical Christ. It heard the authoritative voice of Jesus, that is more reliable than the Bible, which is actually inspired and infallible. The argument moved from credible reliability, to supreme reliability.
20. The authority of the Bible rests upon the authority of Jesus.