

God's Reliable S.T.A.M.P. on the Bible

Sample evidence God provides to confirm the trustworthiness of the Bible

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S is for **Scientific** substantiation

- Even though the Bible is not a science book, when it speaks of anything that falls within a scientific arena, it is always accurate because God is the Creator of everything and wouldn't contradict Himself.
- **EX #1: Decaying universe:** Psalm 102:25-26 (Isa. 51:6, Matt. 24:35) – *“Of old You founded the earth, and the heavens are the work of Your hands. ²⁶ “Even they will perish, but You endure; And all of them will wear out like a garment; Like clothing You will change them and they will be changed”*
- **EX #2: Possibility of numbering the stars:** Jer. 33:22 – *“As the host of heaven cannot be counted and the sand of the sea cannot be measured, so I will multiply the descendants of David My servant and the Levites who minister to Me.”* (Now we know there are at least 100 billion stars in our galaxy and probably several hundred billion galaxies in the universe that would take trillions and trillions of years to number”
- **EX #3: The Sun follows a circular path thru the universe:** Psalm 19:6 – *“Its rising is from one end of the heavens, And its circuit to the other end of them; And there is nothing hidden from its heat”* (Today, we know that the sun does move in a “circuit” at speeds close to 600,000 MPH within one of the spiral arms of the Milky Way Galaxy and this galaxy is hurling thru space at about 2 million MPH)
- **OTHERS:** The universe had a cause (Gen. 1:1 – Kalam Cosmological Arg), The earth is spherical (Isa 40:22-700BC), hangs on nothing (Job 26:7), Matter is made out of particles that aren't visible in natural light (Heb. 11:3), predictable paths of oceanic currents (unknown until mid-1800's - Psalm 8:8), the earth's hydrological cycle (Job 36:27-28, a mystery in the middle ages), global wind currents (jet stream) and the earth's water cycle (Ecc. 1:6-7), circumcision on the 8th day (Gen. 17:12 – 1900's discovered that only after 8 days does vitamin K in the infant's diet permit prothrombin, a blood-clotting factor to reach its peak).

T is for **Transformational** effect

- One very profound piece of corroborating evidence is the millions of lives dramatically changed by the gospel demonstrating what the Bible said you could expect a changed life would be like in Christ
- How do we explain the transformation of an erudite Pharisee named Saul who was radically changed from a self-righteous and pompous persecutor of the church into one of the greatest preachers and church planters in history?
- The Bible expects a radical transformation when a person encounters and experiences the life-giving grace of God and His residing power (Rom. 1:16; Eph. 2:10)
- How do we explain the transformation of 11 weak-willed, discouraged and depressed disciples who after they encountered the risen Christ as explained in the bible that they were willing to die a martyr's death for him?

A is for **Archaeological** confirmation

- The systematic discovery, recording and study of the surviving material remains left in the ground provide an incredible validation of the history, places, people and events recorded in the Bible.
- Dr. Clifford Wilsom (author of the 17-volume survey of Archaeology reviewing 5,000 facts relating to arch) said this, *“It is remarkable that where confirmation is possible and has come to light, the Bible stands investigation in ways that are unique in all literature. Its superiority to attack, its capacity to withstand criticism, its amazing facility to be proved right after all, are all staggering by any standards of scholarship. Seemingly assured results ‘disproving’ the Bible have a habit of backfiring. Over and over again the Bible has been vindicated. That is true from Genesis to Revelation....”*
- Maybe when Jesus said, *“...if these become silent, the stones will cry out”* (Luke 19:40-Palm Sunday), He foreshadowed the reality of what future digs would reveal about the truth of the proclamations of His disciples (*“Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord”*)
- Nelson Glueck (one of the greatest archaeologists of the 20th century, president of Hebrew Union College from 1947-1971) said this, *“...it may be clearly stated categorically that no archaeological discovery has ever controverted a single biblical reference.”* (Geisler and Brooks, When Skeptics Ask, p. 179)

M is for **Manuscript** evidence

- Probably one of the greatest testimonies to the trustworthiness of the Bible is its manuscript evidence which scholars say gives us a Bible that is 99.9% accurate (amazing, Wescott and Hort). The issue is how many manuscripts do you have and what is the time interval between the original and the earliest copy?

- The biblical text is far more accurately preserved than any other text of ancient history...period.
- We don't have the originals, but we have the copies that are far more numerous with far greater accuracy and far earlier dating than for any secular classic from antiquity.
 - The New Testament has a fragment within a generation of its original composition, whole books within about 100 years from the time of the originals, most of the NT in less than 200 years, and the entire New Testament within 250 years from the date of its completion. That's between 50-300 years after the originals and entirely unprecedented.
 - Collectively there are thousands of New Testament manuscripts and portions (5300 extant Greek manuscripts and portions, 10,000 Latin Vulgate, and 9300 other versions) = 24,000+ (closest is Homer's Iliad with 643 copies, but its earliest copy is 1500 years from the original)
 - Add to this number the one million quotes tabulated of early church fathers who lived from the early first century to the Middle Ages from which we can virtually piece together the entire Bible.
 - Compare all this to the other well-known ancient literature. For example, of 16 well-known classical authors (Plutarch, Tacitus, Suetonius, Polybius, Thucydides, Xenophon, and others), the total number of extant copies is typically less than ten, and the earliest copies date from 750 to 1600 years after the original manuscript was first penned.
- What about all the differences in the manuscripts? The scholars call them variants and there is a whole field of textual criticism that attempts to determine the original wording of any documents whose original document no longer exists.
 - There are 400,000 variants that are categorized into 4 kinds (❶ spelling/nonsense readings, ❷ changes that can't be translated-synonyms, ❸ meaningful variants that are not viable and ❹ meaningful and viable variants
 - 75% of our variants are spelling and nonsense readings that are easily resolved ("*a book*", "*an apple*" – indefinite article "n"). The second largest group is word orders (affect nothing except emphasis), the third largest is meaningful, but not viable (ex. Luke 6:22 – one later manuscript is missing "*on account of the Son of Man*", but not earlier ones). Of the fourth ("*meaningful and viable*" variants), they comprise less than 1% of all textual variants and affect no essential doctrines.

P is for **Prophetic** accuracy

- God has put His reputation on the line by saying things like this: "*whatever word I speak will be performed, declares the Lord God*" (Ezek. 12:28b). Read Isaiah 46:10-11
- About 27% of the entire Bible contains prophetic material—an astonishing figure for so large a book.
 - Prophecies are found in 62 of the 66 books of the Bible
 - Of the Old Testament's 23,210 verses, 6,641 contain predictive material (28%)
 - Out of the New Testament's 7,914 verses, 1,711 contain predictive material (21.5%).
 - Of the entire Bible's 31,124 verses, 8,352 (about 22%) contain predictive material and more than 1800 verses (including 318 in the New Testament) address the Second Coming of Christ.
 - This would mean that the physical return of Jesus Christ to the earth has the same chance of being fulfilled as all of the other prophecies which is 100 percent.
- 1 Kings 13:2 predicted King Josiah by name and lineage 300 years before he was ever born (2 K 23:14-19)
- Micah predicted the exact birthplace of the Messiah birth 700 years before it happened (5:2)
- Isaiah predicted the Babylonian captivity 100 years before it happened (39:57)
- Daniel (Matthew 24:15) predicted the Medo-Persian, Greek, and Roman Empires (chapters 2, 7, 8) in such detail that antsupernaturalistic scholars are forced, against all the evidence, to date the book at 165 B.C., implying it is essentially a forgery.
- 109 aspects of Jesus Christ's first coming were predicted and every single one of them was fulfilled.