



TRUTH

“... thy word is truth” (John 17:17)

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TELL ME ABOUT PROOF WHICH SHOWS THE BIBLE IS THE WORD OF GOD

Increasingly in our world, it has become very difficult to believe the things you read and hear. Through many advances in technology, a person can put two people together in a picture and make it appear as if they once stood side by side when, in fact, they have never even met. Another person can write a social media post or article and make claims and statements that are believable, but are completely false.

All of this can be very frustrating and cause us to be very skeptical. And it most certainly transfers over to how people view the Bible. Is it made up? Does it contain errors? Is it really the word of God? These are questions that the world (and even you) may have, so it is certainly worth our consideration.

A good place to start is that, yes, the **Bible claims** to be the word of God. Paul would write in 2 Timothy 3:16,17, “*All Scripture is given by inspiration of God . . .*” Peter wrote, “*For prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit*” (2 Peter 1:21). And Paul would be thankful that when his brethren, “*...received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe*” (1 Thessalonians 2:13). In fact, over 2,500 times the Bible claims to be the word of God.

Some people might try to counter this fact by pointing out that other books claim to be straight from God. So what other evidence can we consider to help us know that the Bible is the only word of God?

The Bible presents an accurate view of scientific material that can only have as its source an omniscient God. The **scientific foreknowledge** of the Bible is amazing to consider! The Bible is not a scientific textbook. Yet, if a person follows the many scientific and medical principles that God gave His people, that person would not be in danger of many diseases or other health issues that can befall man.

The Bible touches on food laws (not eating animals that could carry diseases, Leviticus 11), health laws (quarantining when sick, Leviticus 13:1-4), and sanitation laws (cleaning after touching something that is dead, Numbers 19:16). Only a book from God could provide such accurate information.

Another piece of evidence that gives us confidence that the Bible is the word of God is the way the Bible discusses **prophecy**. A person might make predictions about various matters and be right some of the time. But the Bible is right 100% of the time. There are thousands of verses in the Bible that discuss prophecy. All are verifiable and true.

And the Bible is not limited to one particular type of prophecy, but instead touches on: nations rising and falling (Assyria and Babylon), the reign of kings (Josiah, Cyrus, Sennacherib), and, of course, the well-known hundreds of prophecies concerning the birth, life, and death of Jesus Christ. Also, all of the Bible’s prophecies correctly handle: proper timing, specific details, and exact fulfillment of those details.

One final consideration for this article is that the **unity** of the bible helps us to know it is from God. Anything written by one or more humans has a high probability of having multiple errors. But a book that was written by about 40 men over the course of some 1,600 years made up of 66 books has complete unity? Absolutely.

The Bible has unity in its theme (man’s sin and God’s plan of redemption through His Son) and in its discussion of the history of the world (cultures, geography, events). Unity is one of the toughest things to obtain in this world, but by nature of being the word of God, the Bible achieves perfect unity.

We might also mention here, in connection with all of the previous items discussed, that the Bible is **accurate** on a level that no human could ever attain. This consistency and accuracy proves God’s work in the transmission of His word to mankind.

The truth is, the evidence is overwhelming. In this short article we are not able to detail what a rich, encouraging study it can be to further examine these topics and more.

The Bible is not just another book among many or just a great story to read. It is the word of God which can be read and understood. May we take comfort in those facts, but also be ready to obey the commands contained therein.

-- Joel Danley

AM I MENTALLY PREPARED TO GET MARRIED?

So, you think you want to get married, is that correct? Do you know what you are getting into? Seriously, do you understand this unique relationship called marriage, and do you comprehend what is going to be necessary on your part in order for your marriage to be an enjoyable, healthy union? Are you ready to make the commitment to make it work?

Sometimes people get married for unwise reasons. They may desire to marry because they feel uneasy due to the fact that their relatives and friends already have married and they are the lone single person remaining. They may look at marriage simply as an opportunity to get out of their parents' house and away from their dominion. Others decide to marry simply as an arrangement that will provide better financial security for one or both of the spouses. None of those are sound reasons for getting married.

In the Bible, we see that the purposes of marriage would include (1) to have companionship (Genesis 2:18-22), (2) to reproduce children (Genesis 1:28), and (3) to avoid sexual immorality (1 Corinthians 7:2,9).

There are a number of practical aspects of married life which a person ought to seriously consider before jumping into a marriage. When one gets married, he leaves his/her parents and starts a new family (Mark 10:7). Husband, your father is not the head of this new family . . . *you* are (Ephesians 5:23). Wife, your father is no longer the head of your family . . . *your husband* is. Are you ready to accept this new arrangement?

Marriage is not a give-it-a-try, temporary setup. Sir, it is the Lord's will for your marriage to be a permanent arrangement. He hates divorce (Malachi 2:16), and He does not want either party trying to separate what He joins together (Mark 10:9). Are you mentally prepared to stick with one another for life?

Are you mature enough to act like a responsible adult? If not, you are not ready for marriage. Little kids show immaturity by throwing tantrums when they do not get their way. They yell and scream to get attention. They can be self-centered, caring only about what they want. They say whatever comes to their mind with no filters. They lie to protect themselves. They do not take responsibility for their actions. When adults bring such immature mindsets and approaches to marriage, they should expect struggles and potential disaster. Are you able to "*put away childish things*" (1 Corinthians 13:11) and act like a responsible adult? If not, you need to delay getting married.

Are you ready to love your spouse above all other people, all earthly activities, and all earthly possessions? A married person's mentality ought to be, "My spouse is more important to me than anything

or anyone in the world, except God. If you try to mess with my marriage, you will have a fight on your hands." The only person with whom you become one flesh is your spouse (Mark 10:7,8). Are you mentally ready to treat your spouse like he/she is the most wonderful person in the world? If not, hold off on getting married.

What about the financial aspects of married life, am I ready for that? It is the God of heaven Who gives us the power to obtain material things (Deuteronomy 8:18), and He wants us to be good stewards of our blessings (1 Corinthians 4:2). Are you a financially responsible person? Does money just seem to slip through your fingers? Do you have the habit of making purchases without considering if you have sufficient funds to cover the expense or without thinking about the long-term effects of such a purchase? Couples squabble over a variety of issues, and one of the main factors in marital strains is disagreements over money matters. If either of the parties is not a fiscally-responsible person, you may want to hold off on getting married. "But we love each other." Many marriages that begin with folks head over heels in love with each other crash when they realize they are not on the same page with finances.

Am I mentally ready to take care of my spouse? "We are young, so that is not much of a factor now." If you live long enough, there will be significant changes in a person's body and mental functions. We see that depicted in Ecclesiastes 12:1-5. Are you ready to love and serve your spouse in whatever way is necessary, even when she suffers with dementia, or even if he is unable to walk or control some of his bodily functions? True love endures all things and never fails (1 Corinthians 13:7,8). Are you ready to care for your spouse, no matter what takes place? If not, you are unprepared for marriage.

Are you mentally ready for the physical/sexual side of marriage? In God's sight, bed relations in marriage are appropriate (Hebrews 13:4). In fact, the Lord expects/wants a husband and wife to offer their bodies to one another in such unique love language (1 Corinthians 7:2-5). Failing to do so would be depriving one's spouse of a need (7:5). Are you ready for this aspect of marriage?

All marriages encounter challenges. To have a marriage that not only survives them but remains strong and happy, well, that requires a whole lot of effort from both mates. We are not necessarily trying to scare you out of getting married, but there is a lot of mental preparation that needs to be done in advance.

-- Roger D. Campbell

We Need to Imitate Jesus' Courage

To what animal is Jesus most often compared in the Scriptures? The obvious answer is a lamb. But God's Son also is likened to a lion, being described as "*the Lion of the tribe of Judah*" (Revelation 5:5). The lion is recognized as being strong and fearless.

Though they did not recognize Him as the Christ, some observers candidly confessed Jesus' boldness, saying, "*But look! He speaks boldly, and they say nothing to Him*" (John 7:26). As followers of Jesus, we need to strive to imitate His boldness. In what ways did He demonstrate His courage?

Even in the face of danger, Jesus had the courage to confess His Deity. When He was asked by the Jewish high priest, "*Are You the Christ, the Son of the Blessed,*" His answer was, "*I am*" (Mark 14:61,62). That confession ultimately cost Him His life. Are you and I courageous enough to confess Jesus, even when we face potential backlash for doing so?

Jesus showed courage by taking the right action, even as He was criticized for it. For instance, He kept on eating with and reaching out to tax collectors and sinners, despite the criticism He faced (Luke 15:1,2).

Our Lord manifested boldness when He said and taught what people needed to hear. Though they may have preferred to hear something softer, Jesus told great multitudes of listeners that anyone who desires to be His disciple must love Him above their family, bear their cross, and forsake all (Luke 14:25-27,33).

The Christ showed courage when He spoke against religious error and exposed the character of religious leaders. He pointed out the error of trying to bind man-made traditions (Mark 7:1-13) and openly condemned the hypocrisy of the scribes and Pharisees (Matthew 23).

Our Savior further showed boldness when He stayed committed to the Father and His will, even when those around Him failed or faltered. The night before Jesus went to the cross, all of the apostles forsook Him (Mark 14:50), Judas betrayed Him, and Simon Peter denied Him. Yet, the Master remained loyal to His heavenly Father and the divine plan.

Jesus courageously suffered for the cause of truth, even though He was innocent of any wrongdoing. When He was reviled, He did not revile in return (Mark 15:29-32). Instead, He "*committed Himself to Him who judges righteously*" (1 Peter 2:23).

When Immanuel was forsaken, He wavered not. As He was tempted by the devil when He was alone, He stood His ground. When He was mocked, He pressed on. Let us learn to imitate His courage!

-- Roger D. Campbell

Galatians 1:1,2,10-23 – The Genuineness of Paul's Apostleship

Paul claimed to be an apostle (Galatians 1:1). Some first-century members of the church seemed to doubt or even deny such an affirmation. Thus, in some of Paul's epistles, at times we see him defending his apostleship and the authority with which he spoke.

The first two chapters of Galatians contain certain elements which have "the feel" of Paul defending his apostleship and the message he proclaimed. How was the description "an apostle of Christ" granted to him? (1) Did a group of humans confer such authority upon him? (2) Did he appoint himself to that position? (3) Did the God of heaven call Him to that role and grant him the designation of "an apostle of Jesus?" The correct answer is number three: the Lord chose Him.

The letter opens with the words, "*Paul, an apostle (not from men nor through man)*" (Galatians 1:1)

Paul was an apostle "*through Jesus Christ and God the Father*" (1:2).

The gospel that Paul preached was "*not according to man*" (1:11).

The gospel proclaimed by Paul: "*For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it*" (1:11).

The gospel Paul preached "*came through the revelation of Jesus Christ*" (1:12). The unmistakable Source of his apostleship and preaching was none other than Jesus the Christ.

It pleased God to reveal His Son in Paul as he preached Him among the Gentiles (1:15,16).

As Paul began his preaching of the gospel, he did not confer immediately with flesh and blood, nor did He go up to meet with other apostles in Jerusalem (1:16,17). No, Paul was not trained by the more-experienced apostles . . . He got His message from the Lord via the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 3:1-5).

After his conversion, Paul preached "the faith" which he once had tried to destroy (1:23). "The faith" was the gospel system of faith which resulted in salvation for those who obeyed it (Acts 6:7). Paul preached the same message that the other apostles did.

Consider a few final facts that we learn from passages recorded outside of Galatians. One, Paul saw Jesus after He rose from the dead (1 Corinthians 9:1). Two, what Paul wrote (and preached) was called "*the commandments of the Lord*" (1 Corinthians 14:37). Three, Paul was "*not at all inferior to the most eminent apostles*" (2 Corinthians 11:5). Paul was a genuine apostle, having the same delegated authority from the Lord that the other apostles had. Thus, when he spoke for God, wise men heeded his message.

-- Roger D. Campbell

LESSONS FROM THE CHURCH IN CORINTH

The city of Corinth was a flourishing trade center in New Testament times and was a cultural, social, and economic melting pot of about 400,000 people by the time Paul arrived (circa AD 51). The Corinth of Paul's day was quite cosmopolitan and worldly. The city was infamous for its bars and brothels. Particularly, Corinth was infamous for its temple of the Greek goddess Aphrodite and its hordes of both male and female prostitutes, ever seeking "customers" to assist in "worshiping" the pagan idol. Relished by much of the Roman Empire for its general lack of moral standards and "freedom of thought," Corinth was truly a city in dire need of the gospel of Christ!

The beginning of the Lord's church in Corinth is recorded in Acts 18:1-18. Paul first went to the Jewish synagogue, where people were, for the most part, unreceptive. Perhaps the most surprising early convert was the chief ruler of the synagogue, Crispus, along with his household (Acts 18:8). Luke then records, "And many of the Corinthians, hearing, believed and were baptized" (Acts 18:8). The Lord appeared to Paul in a night vision and told him to take courage and keep teaching, for the Lord would keep him safe, and informed him that many people in the city would be receptive. Thus began the Lord's church in Corinth, and Paul "continued there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them" (Acts 18:11).

The diverse cultural, societal, and economic backgrounds of the Corinthian citizens were brought into the local body when the Lord's church was established there. This caused difficulties for the brethren as they sought to become a unified family of Christians. The Holy Spirit preserved two letters Paul wrote to them, wherein he dealt with numerous issues that plagued this rather diverse congregation. What can Christians today learn from the church at Corinth?

Faith must be placed in God, not man. One of the problems Paul dealt with in detail in 1 Corinthians was their inclination to denominate themselves based on humans (some even seeking to denominate Christ, 1 Corinthians 1:11-13). Paul's Spirit-inspired message to them was for unity in Christ, Who is neither divided nor denominated in any way. Paul emphasizes men as mere servants of the King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

Sin must be dealt with and corrected. The issue at Corinth with the man living in sin (1 Corinthians 5) illustrates the sad fact that, too often, culture influences the church more than the church influences the culture. However, Paul is clear: Jesus is Lord, and Christians must submit to Him, both in dealing with and correcting sin when it invades the Lord's church.

God's people must be separate from the world. Maintaining a distinction from the sinful, godless world is a perennial challenge for God's people. The Corinthian brethren's propensity to adopt their surrounding immoral culture (instead of separating from such) illustrates the constant struggle of God's people to maintain separation from the world.

God's plan works. Perhaps no example better illustrates the superiority of God's ways and wisdom than the matter of Paul's order to withdraw fellowship from the man living in fornication (1 Corinthians 5). Humans are often reluctant to follow God's plan (especially regarding church discipline), yet God's plan always works. Whether the brother was restored or not, the church's purity—and its distinctive separation from the world—would be maintained, and God's will would be followed. It turned out that the man **was** restored (2 Corinthians 2:1-11). Truly, "*the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God*" (1 Corinthians 3:19)! God's way is always the best way!

Where the greatest trouble is, there needs to be the greatest love. Amid dealing with a plethora of problems plaguing the Corinthian church, Paul introduces the key, overarching solution with, "*And yet I show you a more excellent way*" (1 Corinthians 12:31). That "*more excellent way*" is detailed in 1 Corinthians 13 and can be summed up in one word: "love." Whatever the problem, when people love God supremely and love others, those problems can and will be resolved. Perhaps the greatest problem in the church at Corinth was a lack of *biblical* love. Biblical love does not ignore sin or differences, but addresses them frankly and compassionately, seeking God's will above all and others' best interests before one's own.

These are just a few of many great lessons from the church at Corinth. These lessons are as applicable now as when they were first written, for, as Paul stated, these are the lessons he taught "*everywhere in every church*" (1 Corinthians 4:17). Paul also reminded them (and us), "*If anyone thinks himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things which I write to you are the commandments of the Lord*" (1 Corinthians 14:37). Are we listening to and learning from the Spirit's inspired instructions to the church at Corinth?

-- Chad Dollahite

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