

### **Session 3: Reliability of Scripture**

#### **I.) Where did the Bible come from?**

The Bible came from \_\_\_\_\_, by the \_\_\_\_\_, through \_\_\_\_\_, to humankind.

**Question: What do you envision when you think about Paul writing, let's say, 2 Corinthians?**

*And we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts, knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. (2 Peter 1:19–21)*

#### **II.) How did the Bible get to us today?**

**Question: What are some common objections in this vein of thought?**

- a. The Old Testament: is it consistent?
  - i. One case study:
    - The last book of the OT, Malachi was written \_\_\_\_\_ before the birth of Christ.
    - Historically, the oldest known copies of the OT in Hebrew were from about A.D. 900.
    - That's a ~1300-year gap.
    - Wouldn't it be nice if we had some kind of time capsule of OT texts stored during this time to help demonstrate that the OT texts weren't corrupted?
- b. The New Testament: is it consistent?
  - i. One common pop-objection about the Bible today is that it's been corrupted over time. This charge is specifically leveled against the NT texts.
  - ii. No other historical document shares--or even comes close to sharing--the level of consistency that the New Testament enjoys.

Author	Work	Date Written	Earliest MSS	Time Gap	Old # <sup>29</sup>	New
Homer	Iliad	800 BC	c. 400 BC	400	643	1,757
Herodotus	History	480–425 BC	10th C	1,350	8	109
Sophocles <sup>30</sup>	Plays	496–406 BC	3rd C BC	100-200	100	193
Plato	Tetralogies	400 BC	895	1,300	7	210
Caesar	Gallic Wars	100-44 BC	9th C	950	10	251
Livy	History of Rome	59 BC–AD 17	Early 5th C	400	1 Partial , 19 copies	150
Tacitus	Annals	AD 100	1st half:850, 2nd: 1050 (AD 1100)	750–950	20	2 + 31 15 <sup>th</sup> C
Pliny, the Elder	Natural History	AD 49–79	5th C fragment: 1; Rem. 14–15th C	400 (750)	7	200
Thucydides	History	460–400 BC	3rd C BC (AD 900)	200 (1,350)	8	96
Demosthenes	Speeches	300 BC	Some fragments from 1 C. BC. (AD 1100)	1,100+ (1,400)	200	340
NT		AD 50–100	AD 130 (or less) <sup>31</sup>	40	5,366	5,795

c. Is corruption possible?

i. Do we have any examples of corruption of the Bible?

### III.) Why can we consider the Bible to be trustworthy?

- **Internally** \_\_\_\_\_
  - Example: fulfilled prophecy
- **Externally** \_\_\_\_\_
  - Example: the Bible's unequivocally-matched impact on world history
- **Miraculously** \_\_\_\_\_
- **Comprehensively** \_\_\_\_\_
  - When considering the Bible's scientific accuracy, we have to remember why it was written (~genre) and in what context (to whom) it was written.
- **Christologically** \_\_\_\_\_
  - Jesus demonstrated complete trust in his "bible" ...which just so happened to be a translation.

### Additional Notes, Comments, and Questions:

What did we miss?

## **Some common objections to the Bible's veracity and reliability**

### **1. The Bible is Full of Myths.**

**Charge:** miracles, parallel accounts of the flood, and similarities with Greek gods.

**Response:** The Bible does not have a mythical literary style when compared with other ancient literature. Ruling out myths presupposes a naturalistic worldview. Challenge people to read the Bible!

### **2. The Bible Conflicts with Science.**

**Charge:** This is perhaps one of the great challenges of the 20th century – the Scopes Monkey trial.

**Response:** The Bible describes nature from a phenomenological perspective – that is the world of nature is described as it appears to the naked eye. Furthermore, the scientific method is unable to examine any historical claim, since it can only comment on phenomenon which are observable and repeatable.

### **3. The Bible is Full of Contradictions**

**Charge:** The Bible is full of contradictions.

**Response:** Like what? How do you know, have you read it? There are some divergent accounts and writers do describe similar things from different perspectives. However, under close scrutiny, these passages are complementary, not contradictory.

### **4. The Bible is Historically Inaccurate**

**Charge:** When new historical information comes to light, it detracts rather than lends credibility to the Bible.

**Response:** Really? Like what? Actually, the Bible is one of the most historically accurate texts of antiquity.