

How did we get the Bible?



In our last lesson, we saw that the Bible is supported by internal evidence as well as external evidence.

Internal evidence includes such things as the Bible's unity and claims the Bible

makes about itself. In most of the New Testament books there is a claim to authorship. We are able to test to some degree whether or not that author could have written the book by its contents. For instance, does it match what the author could have known in his lifetime? Other questions might centre around whether the descriptions of Paul's life and work in Acts match what we find in the books generally attributed to Paul.

Perhaps the most compelling evidence for the truth of Scripture for the Christian is the fact that Jesus often quoted from the Old Testament (Matthew 4:4,7,10).

1. What is happening in the life of Jesus in Matthew 4:1-11? How does Jesus use Scripture? What does this tell us about the view that Jesus held about the Old Testament?

External evidence for the truth of Scripture includes those things outside the Bible that show the Bible to be accurate.

The Dead Sea Scrolls discovery in 1947 is an external evidence that supports the accuracy of the Bible. The scrolls were dated from 250 to 150 B.C. and parts of every Old Testament book were found. Though these scrolls were about 1,000 years older than any other copy of the Old Testament previously discovered, they were virtually identical to later copies.

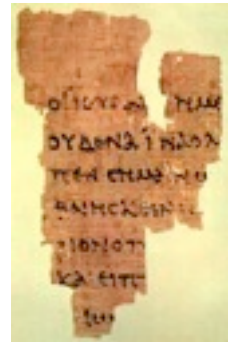


The Bible is also shown to be historically accurate. Isaiah was accused of making a mistake when he wrote that Sargon was king of Assyria

(Isaiah 20:1). Previous to this Sargon was unknown, so many sceptics claimed Isaiah was in error. In 1843, Paul Emile Botta discovered Sargon's palace and archaeological evidence that Isaiah was accurate. The brick inscription above says: "Sargon, king of the universe, built this city: Dûr-Sharrûkin ("The fortress of Sargon") is it's name; inside it he had this unrivalled Palace built." (http://mv.vatican.va/3_EN/pages/x-Schede/MEZs/MEZs_Sala09_05_038.html)

2. Why are archaeological finds so important as a part of the body of external evidence??

The John Rylands Papyrus, found in 1920, has provided the oldest known fragment of any part of the New Testament. It has been dated to 125 A.D. and contains John 18:31-33; 37-38. This discovery disproves the claim by sceptics that the Gospel of John could not have been written until the end of the 2nd century A.D. (<http://www.squidoo.com/biblicalarchaeology>)



In Acts, Luke mentions thirty-two countries, fifty-four cities; nine Mediterranean islands, and ninety-five persons. With this much information, Luke's accuracy proves that he lived during the period of the first century and that what he wrote historically is true. (<http://www.apologeticspress.org/articles/2467>)

3. Which type of evidence is most compelling to you; internal or external? Why?

For the Bible to be true, it must show itself to be accurate historically, prophetically, scientifically, and it must carry a tone of authority. There is compelling evidence both within the Bible and externally to show the Bible as being true.

For further information about these topics see: Apologetics Press at: www.apologeticspress.org; Answers in Genesis at: <http://www.answersingenesis.org>; and *New Testament Evidences* by Wallace W. Wartick.

Though we may believe the Bible to be the Word of God and to be accurate, we have yet to answer the question: *"How did we get the Bible?"*

Ancient Writing Materials

The original copies of the Biblical books are referred to as **autographs**, but we have no copies of any of the autographs. What we have hundreds of copies of copies. These copies can be dated and compared to other copies from other locations. Part of the method of dating is determined by the writing materials.

Ancient writings took place on stone, clay, wood, leather, papyrus, vellum or parchment.

4. What do the following Scriptures say about writing on stone? (Exodus 31:18; 34:1,28; Deuteronomy 27:2-3; Joshua 8:30-32)

5. What writing material was used in Ezekiel 4:1?

6. What could the writing material have been in Jeremiah 36:23?

7. What kind of writing material is found in Revelation 5:2?