

How Do We Know That What We Believe Is Real?

Michael R. Daily, June 2022

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Question: *How do we know that what we believe is real? There are people out there who believe in something else as strongly as I believe and they think what they believe is right just as I believe the Gospel is true. How can I be sure I'm believing in the right thing?*

The best way to decide what to believe is to objectively gather all the relevant evidence regarding a matter and deeply analyze it without bias to see what truth the weight of the evidence is pointing to.

Objectively: *dealing with facts without distortion by personal feelings, prejudices, or interpretations*

Evidence: *something that furnishes proof; something submitted to a tribunal to ascertain the truth*

Analysis: *detailed examination of anything complex in order to understand its nature or essential features*

Bias: *an inclination of temperament or outlook resulting in a personal and sometimes unreasoned judgment, a preconceived judgment formed without just grounds or sufficient knowledge*

Matthew 22:37

And He said to him, "YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND."

Proverbs 18:15

The mind of the prudent acquires knowledge, And the ear of the wise seeks knowledge.

Unfortunately, this is not how most people decide what to believe!

Most people decide what to believe by determining what belief would make their life the easiest or most enjoyable.

Proverbs 12:15

The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, But a wise man is he who listens to counsel.

Ecclesiastes 10:2

A wise man's heart *directs him* toward the right, but the foolish man's heart *directs him* toward the left.

For example, why is an atheist an atheist? Is it because they have objectively analyzed all the evidence and the evidence forces them to admit that its just not possible for God to exist? No. Its because that person has decided that their life would be best if there was no God. If there was no God then they could do anything they wanted and no one could ever say they were doing anything wrong. Since my life would be most satisfying to me if God did not exist, I am, therefore an atheist! Notice that in making their decision there was no gathering of evidence or deep analysis of alternatives. Now that they have decided to be an atheist, as they go through life and occasionally come across things that seem to support their belief, they casually point to those things as evidence supporting their position, while ignoring contradictory evidence. But their decision was made much earlier.

In his book, *The Last Word*, atheist Thomas Nagel wrote, "*I want atheism to be true and am made uneasy by the fact that some of the most intelligent and well-informed people I know are religious believers. It isn't just that I don't believe in God and, naturally, hope that I'm right in my belief. It's that I hope there is no God! I don't want there to be a God; I don't want the universe to be like that.*"

Proverbs 18:2 - A fool does not delight in understanding, But only in revealing his own mind.

Proverbs 19:3 - The foolishness of man ruins his way, And his heart rages against the LORD.

Why does a person become a Hindu? Is it because they have gathered all the relevant information and analyzed all the alternative beliefs to see which one best fits the evidence? No. Instead they determine what belief would be best for their life if it was true. If I grew up in a Hindu culture and everyone in my family and my friends and my society were Hindu, it would be easiest and most enjoyable for me if the Hindu God also happened to be the real God. Therefore, I am Hindu.

You will also notice that when people of different religions get married one of them will often switch to the other person's religion. Why? Is it because they suddenly completed an in-depth analysis of the evidence and it pushed them to the other religion? No. They did it because they believed their marriage would be more successful (i.e. their life would be better) if the religion of their spouse happened to be true.

So, the vast majority of people decide what they believe based on what they think would most improve their lives if it was true.

Proverbs 28:26

He who trusts in his own heart is a fool, But he who walks wisely will be delivered.

Jeremiah 17:9

The heart is more deceitful than all else And is desperately sick; Who can understand it?

These people can be very passionate about their belief but that doesn't mean its true, it just demonstrates how much they want it to be true.

Key Point: *People are not deciding what to believe based on an unbiased gathering and analysis of the evidence. If they did, everyone would become a Christian, because the evidence overwhelmingly points to the God of the Bible.*

First Decision: God or No God?

Let's start by working through a series of decisions. The first decision is, "Am I going to be an atheist or am I going to believe that there is a God?" The evidence we will analyze to make this decision is the physical universe.

(Romans 1:18–20)

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness,¹⁹ because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them.²⁰ For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.

(Jeremiah 32:17)

Ah Lord GOD! Behold, You have made the heavens and the earth by Your great power and by Your outstretched arm! Nothing is too difficult for You,

When you look at the complexity of the universe and biology and the delicate balance that everything is in that is required for life on Earth to currently exist what is the best explanation? There are millions of things in perfect balance all of which are needed for life to exist on Earth. The atmosphere has just the right percentage of oxygen in it – not too much, not too little. The orbit of the Earth is exactly perfect for supporting life on the Earth. The Sun is 93 million miles away from Earth but I can walk out my door without even a coat on on a nice spring day and enjoy the perfectly balanced fresh air and not float away or be crushed by too much gravity. As we learn more about the operations of a single human cell we realize its operational complexity is greater than that of an aircraft carrier! And that is just one cell.

So, I have two options. I can look at this evidence and decide that there must be a God who created all of this or the alternative is to believe the following:

- 1) Nothing existed, no light, no energy, no atoms (not even one atom), time did not exist, and yes, even empty space did not exist. Then, for no known reason, the nothingness exploded into energy and light, and even space came into being all by itself with no God doing it.
- 2) Some of the energy somehow turned itself into subatomic particles. These particles randomly bumped into each other and somehow formed themselves into atoms.
- 3) Over billions of years the atoms randomly bumped into each other and somehow formed a variety of different elements and molecules and even chemicals.
- 4) The chemicals randomly bumped into each other over long periods of time and somehow the result was a living cell operating with the complexity of an aircraft carrier. Then somehow this single cell figured out a way to replicate itself over and over.
- 5) The living cells somehow diversified themselves into many different types of cells and as these cells randomly bumped into other chemicals, the cells started to turn themselves into organisms that had many different types of cells.
- 6) The multi-cell organisms continued randomly bumping into other cells and chemicals and turned into more and more complex plants and animals.
- 7) Although there was no driver for it, as the animals became more and more complex through random movements of cells and chemicals and particles, they developed two versions of themselves, some male, and some female that just so happen to perfectly fit together in such a way that the only way the species could continue is by requiring sexual relations between them (by the way, this is a significant liability in terms of survival of the species).
- 8) While all of this was happening other atoms were somehow coming together to make stars and planets and moons and all of these were somehow positioning themselves so that they were spaced exactly in the right spots so that life and all the other life related things could develop without being destroyed by extreme heat or cold, cosmic radiation, too much or too little water, too much or too little oxygen, etc.

This is ridiculous! How could all of this happen without someone directing it?

How many of you believe that wind and weather, acting on a mountain over billions of years, would somehow carve the images of the faces of 4 US presidents into it? I don't know anyone who believes that but its easier to believe that is true than to believe all the things I just read to you! Being an atheist requires that you believe a long list of very foolish things. This is why God says that the fool says there is no God.



https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mount_Rushmore

Psalm 14:1

The fool has said in his heart, "There is no God." They are corrupt, they have committed abominable deeds; There is no one who does good.

Therefore, the physical evidence of the Universe itself strongly points to the existence of God rather than to atheism. This answers the first question.

Second Decision: Is God Knowable or Unknowable?

Since God exists is He knowable or unknowable? If God is not knowable then how would I live my life? I would essentially live my life the way I thought was best. There would be no difference in the way I lived my life and the way the atheist lived their life. The only difference would be that the atheist would live however they wanted with the belief that when they die they ceased to exist. If I believed that God was not knowable then I would live my life the way that I thought was best and then wait to see what happens after I die.

Why would God go to all this trouble to create us if we are just going to live like those who don't believe He exists? It doesn't make a lot of sense. Therefore, I would expect God to be knowable.

(Jeremiah 9:23-24)

Thus says the LORD, “Let not a wise man boast of his wisdom, and let not the mighty man boast of his might, let not a rich man boast of his riches; ²⁴ but let him who boasts boast of this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the LORD who exercises lovingkindness, justice and righteousness on earth; for I delight in these things,” declares the LORD.

(Acts 17:22-31)

So Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus and said, “Men of Athens, I observe that you are very religious in all respects. ²³ For while I was passing through and examining the objects of your worship, I also found an altar with this inscription, ‘TO AN UNKNOWN GOD.’ Therefore what you worship in ignorance, this I proclaim to you. ²⁴ The God who made the world and all things in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands; ²⁵ nor is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all *people* life and breath and all things; ²⁶ and He made from one *man* every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined *their* appointed times and the boundaries of their habitation, ²⁷ that they would seek God, if perhaps they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us; ²⁸ for in Him we live and move and exist, as even some of your own poets have said, ‘For we also are His children.’ ²⁹ Being then the children of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and thought of man. ³⁰ Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all *people* everywhere should repent, ³¹ because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead.”

Third Decision: Has God Written Something For Us So That We Can Know Him?

Since God exists and He is knowable, I would have expected Him to write something down for us. Why? Because of the way He designed us. Humans are not very good at remembering details over long periods of time. We remember things incorrectly or partially, and we forget important agreements and details.

To overcome this problem we document in written contracts every important event in our lives. This includes birth/baptism/marriage/death certificates, school records, car and home ownership, insurance policies of various types, loan agreements, employment agreements, etc. Every time you download new software or apps to your phone or computer you have to click the “agree” button on the written contract before you can proceed.

By having these agreements in writing we can go back and remind ourselves of the details of exactly what it was that we agreed to. Since God knows that we are like this, I would expect Him to make Himself knowable to us by providing us with a written document that we can study, analyze, and review whenever we need to.

Exodus 24:12

Now the LORD said to Moses, “Come up to Me on the mountain and remain there, and I will give you the stone tablets with the law and the commandment which I have written for their instruction.”

Exodus 34:27

Then the LORD said to Moses, “Write down these words, for in accordance with these words I have made a covenant with you and with Israel.”

(Luke 1:1-4)

Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile an account of the things accomplished among us, ² just as they were handed down to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word, ³ it seemed fitting for me as well, having investigated everything carefully from the beginning, to write *it* out for you in consecutive order, most excellent Theophilus; ⁴ so that you may know the exact truth about the things you have been taught.

(John 20:30-31)

Therefore many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; ³¹ **but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name.**

(Romans 15:4)

For whatever was written in earlier times was **written for our instruction**, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.

Fourth Decision: Of All the Religious Writings In The World, Which One Is From The Real God?

There are many religious writings in the world that are in conflict with each other. So, we know that some are not really from God. So how do we determine which of the religious writings is from the real God? If a religious writing is from the one true God we would expect it to meet a very high standard of quality that other religious writings (those not from the real God) would not be able to meet. In fact, we would expect God's writings to be so good that it would become our ultimate authority in determining what is true and what is false, above any other type of authority.

The Bible claims to be our ultimate authority in determining what is true and what is false. The Bible claims to be the words of God and that He has supernaturally watched over and protected His Word throughout history and that the Bible we have today are God's words, perfect, pure, unchanged, without error, having the power to change human lives.

Psalms 19:7-11

The law of the LORD is **perfect**, restoring the soul; The testimony of the LORD is **sure**, making wise the simple. ⁸ The precepts of the LORD are **right**, rejoicing the heart; The commandment of the LORD is **pure**, enlightening the eyes. ⁹ The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever; The judgments of the LORD are **true**; they are righteous altogether. ¹⁰ They are more desirable than gold, yes, than much fine gold; Sweeter also than honey and the drippings of the honeycomb. ¹¹ Moreover, by them Your servant is warned; In keeping them there is great reward.

(Psalm 119:140) - Your word is very pure, Therefore Your servant loves it.

(Psalm 12:6)

The words of the LORD are pure words; As silver tried in a furnace on the earth, refined seven times.

Jeremiah 1:11-12

The word of the LORD came to me saying, "What do you see, Jeremiah?" And I said, "I see a rod of an almond tree." ¹² Then the LORD said to me, "**You have seen well, for I am watching over My word to perform it.**"

The Bible makes the most outrageous claim of all in stating that every single word in the Bible (in the original languages and manuscripts, not in copies or translations) is exactly where God wanted it to be.

Luke 16:17

But it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one stroke of a letter of the Law to fail.

So, the question is, how do we determine if these claims are true or false?

In every person's life there is an ultimate authority that the person uses to determine if other things are right or wrong, good or bad, true or false. For many people this ultimate authority is their personal feelings, life experiences, or their own personal philosophy of right and wrong. It is easy to show that because people vary widely in their feelings, experiences, and philosophy that using this as an ultimate authority leads more often to conclusions that are arbitrary rather than to truth. If this was a good approach then we would all come to the same conclusions and these conclusions would not change from one generation to the next - but that is not what we see.

For others, the claims of non-observational, philosophical “science” (not based on repeatable experiments) are their ultimate authority even though they may not really understand the assumptions behind the claims or even take time to investigate them. Over time we see that the conclusions of non-observational science (philosophy) change as often as any other issue of fashion.

Others limit themselves to the world of observational science (things we can perform repeatable experiments on) without philosophical interpretations or extrapolations. While this approach has legitimate merits, the follower quickly realizes that observational science does not extend to many important aspects of life. Things that can’t be observed or experimented with like the beginning of the universe or life after death are outside its capabilities. Even the philosophical assertions of evolution cannot be observed and are, therefore, outside the capabilities of observational science.

This issue of ultimate authority is important because it means that nothing else can be used to “prove” that the ultimate authority is true. If something else could be used, then “that thing” would really be our ultimate authority instead.

For the Christian, the ultimate authority we use to determine right and wrong, good and bad, truth and error, is the Bible. Therefore, there is nothing else we can turn to to “prove” the Bible can be trusted. For everything else in life we can always compare “that thing” to the Bible and use the Bible to validate its truth. But because the Bible is our final authority there is nothing else we can turn to. As a result, the approach we take to determine if the Bible can really be trusted is different than the approach we would take to determine the truth and validity of anything else in life. This unique situation may feel a little unsettling because it is so different from our everyday experiences in trusting other things, but as long as we remember why the Bible is in such a unique situation we can work through this successfully.

Fortunately, God has created an orderly universe and given us logical minds such that we can cross-check the Bible with many other things that we know are mostly true. If we cross-check the Bible with a large and diverse source of things we know are mostly true we would expect the Bible to be in agreement with these other things most of the time. We can, in effect, create a large volume of evidence supporting the claims of the Bible. We can also take this same approach with other religious writings and see how the Bible compares to them.

The end result of this approach being that an overwhelming volume of evidence can be provided that will bring the honest student to admit that it is, in fact, very reasonable to believe the Bible is the perfect Word of God and other religious writings are not. This is as far as we can go without faith. The final step is to not only admit that it is not unreasonable to believe the Bible is the Word of God but to, by faith, believe that it really is the Word of God and to submit to it and obey it as our ultimate authority in life.

We can look at at least six things as a starting point:

- 1) **Internal Consistency:** We can cross check and cross validate the Bible against its own claims. As the Word of God we would expect its internal self-consistency to be supernaturally 100% in all ways, shapes, and forms. If it is not 100% self-consistent it can’t be the Word of God. We can also use this same test on other religious documents. We will discuss Internal Consistency in more detail a little later.
- 2) **Historical Quality:** We can also compare the metrics we use to validate other historical documents and see how the Bible’s metrics in these areas compare to all other historical works and the writings of other religions. Metrics are just the specific things we measure to determine how good or bad something is. If the Bible is truly the Word of God we would expect it to supernaturally surpass the metrics of all other historical works and religious writings. What we find is that the Bible surpasses all known historical documents, both religious and secular, in terms of historical quality by at least a factor of 10. The strongest evidence for a non-Biblical ancient document is for Homer’s Iliad (643 copies with the earliest copy being made 500 years after the original was written). Now compare that to the New Testament. We currently have 24,970 copies with the earliest copies being made less than 100 years (less than 50 years for some of the books) after the original was written! Think about that. The writers of many of these books were alive for many of these years and could publicly correct anything that was copied incorrectly. In addition we have almost 25,000 copies that we can compare against each other. If any error was made in making the copies it would be easy to detect these errors and correct them.

- 3) **Observational Science:** We would also expect the Bible to be consistent with observational science but not necessarily the non-observational, philosophical part of science. We would expect the Bible to provide supernatural insight into the physical world before its time. The oldest book of the Bible, Job, described the Earth as round and that it “hangs on nothing” at a time when the prevailing wisdom was that the Earth was flat and was supported by something else.

Job 26:7

“He stretches out the north over empty space And hangs the earth on nothing.

¹⁰“He has inscribed a circle on the surface of the waters At the boundary of light and darkness.

(Isaiah 40:22)

It is He who sits above the circle of the earth,

The Bible even describes how the world was made out of atoms (individual atoms can never be seen because they are smaller than the wavelength of visible light),

(Hebrews 11:3)

By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible.

and the future use of smart weapons in the destruction of Babylon during the future Great Tribulation,

(Jeremiah 50:9)

“For behold, I am going to arouse and bring up against Babylon A horde of great nations from the land of the north, And they will draw up *their* battle lines against her; From there she will be taken captive. Their arrows will be like an expert warrior Who does not return empty-handed.

The Bible described the Water Cycle thousands of years before it was discovered by science in the 1600s.

(Job 26:8) – clouds contain large amounts of water

He wraps up the waters in His clouds, And the cloud does not burst under them.

(Ecclesiastes 11:3) – rain is water falling out of the clouds

If the clouds are full, they pour out rain upon the earth;

(Ecclesiastes 1:7) – rainwater flows into rivers which flow into the sea but sea level does not grow

All the rivers flow into the sea, Yet the sea is not full

(Amos 9:6) – water evaporates from the sea and forms clouds which then rain water on the earth

.... He who calls for the waters of the sea And pours them out on the face of the earth, The LORD is His name.

The Bible indirectly indicates the future use of satellite television during the future Great Tribulation.

(Revelation 11:7-9)

When they have finished their testimony, the beast that comes up out of the abyss will make war with them, and overcome them and kill them. ⁸ And their dead bodies *will lie* in the street of the great city which mystically is called Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified. ⁹ Those from the peoples and tribes and tongues and nations will look at their dead bodies for three and a half days, and will not permit their dead bodies to be laid in a tomb.

For more information on this topic see, “Observational Science Compared To The Bible” at:

<http://gciweb.org/2011/04/youth-bible-study-materials-michael-r-daily/>

Compare to other religions:

Hindu: Hindu scriptures describe the Moon as being farther away from the Earth than the Sun is! The Earth is described as flat and triangular, structured in seven stories, each of which is inhabited and has its own ocean. In addition, planet Earth sits on the backs of four elephants that stand on the back of a turtle swimming in a sea of milk!

Buddhist: Buddhist scriptures describe Earth as flat. The Sun is made of a core of gold surrounded by a shell of crystal (its not the thermonuclear reactor science says it is). The Moon is constructed of silver and jewels (not the grey powder that covered the Apollo astronauts and their equipment). Eclipses are caused by an evil being who occasionally swallows the Sun and Moon and releases them when ordered to do so by Buddha. Earth is said to have a mountain at its center called Mount Meru. Buddhist scriptures describe this mountain as being 84,000 miles high (which would be over 10 times larger than the Earth's diameter)!

Muslim: Although written 600 years after Christ and at a time when the Bible was available in its entirety, the Koran still contains cosmological errors. According to the Koran, there are seven heavens in which all things are said to move. These heavens are solid, have roofs, and contain lamps which are posted to keep demons from entering the heavens and tempting the inhabitants. When the Sun sets it sets in a sea of black mud!

Greek Mythology: The ancient Greeks believed the Earth sat on the back of an immortal giant named Atlas. No word on what Atlas was supposed to be standing on.

Mormon: Oliver B. Huntington, a devout LDS contemporary of Joseph Smith, stated that Smith taught, *"The inhabitants of the moon are more of a uniform size than the inhabitants of the earth, being six feet in height. They dress very much like the Quaker style They live to be very old; coming generally near a thousand years. This is the description of them as given by Joseph (Smith) the Seer, and he could see whatever he asked the Father in the name of Jesus to see"* (Journal of Oliver B. Huntington, Vol. II, p. 166). In the 1960s and 1970s the Apollo program sent astronauts to the moon multiple times. No inhabitants were found.

- 4) **Effectiveness:** We would expect the instructions of the Bible to be found to be supernaturally correct in regard to human relationships and the physical world even though they may be counterintuitive to human thinking. While God was telling Israel to wash or burn the clothes of seriously sick people and to cover their mouths when they talked, the Egyptians at that same time (the most "advanced" nation of that time) were smearing animal dung on their sores.

(Exodus 15:26)

And He said, "If you will give earnest heed to the voice of the LORD your God, and do what is right in His sight, and give ear to His commandments, and keep all His statutes, I will put none of the diseases on you which I have put on the Egyptians; for I, the LORD, am your healer."

(Leviticus 13:45-46) (NLT) (sick people should cover their mouths when talking and stay away from others)
Those who suffer from a serious skin disease must tear their clothing and leave their hair uncombed. They must cover their mouth and call out, 'Unclean! Unclean!' ⁴⁶ As long as the serious disease lasts, they will be ceremonially unclean. They must live in isolation in their place outside the camp.

(Leviticus 13:53-55) (washing or burning the clothing of sick people)

But if the priest shall look, and indeed the mark has not spread in the garment, either in the warp or in the woof, or in any article of leather, ⁵⁴ then the priest shall order them to wash the thing in which the mark occurs and he shall quarantine it for seven more days. ⁵⁵ After the article with the mark has been washed, the priest shall again look, and if the mark has not changed its appearance, even though the mark has not spread, it is unclean; you shall burn it in the fire, whether an eating away has produced bareness on the top or on the front of it.

- 5) **Prophecy:** We would expect the Bible to be able to supernaturally predict the future with 100% accuracy and with a supernatural level of detail unmatched by any other religious or scientific writing. 27% of the Bible was prophecy of the future at the time it was written. About half of these prophecies have come true with the other half to come true in our future. No Bible prophecy has failed to occur.

One of the most important Old Testament prophecies of the Bible is the destruction (around 70 A.D.), dispersion of the people to other nations, and re-constitution of the nation of Israel 1,878 years later. This prophecy was fulfilled in 1948. The same people, back in the same piece of land, with the same name for the nation (Israel). Israel of the Old Testament exists today and on their flag is the Star of King David.

There are 456 prophecies concerning Jesus in the Old Testament. During the last day of Jesus' life on Earth He fulfilled at least 22 prophecies during that day! What is the mathematical probability that a single person could fulfill the 456 predictions about his life made by the Bible hundreds of years before the person was born? This number is too small to calculate. What is the mathematical probability that a single person could fulfill just 16 of these prophecies in a single day? It's about 1 chance in 10⁴⁵ or one chance in 10 billion trillion trillion trillion!

(Isaiah 46:9-11)

Remember the former things long past, For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is no one like Me, ¹⁰ Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times things which have not been done, Saying, 'My purpose will be established, And I will accomplish all My good pleasure'; ¹¹ Calling a bird of prey from the east, The man of My purpose from a far country. Truly I have spoken; truly I will bring it to pass. I have planned *it*, surely I will do it.

- 6) **Resistance to Attack:** We would expect the Bible to be supernaturally designed to be resistant to tampering by evil men or evil angels who might try to change it or manipulate it for their own purposes. In fact, the design of the Bible is recognized by communications engineers as employing a message transmission architecture similar to "spread spectrum". Spread Spectrum was developed during the 1940's as a way to make a transmitted message as jam-proof and counterfeit-proof as possible and without which today's cell phone networks could not function. This is why information in the Bible on any specific subject is spread over numerous books of the Bible instead of being concentrated in only one book.

Internal Consistency

In areas of doctrine the Bible claims that it is true for all people, at all times in history, and in all cultures. We can use these claims to see if the Bible can be trusted.

(I Timothy 2:1-4)

First of all, then, I urge that entreaties *and* prayers, petitions *and* thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men, ² for kings and all who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity. ³ This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, ⁴ who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

(Psalm 105:7-8)

He is the LORD our God; His judgments are in all the earth. ⁸ He has remembered His covenant forever, The word which He commanded to a thousand generations,

(Revelation 14:6)

And I saw another angel flying in midheaven, having an eternal gospel to preach to those who live on the earth, and to every nation and tribe and tongue and people;

The Bible is made up of 66 books written by over 40 people over a 1,400 year period, on 3 continents, in 3 languages, in multiple forms, by people with diverse backgrounds (priest, doctor, political leader, military general, billionaire, teacher, fishermen, and shepherds).

If the Bible is true for all people then we can use that claim to test the Bible. For example, if the writers of the books of the Bible were multiple people and they were different types of people then our ability to trust the Bible as the Word of God would be greater than if the Bible had been written by one person or even by the same type of person (example: all rabbis). Why? Because if one person (or even one type of person) wrote the Bible it would be easier to write a set of self-consistent books. But if the books were written by a large number of different people and these people had diverse backgrounds and occupations, it would be impossible for them to write a self-consistent set of books unless God supernaturally helped them. In fact, the 66 books of the Bible were written by over 40 people with backgrounds and occupations as diverse as priests, medical doctors, political leaders, teachers, fishermen, and shepherds. Imagine the difference in how medical doctors talk to each other compared to how fishermen talk to each other. This is one piece of evidence that the Bible is supernatural in nature.

Compare this to the writings of other religions. If the book was written by one man that shows it is weak compared to the Bible (examples are the Book of Mormon, the Koran, the writings of the Unification Church (i.e. "Moonies"), L. Ron Hubbard (Scientology), Mary Baker Eddy (Christian Science), etc.

If the Bible is true for all times of history we can use time itself as a test for the Bible's validity. For example, when the books of the Bible were being written our ability to trust them as the Word of God would be stronger if they were written over long periods of time rather than written all at once. Why? Because a group of men could write a consistent set of books if it was coordinated by writing them at the same time. But if the books were written with separations of long periods of time it would be impossible to make them self-consistent unless God made them so. In fact, the Bible was written over a period of 1,400 years. Think about how much life has changed over the last 1,400 years (from 622 AD to 2022). This is one piece of evidence that the Bible is supernatural in nature.

If the Bible is true for all human cultures we can use this as a test for the Bible's validity. For example, if the authors of the Bible came from different cultures and places then our ability to trust the Bible would be greater than if the Bible had been written by people from a single culture or location. Why? Because it would be easier for a group of authors to write a self-consistent group of books if they shared a common culture, location, or language. But if the books were written by people from different cultures, locations, and languages it would be impossible for their writings to be completely consistent with each other.

In fact, the books of the Bible were written by people on three different continents (Asia, Africa, and Europe), in three different languages (Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek), and in four different linguistic forms (history, poetry, prophecy, and narrative). Think about how differently a Russian history professor communicates compared to an African poet. This is another piece of evidence that the Bible is supernatural in nature.

It would be impossible to coordinate the writings of 66 books across people diverse in any one of these areas (diversity of people type, time, culture, geography). The need to coordinate across all four of these areas simultaneously and with perfection provides strong evidence of God's supernatural action in writing the Bible.

Compare These Things To The Inconsistencies of Other Religions

Initially the Book of Mormon denounced polygamy as an abomination before God (Jacob 2:27-28, Jacob 3:5-8) as well as in the Doctrine & Covenants (D&C 42:22). Later, founder and author Joseph Smith changed this to unlimited plural marriage (D&C 132:61-63) directly contradicting previous "revelation". Once the US government started prosecuting polygamists in the late 1800s LDS president Wilford Woodruff, whose declarations carry the weight of scripture, declared polygamy to be wrong thus reversing church doctrine on this issue once again. The Koran contradicts itself when talking about Jesus. In Shura 3:45 it states that Jesus will be with god in paradise but in Shura 21:98 it says that Jesus will be in hell for being worshipped by Christians.

Conclusion

The evidence overwhelmingly supports the Bible's claims that it is the perfect Word of God.

For 66 pages of detailed information on this topic (with associated references) please see the study, "Can I Really Trust The Bible?" at: <http://gciweb.org/2011/04/youth-bible-study-materials-michael-r-daily/>

QUIET TIMES ALONE WITH GOD

JEREMIAH 15:16

THEME: *How Do We Know That What We Believe is Real?*

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Matthew 22:37, Proverbs 18:15*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Proverbs 12:15, Ecclesiastes 10:2*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Proverb 18:2, Proverbs 19:3*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

QUIET TIMES ALONE WITH GOD

JEREMIAH 15:16

THEME: *How Do We Know That What We Believe is Real?*

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Proverbs 28:26, Jeremiah 17:9*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Romans 1:18-20, Jeremiah 32:17*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Psalms 14:1*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

QUIET TIMES ALONE WITH GOD

JEREMIAH 15:16

THEME: *How Do We Know That What We Believe is Real?*

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Jeremiah 9:23-24, Acts 17:22-31*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Exodus 24:12, Exodus 34:27*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Luke 1:1-4*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

QUIET TIMES ALONE WITH GOD

JEREMIAH 15:16

THEME: *How Do We Know That What We Believe is Real?*

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *John 20:30-31, Romans 15:4*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Psalm 19:7-11, Psalm 119:140, Psalm 12:6*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Jeremiah 1:11-12, Luke 16:17*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

QUIET TIMES ALONE WITH GOD

JEREMIAH 15:16

THEME: *How Do We Know That What We Believe is Real?*

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Job 26:7, Isaiah 40:22*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Hebrews 11:3, Jeremiah 50:9*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Job 26:8, Ecclesiastes 11:3, Ecclesiastes 1:7, Amos 9:6*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

QUIET TIMES ALONE WITH GOD

JEREMIAH 15:16

THEME: *How Do We Know That What We Believe is Real?*

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Revelation 11:7-9*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Exodus 15:26. Leviticus 13:45-55*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Isaiah 46:9-11*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

QUIET TIMES ALONE WITH GOD

JEREMIAH 15:16

THEME: *How Do We Know That What We Believe is Real?*

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *I Timothy 2:1-4*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Psalms 105:7-8*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Revelation 14:6*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?