

The Bible is not a book of low moral standards that encourages people to rebel against governments and rulers. It's not the Bible that spawns terrorism, supports corruption or cheers the idle. On the contrary, no book has ever been written that maintains such a consistently high standard of morality. For the past two thousand years, untold millions of Christians have taken this book as their rule and guide for life. They have gladly obeyed it and readily died for it.

Why then has the Bible been so bitterly attacked? One answer is that it makes great claims for itself. It claims to be the word of the only true God and therefore to carry the authority of the Creator with its every sentence and line. It also claims to be the only reliable guide to tell us all that we need to know about God, the origin of the universe, the beginning of the human race, the meaning of life, what happens beyond the grave, and the way to find friendship with our Creator. The Bible demands that its laws and statements must carry more authority than any government, church or religion. It also claims that its history, geography, and any other subject it deals with, are accurate and more valuable than any of the theories of men. The Bible never claims to be just one book among many, but the book above all. 'As for God, his way is perfect; the word of the Lord is flawless' (Psalm 18:30). Claims like this are not popular.

Brian Edwards, All You Need To Know About The Bible. Introduction to Book 5

Further reading from a Christian perspective:

- Paul Barnett, The Truth about Jesus (The challenge of evidence), 1994
- Amy Orr-Ewing, Why Trust The Bible?, 2005
- Tim Keller, The Reason For God, 2008
- David J. Randall, Why I Am Not An Atheist, 2013
- Clive Anderson & Brian Edwards, Evidence For The Bible, 2014
- Brian H Edwards, All You Need To Know About The Bible (Books 1-6), 2017 •
(These books are a thorough and excellent resource, which were used extensively through the study and preparation of this topic)
- Ravi Zacharias International Ministries, rzim.org



The Bible: True or False?

Legal principles to apply to the biblical records:

1. Documents, whether ancient or modern, have the right to be considered the true and correct record, unless and until proven otherwise.
2. Documents should be taken as authentic if they are found to be from the place and written by the people who would most likely be responsible for them.
3. The person who wrote the document should be considered credible and trustworthy unless or until proven otherwise.
4. The greater the number of independent witnesses, along with the agreement of their evidence, the greater the likelihood of the accuracy of the report.
5. The reliability of the report is confirmed by how much the details match known events and circumstances.

Source:

Simon Greenleaf, The Testimony of the Evangelists Examined by the Rules of Evidence Administered in Courts of Justice, 1846

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

2 Timothy 3:16-17, the Bible

1. Is it reliable?

The Bible has proven itself with:

- * Facts and Geography
- * History and Politics
- * Prophecy (see additional handout)

2. Is it right?

Remembering the ancient nature of much of what we are dealing with here, we must always ask the question—everywhere that the evidence can be tested, does it prove itself to be true?



The Great Isaiah Scroll, found amongst The Dead Sea scrolls in 1947

3. Is it relevant?

1. The Bible is compatible with science
2. The Bible is honest about the good and bad in people
3. The Bible is not a novel, it's a record of things that actually happened
4. The Bible works with every culture in the world

The survival of variant manuscripts is regarded as a strength by Christian scholars in establishing a critical text of the New Testament. The variations do not appear to compromise either the historical integrity of the New Testament or its reliability as a canon of Christian doctrine in any substantive way. The existence of a large number of manuscripts in different ancient languages, with their origins in widely separated churches yet in substantial agreement with each other, is an argument in favour of the integrity of the Scripture.

Michael Nazir-Ali, *Frontiers in Muslim-Christian Encounter*, 1987

How does the Bible compare with other literature of a similar era?

There is no ancient literature that stands up as well as the Bible with copies so close to the original manuscript, sometimes only decades—and with a full New Testament only 300 years after the death of the apostles. In contrast:

- The earliest complete text of the Jewish scholar Josephus' history of the Jews, 'Jewish Antiquities', is dated 1,300 years after his death (and he was a contemporary of the Apostles).
- The earliest manuscripts for the Greek philosopher Plato (who died around 350BC) are from around 1,200 year after his death.
- The earliest record of Julius Caesar's account of his own campaigns in Gaul, 'Gallic Wars', from 58-55BC were from 900 years after his death.
- The earliest copies of Tacitus, a Roman historian (and contemporary of the Apostles) who wrote 'Annals' about the history from Augustus to Nero, and 'Historiae' of the Roman Empire, were 800 years after his death.
(Taken from Edwards, 2017)

