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Facts Indicating the Divine Origin of the Bible

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ARTICLE NINE

FACTS INDICATING THE DIVINE ORIGIN OF THE BIBLE

FACTS INDICATING THE DIVINE ORIGIN OF THE BIBLE

Often the unbeliever hurls the following accusation at the believer: “Oh, you Christians – you’re all alike! You’re so dogmatic! You think you alone are right and everybody else is dead wrong! How can you possibly be so sure what you believe is true?” This question, even though often asked in a scoffing manner, is nevertheless a fair one. How does the child of God know his faith is the only correct one?

Let us suppose you are invited to an important social function in your hometown. Attending this gathering are people from all over the world. As the introductions are being made, it slowly dawns on you that the only professing Christian there is yourself. You are subsequently introduced to a Buddhist, a Confucianist, a Shintoist, a Muslim, and other individuals, all belonging to various non-Christian religions. After a pleasant dinner, the conversation gradually turns to matters of religion. Your hostess, realizing this subject to be of general interest, suddenly announces: “I have a wonderful idea! Since everyone here seems to have a great interest in religion, may I suggest we share with one another by doing the following: Each person will be allowed to speak uninterrupted for ten minutes on the subject, Why I feel my faith is the right one.”

The group quickly agrees with this unique and provocative idea. Then, with no warning, she suddenly turns to you and exclaims, “You go first!” All talk immediately ceases. Every eye is fixed on you. Every ear is tuned to pick up your first words. What, pray tell, would you say? How would you start? Let us quickly list a few arguments you could not use.

- You couldn’t say, “I know I’m right because I feel I’m right! Christ lives in my heart!” – This of course is a wonderful truth experienced by all believers, but it would not convince the Buddhist who would doubtless feel Buddha lived in his heart.
- You couldn’t say, “I know I’m right because Christianity has more followers in this world than any other religion” – This is simply not true today. Actually, the sad truth is that evangelical, Bible-believing Christianity is a distinct minority in the world today. The Muslim would doubtless quickly point this out to you.
- You couldn’t say, “I know I’m right because Christianity is the oldest of all religions” – Ultimately, of course, this is true. But the Confucianist might contend that Confucius presented his teachings centuries before the Bethlehem scene. Of course, he would not understand the eternal existence of our Lord Jesus Christ.

These then are arguments you could not use. What then could you say? In reality you would have at your disposal only one single argument. But that argument, that weapon, used in the right way, would be more than enough to overwhelmingly convince any honest and sincere

listener at a social gathering. That wonderful weapon, that unanswerable argument is one's own personal copy of the Bible. What could you say? Well, you could hold up your Bible and confidently proclaim: "Look at this! I know I'm right because the author of my faith has given me a Book that is completely unlike any of the books of your faiths." You could then continue (until your time runs out) by pointing out the unity, the indestructibility, and the universal influence of the Bible. You could discuss its historical, scientific, and prophetic accuracy. Finally, you might relate exciting examples of perhaps the greatest single proof of the supernaturalness of the Bible, and that is its marvelous, life-transforming power.

Of course it must be pointed out that neither the Word of God nor the God of the Word can be scientifically analyzed in a laboratory test tube. The Divine Creator still desires and demands faith on the part of his creation, (See Heb. 11:1-6.) But he has presented us with a heavenly textbook to aid us in this needed faith. In fact, the Gospel of John was specifically written "that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name" (John 20:31).

During this phase of the study we will but briefly touch upon each of these "supernatural signs of the Scriptures," all of which indicate our Bible did in fact come from the very hand of God. As the Christian acquaints himself with these amazing arguments, he is then qualified to: "Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear" (1 Pet. 3:15).

I. First Supernatural Element: Its Amazing Unity – That the Bible is a unity is a fact no honest reader can deny. In the preface of most Bibles, the 39 Old Testament and 27 New Testament books are listed in two parallel columns down the page. But a more accurate way would be to place the entire 66-book collection in a clock-like circle, with Genesis occupying the first minute past 12:00, Exodus the second, Leviticus the third, and so on. Finally, the book of Revelation would be placed on the number 12, right next to Genesis. It is simply thrilling how these two books, Genesis the first and Revelation the last, perfectly dovetail together in a unity only God could create. For example:

In Genesis we read: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" (1:1). In Revelation we read: "I saw a new heaven and a new earth" (21:1).

In Genesis we see described the first Adam with his wife, Eve, in the Garden of Eden, reigning over the earth (1:27-28). In Revelation we see described the last Adam with his wife, the church, in the City of God, reigning over all the universe (21:9).

In Genesis we are told: "And the gathering of the waters called he Seas" (1:10). In Revelation we are told: "And there was no more sea" (21:1).

In Genesis God created the sun and moon, the day and the night (1:5, 16). In Revelation "there shall be no night there" (22:5). "And the City had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof" (21:23).

In Genesis the Tree of Life is denied to sinful man (3:22). In Revelation the Tree of Life “yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations” (22:2).

In Genesis man hears God say: “Cursed is the ground for thy sake” (3:17). In Revelation man will hear God say: “And there shall be no more curse” (22:3).

In Genesis Satan appears to torment man (3:1). In Revelation Satan disappears, himself to be tormented forever (20:10).

In Genesis the old earth was punished through a flood (7:12). In Revelation the new earth shall be purified through a fire (2 Peter 3:6-12; Rev. 21:1)

In Genesis man's early home was beside a river (2:10). In Revelation man's eternal home will be beside a river: “And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb” (22:1).

In Genesis the patriarch Abraham weeps for Sarah (23:2). In Revelation the children of Abraham will have God himself wipe away all tears from their eyes (21:4)

In Genesis God destroys an earthly city, wicked Sodom, from the sands (chapter 19). In Revelation God presents a heavenly city, new Jerusalem, from the skies (21:1).

Genesis ends with a believer in Egypt, lying in a coffin (50:1-3). Revelation ends with all believers in eternity, reigning forever (21:4).

A. This unity is achieved in spite of the long period of time involved in its writing.

1. More than 15 centuries elapsed between the writing of Genesis and Revelation.
2. Nearly 400 years elapsed between the writing of Malachi and Matthew.

B. This unity is achieved in spite of the many authors (some 40) and their various occupations (approximately 40) “The Lord gave the word: great was the company of those who published it” (Psa. 68:11).

1. Moses was an Egyptian prince.
2. Joshua was a soldier.
3. Samuel was a priest.
4. David was a king.
5. Job was a rich farmer.
6. Amos was a poor farmer.
7. Ezra was a scribe.
8. Isaiah was a prophet.
9. Daniel was a prime minister.
10. Nehemiah was a cupbearer.
11. Matthew was a tax collector.
12. Mark was an evangelist.
13. Luke was a physician.
14. John was a wealthy fisherman.

15. Peter was a poor fisherman.
16. Jude and James were probably carpenters,
17. Paul was a tentmaker.

C. This unity is achieved in spite of the different geographical places where the Bible was written.

1. In the desert (Exod. 17)
2. On Mount Sinai (Exod. 20)
3. In Palestine (most)
4. In Egypt (Jeremiah?)
5. On the Isle of Patmos (Revelation)
6. In Babylon (Daniel)
7. In Persia (Esther)
8. In Corinth (1 and 2 Thessalonians)
9. In Ephesus (Galatians?)
10. In Caesarea (Luke?)
11. From Rome (2 Timothy)

D. This unity is achieved in spite of the many different styles of its writing.

1. As history
2. As prophecy
3. As biography
4. As autobiography
5. As poetry
6. As law
7. In letter form
8. In symbolic form
9. In proverb form
10. In doctrinal form

Let us imagine a religious novel of 66 chapters that was begun by a single writer around the sixth century A.D. After the author had completed but five chapters he suddenly dies. But during the next 1,000 years, up to the sixteenth century, around 30 amateur “free-lance” writers felt constrained to contribute to this unfinished religious novel. Few of these authors shared anything in common. Some of them were black, others white, still others yellow, and a few brown. They spoke different languages, lived at different times, in different countries, had totally different backgrounds and occupations, and wrote in different styles.

Let us furthermore imagine that at the completion of the thirty-ninth chapter the writing for some reason suddenly stops. Not one word is therefore added from the

sixteenth until the twentieth century. After this long delay it begins once again by eight new authors who add the final 27 chapters.

With all this in mind, what would be the chances of this religious novel becoming a moral, scientific, prophetic, and historical unity? The answer is obvious – not one in a million. And yet this is the story of the Bible.

II. Second Supernatural Element: Its Indestructibility – The story is told of a visitor who toured a blacksmith shop. Viewing heaps of discarded hammers but only one huge anvil, he asked: “How often do you replace your anvil?” With a smile the owner replied, “Never! It is the anvil that wears out the hammers, you know!”

So it is with the Word of God. The hammers of persecution, ridicule, higher criticism, liberalism, and atheism have for centuries pounded out their vicious blows upon the divine anvil, but all to no avail. There they lay, in rusting piles, while the mighty anvil of the Scriptures stands unbroken, unshaken, and unchipped.

A. Its indestructibility in spite of political persecutions (from the Roman emperors) – In A.D. 303, Emperor Diocletian thought he had destroyed every hated Bible. After many tireless years of ruthless slaughter and destruction, he erected a column of victory over the embers of a burned Bible. The title on the column read: “Extinct is the Name of Christian.” Twenty years later, the new Emperor Constantine offered a reward for any remaining Bibles. Within 24 hours no less than 50 copies were brought out of hiding and presented to the king.

B. Its indestructibility in spite of philosophical persecution – Here several cases come to mind:

1. Voltaire – He once said, “Another century and there will be not a Bible on the earth.” The century is gone, and the circulation of the Bible is one of the marvels of the age. After he died, his old printing press and the very house where he lived was purchased by the Geneva Bible Society and made a depot for Bibles.

On December 24, 1933, the British Government bought the valuable Codex Sinaiticus from the Russians for half a million dollars. On that same day a first edition of Voltaire’s work sold for 11 cents in Paris book shops.

2. Thomas Paine – He once said, “I have gone through the Bible as a man would go through a forest with an axe to fell trees. I have cut down tree after tree; here they lie. They will never grow again.” Tom Paine thought he had demolished the Bible, but since he crawled into a drunkard’s grave in 1809, the Bible has leaped forward as never before.

III. Third Supernatural Element: Its Historical Accuracy – Less than a century ago, the agnostic took great glee in sneeringly referring to the “hundreds of historical mistakes” in the Bible. But then came the science of archaeology, and with each shovel full of dirt the sneers have become less visible, until today they scarcely can be seen.

IV. Fourth Supernatural Element: Its Scientific Accuracy – It has previously been discussed in this study that although the Bible is primarily a spiritual message from God and not a specific scientific textbook, all scientific statements found in the Scriptures must nevertheless be taken literally and at face value. The devoted believer will find little time for the claim that while we may look to God for the who and why of creation, we must depend upon the scientist for the how and when of this creation. Actually the Bible contains far more specific scientific statements than one might realize. Some of these precepts would include:

A. The fact that the earth is spherical – Some seven centuries B.C. the Hebrew prophet Isaiah wrote: “It is he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth” (Isa. 40:22).

While it is true that a few Greek philosophers did postulate this as early as 540 B.C., the common man held the earth to be flat until the introduction of the compass and the fifteenth-century voyages of Columbus and Magellan.

B. The fact that the earth is suspended in space – The book of Job is thought to be one of the oldest in the Bible, written perhaps earlier than 1500 B.C. At this time one of the most advanced “scientific” theories concerning the earth was that our planet was flat and rested securely upon the back of a gigantic turtle who was slowly plodding through a cosmic sea of some sort. But note the refreshing (and accurate) words of Job: “He stretcheth out the north over the empty place, and hangeth the earth upon nothing” (Job 26:7). All this was not known by the scientists of the world until the writings of Sir Isaac Newton in 1687.

C. The fact that the stars are innumerable – Nearly 20 centuries B.C., God spoke to Abraham one night and said: “Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him. So shall thy seed be” (Gen. 15:5).

V. Fifth Supernatural Element: Its Absolute Honesty – Perhaps no other single statement so completely summarizes the Bible as does the following: “The Bible is not a Book that man could write if he would, or would write if he could.” Let us analyze this one section at a time.

“Man could not write the Bible if he would.” Even if a man had all the necessary spirituality, he could not know the facts involved in the historical, scientific, and prophetic statements we have previously already seen in the Bible. Thus, without God’s direction the Bible is not a book that man could write if he would.

“Man would not write the Bible if he could.” Suppose God would give sinful man all the necessary facts and abilities to write the Bible. What then? Man still would not write it correctly if he could. Note the following reasons:

A. Because of the bad things God writes about some of his friends – Here five men immediately come to mind. Most of these individuals are mentioned in the Faith Hall of Fame (Hebrews 11).

1. Noah – Indeed a man of God. He walked with God; he was a just man (Gen. 6:9), and he obeyed God (Heb. 11:7). Yet after the flood this great hero of the faith gets dead drunk and exposes his nakedness and shame to his entire family (Gen. 9:20-24). Surely a mere human author would not have written all this.
 2. Moses – The meekest man in all the earth during his time (Num. 12:3), and a leader who single-handedly led an entire nation of enslaved Hebrews out of captivity in Egypt. But en route to Palestine we read of his anger and direct disobedience to the clearly revealed word of God. (See Num. 20:7-12.) Surely man would have eliminated this part of Moses' record.
 3. David – Without exception the grandest human king whoever sat upon a throne. God himself would testify that here was a man after his own heart (see 1 Sam. 13:14; 16:7, 12-13). David's fearlessness (1 Sam, 17:34-36, 49), love for God (Psa. 18; 103; etc.), and kindness (1 Sam. 24:6-7) were universally known. But in 2 Samuel 11 this same king is accurately accused of lust, adultery, lying, and cold-blooded murder. Who but God would write in such a manner?
 4. Elijah – Few other Old Testament prophets are as colorful and exciting as Elijah the Tishbite. In 1 Kings 18 he champions the cause of God against 450 priests of Satan, but in the very next chapter he is pictured as running for his very life from a mere woman.
 5. Peter – self-appointed spokesman for Christ who so confidently assured the Savior that "though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended" (Matt. 26:33). But in the hour of Jesus' great need we read of Peter: "Then began he to curse and to swear, saying, I know not the man" (Matt. 26:74).
- B. Because of the good things God writes about some of his enemies – On TV the bad guys wear black hats and never do anything good, while the good guys wear white hats and rarely do anything wrong. But not in the Bible. As we have already seen, on many occasions God records bad things about the white hats, and he often mentions good things about the black hats. This can be seen in the accounts of Esau (Gen. 33), Artaxerxes (Neh. 2), Darius (Dan. 6), Gamaliel (Acts 5:34-39), Julius (Acts 27:1-3), etc.

The point of all the above is simply this – the Bible is not an edited book. God literally "tells it like it is." Human authors, however sincere, simply do not consistently write this way.

VI. Sixth Supernatural Element: Its Life-Transforming Power – According to an ancient proverb, "The proof of the pudding is in the eating." So it is. Undoubtedly the greatest proof of all that the Bible is indeed God's Word is its amazing ability to change corrupt humanity.

It is said that a socialist once stood on a soapbox in New York and, pointing to an old ragged bum, proudly announced, "Socialism will put a new suit of clothes on that old man

there." As he stepped down, a Christian mounted the box and proclaimed, "The Bible will put a new man in that old suit of clothes there."

An atheist once sneeringly asked a new convert the question, "Do you believe Jesus actually turned water into wine?" The convert answered: "Yes, I believe he did! But let me tell you something. For years I was a hopeless drunkard. All my money went for booze. But then God's Word gripped my soul, and I'm here to say that Jesus performed an even greater miracle, for he turned wine into milk for my children!" Examples from among the multiplied millions that could be offered to demonstrate the power of this Book of God.

A. As illustrated by Billy Graham:

Among the many thousands of conversions in the London Crusade were those of a medical doctor and the man who sat next to him in the arena. Before the service began, the two strangers engaged in conversation, criticizing the campaign and expressing the utmost skepticism. As Graham preached, throwing out one truth of Scripture after another, the doctor was gripped by an unseen power. When the invitation was given, he said to the man next to him. "I don't know about you, but I'm going forward to receive Christ." The other hesitated a moment, then reached into his pocket and replied, "I'm going too, and here's your wallet. I'm a pickpocket." (G. M. Day, *The Wonder of the Word*)

B. As illustrated by Sir Walter Scott

There is not a more familiar story in the annals of literature than the story that describes the death of the immortal Scot poet and novelist, Sir Walter Scott. As he lay dying he turned to his son-in-law, Lockhart, and said to him, "Son, bring me the Book." There was a vast library in Walter Scott's home and bewildered, the son-in-law said, "Sir, what book?" "Which book?" The dying bard replied, "My son, there is just one Book. Bring me the Book." It is then that Lockhart went to the library and brought to Sir Walter Scott the Bible.

*"There's just one book," cried the dying sage,
"Read me the old, old story."
And the winged words that can never age
Wafted him home to glory.
There's just one Book,
There's just one book for the tender years,
One book of love's own guiding,
The little feet through the joys and fears,
The unknown days are hiding*

There's just one Book!

*There's just one book for the bridal hour,
One book of love's own coining,
Its truths alone lend beauty and power,
To vows that lives are joining.
There's just one Book!*

*There's just one book for life's gladness,
One book for the toilsome days.
One book that can cure life's madness,
One book that can voice life's praise.
There's just one Book!*

*There's just one book for the dying,
One book for the starting tears,
And one for the soul that is going home,
For the measureless years.
There's just one Book!*

(W. A. Criswell, *The Bible for Today's World*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 1967, p. 25)

- C. As illustrated by the Apostle Paul – According to his own testimony, Paul was the “chief of sinners” (1 Tim. 1:13). To show this was no empty claim, Paul sadly relates his pre-Christian sinful activities:
1. He took care of the coats of Stephen's murderers as they stoned him (Acts 7:58).
 2. He arrested Christians and threw them into prison (Acts 8:3; 22:4).
 3. He beat Christians (Acts 22:19).
 4. He compelled them to use abusive language (Acts 26:11).
 5. He persecuted them unto death (Acts 22:4).
 6. He attempted to destroy the Christian faith (Gal. 1:23).
 7. He wasted the church of God and made havoc of it (Gal. 1:13; Acts 8:3). This word havoc occurs but once here in the Greek New Testament and refers to a wild boar which charges into a vineyard and viciously uproots it. But then this ravaging wolf heard the voice of the Shepherd and became one of God's best sheepdogs.