

The Bible, No Ordinary Book **2 Timothy 3:16-17**

16 All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Newsweek's article is titled "The Bible: So Misunderstood It's a Sin" and appears in the magazine's Jan. 2 issue -- "No television preacher has ever read the Bible. Neither has any evangelical politician. Neither has the pope. Neither have I. And neither have you. At best, we've all read a bad translation -- a translation of translations of translations of hand-copied copies of copies of copies of copies, and on and on, hundreds of times."

His is not a first attempt to discredit the Bible nor will it be the last. The first words of Satan recorded in the Bible come from Genesis chapter 3 and verse 1 where he says, "Has God indeed said?" And Satan has worked to put a question mark every place the Bible puts a Thus Says the Lord.

But is it true that we have never read the Bible, because it does not exist. Is all we have is copies of unreliable copies hundreds of times over? Well first of all they did not have the kindergartners make the copies. This old claim from the critics has been disproved over and over again. But since they have not true argument they just repeat the same old stuff.

Let us look at an example. The Book of Isaiah has been one of the most attacked books of the Bible. The oldest manuscripts we had were from 900 a.d. and Isaiah was written a little after 600 b.c. When the Dead Sea Scrolls were found they made some amazing discoveries. One of them was a copy of the entire book of Isaiah. This manuscript was dated at about 100 a.d. 1,000 years earlier than we had before. But when they compared the two manuscripts they did not find any substantial differences in the two manuscripts. The book of Isaiah and been copied faithful for at least the 1,000 years.

What I want to show you this month is that the Bible we have is all that it claims to be and is a book you can bet your life on. I don't know of many who would bet their life on "Newsweek".

In the statement of faith that our church adopted at its founding in 1848 part of the first article says this. "We believe that the Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired, and is a perfect treasure of heavenly instruction;¹ that it has God for its author, salvation for its end,²"

The Scriptures: -

We believe that the Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired, and is a perfect treasure of heavenly instruction.

I. God breathed

A. Paul combines two word here in our text.

1. pneo pneh'-o, to breathe, to blow and theo, God to form theh-op'-nyoo-stos translated God breathed or breathed by God.

B. "The Bible is not a collection of the wisdom and insights of men, even of godly men. It is God's truth, His own Word in His own words." The - MacArthur New Testament Commentary – 2 Timothy.

C. God has from the beginning revealed Himself to mankind.

1. And we have the record of it in our Bible.

- a. Adam & Eve
- b. Cain & Abel
- c. Noah
- d. Abraham
- e. Isaac
- f. Jacob
- g. Joseph
- h. Moses

2. Heb 1:1 God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, 2 has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds;

3. 1 Peter 1:10-12 (NKJV) 10 Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace that would come to you, 11 searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. 12 To them it was revealed that, not to themselves, but to us they were ministering the things which now have been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven--things which angels desire to look into.

D. People's problem is not really with an inspired book but with the Author.

1. For if there is a God then He can surely communicate with us.
2. And He can cause His word to be written down.
3. And He can surely preserve His word over time.

II. God caused men to write His words.

- A. 2 Peter 1:21 (NKJV) 21 for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.
 - 1. Each man wrote with his own vocabulary and style.
 - 2. But God superintended the writing to be sure that it was exactly what God wanted.
 - 3. Those God-given, humanly recorded words became God's written Word, inerrant and authoritative as originally given. MacArthur New Testament Commentary – 2 Timothy.

III. But how do we know we still have it?

- A. The Bible compared to other ancient literature.
- B. But Bible manuscripts are not the only sources.
 - 1. Very early the church translated the books of the New Testament into other languages for the purpose of evangelism.
 - 2. The first was the Syriac of which there are at least 5 types.
 - 3. The second was the Latin of which there are at least 6 types.
 - 4. Thirdly there was the Coptic or Egyptian translation of which there are 3 types.
 - 5. Of these translations there are hundreds of manuscripts, all of which substantiate the 5366 copies of the New Testament or portions of the NT.

AUTHOR	BOOK	DATE WRITTEN	EARLIEST COPIES	TIME GAP	NO. OF COPIES
Homer	<i>Iliad</i>	800 B.C.	c. 400 B.C.	c. 400 yrs.	643
Herodotus	<i>History</i>	480-425 B.C.	c. A.D. 900	c. 1,350 yrs.	8
Thucydides	<i>History</i>	460-400 B.C.	c. A.D. 900	c. 1,300 yrs.	8
Plato		400 B.C.	c. A.D. 900	c. 1,300 yrs.	7
Demosthenes		300 B.C.	c. A.D. 1100	c. 1,400 yrs.	200
Caesar	<i>Gallic Wars</i>	100-44 B.C.	c. A.D. 900	c. 1,000 yrs.	10
Livy	<i>History of Rome</i>	59 B.C.-A.D. 17	4th cent. (partial) mostly 10th cent.	c. 400 yrs. c. 1,000 yrs.	1 partial 19 copies
Tacitus	<i>Annals</i>	A.D. 100	c. A.D. 1100	c. 1,000 yrs.	20
Pliny Secundus	<i>Natural History</i>	A.D. 61-113	c. A.D. 850	c. 750 yrs.	7
New Testament		A.D. 50-100	c. 114 (fragment) c. 200 (books) c. 250 (most of N.T.) c. 325 (complete N.T.)	+50 yrs. 100 yrs. 150 yrs. 225 yrs.	5366

- C. There is also a most impressive source in the lectionaries
 - 1. Metzger reports that 2,135 lectionaries have been catalogued, but as of yet the majority still await critical analysis. (A more recent count is 2,396, as noted above. McDowell, J. (2006). Evidence for Christianity (p. 71). Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers.
- D. Then there are the writings of the early church fathers.

EARLY CITATIONS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

Writer	Gospels	Acts	Pauline Epistles	General Epistles	Revelation	Totals
Justin Martyr	268	10	43	6	3	330
Irenaeus	1,038	194	499	23	(266 allusions)	1,819
Clement	1,017	44	1,127	207	65	2,406
Alex.	9,231	349	7,778	399	11	17,922
Origen	3,822	502	2,609	120	165	7,258
Tertullian	734	42	387	27	205	1,378
Hippolytus	3,258	211	1,592	88	188	5,176
Eusebius					27	
Grand Totals	19,368	1,352	14,035	870	664	36,286

- 1. The truth is that if we did not have any copies of the New Testament and no lectionaries and no translations we could from the church fathers reconstruct the entire New Testament with the exception of 5 verses.
- E. Therefore since we have all this evidence from so many different places which substantially agree we can be sure that we have a Bible that has been faithfully transmitted to us over the last 2,000 years.

1 Samuel 23:2 (NKJV) 2 Therefore David inquired of the LORD, saying, "Shall I go and attack these Philistines?" And the LORD said to David, "Go and attack the Philistines, and save Keilah."

Acts 1:16 (NKJV) 16 "Men and brethren, this Scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit spoke before by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus;

Acts 3:21 (NKJV) 21 whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began.

Luke 16:29-31 (NKJV) 29 Abraham said to him, 'They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.' 30 And he said, 'No, father Abraham; but if one goes to them from the dead, they will repent.' 31 But he said to him, 'If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead.' "

Psalms 119:11 (NKJV) 11 Your word I have hidden in my heart, That I might not sin against You!

Romans 3:1-2 (NKJV) 1 What advantage then has the Jew, or what is the profit of circumcision? 2 Much in every way! Chiefly because to them were committed the oracles of God.

2 Timothy 3:15 (NKJV) 15 and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

Acts 11:14 (NKJV) 14 who will tell you words by which you and all your household will be saved.'

Romans 1:16 (NKJV) 16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.

John 5:38-39 (NKJV) 38 But you do not have His word abiding in you, because whom He sent, Him you do not believe. 39 You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me.