

Apologetics



Reliability of Scriptures

OUTLINE

- I. Where Did the Bible Come From?
- II. How Should Christians Use of Scripture In Christian Apologetics?
- III. As Christian Apologists, How Do We Explain *Why* We Believe the Bible Is True?
 - The New Testament documents are Historically Reliable and Credible
 - Jesus' Character is shown as Trustworthy
 - Jesus Claims that the Old and New Testament books were the Word of God
- IV. Rebuttals to Common "Problems" with The Bible

I.) Where Did the Bible Come From?

- The Bible Came From God, By The Holy Spirit, Through Men, To Humankind.
- 66 books written by 40 divinely authors over 1500 years
- Bible is divinely inspired by God, authoritative for all of life, without error or omission, and infallible in its composition.

I.) Where Did the Bible Come From?

- 66 books of the Bible are known as the “canon” of holy scripture.
- OT books well-established. NT books recognized as written by either Apostles or eyewitnesses and widely used in the church.
- 1st document that lists all 27 NT books is Athanasius’s Easter Letter 39, written in 367AD

I.) Where Did the Bible Come From?

Criteria for canonicity:

1. **Apostolic Origin** — attributed to and based on the preaching/teaching of the first-generation apostles (or their close companions).
2. **Universal Acceptance** — acknowledged by all major Christian communities in the ancient world (by the end of the fourth century).

I.) Where Did the Bible Come From?

Criteria for canonicity:

3. **Liturgical Use** — read publicly when early Christian communities gathered for the Lord's Supper (their weekly worship services).
4. **Consistent Message** — containing a theological outlook similar or complementary to other accepted Christian writings.

“the canon of the New Testament was completed...when John wrote [Revelation], about A.D. 98...we must not mistake the historical evidences of the slow circulation and authentication of these books...[as] evidence of slowness of ‘canonization’ of books by the authority or the taste of the church itself.”

B.B. Warfield, *The Formation of the Canon of the New Testament*, 415-416.

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II.) How do Christians view the use of Scriptures in Christian Apologetics?

Christian's Authority is the Word of God

- The source of God's revelation (Joh 1, 2 Pet 1:21)
- Faith is essential to salvation (Heb 11:6, Eph 2:8-9)
- The bible states its own authority (Joh 17:17, 2 Tim 3:16)

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II.) How do Christians view the use of Scriptures in Christian Apologetics?

Non Christians do not recognise the authority of the Word

- Romans 8:7 - “the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God’s law, nor can it do so.”
- Romans 1 - creation points to the Creator
- John 3 - Jesus said “men [love] darkness instead of light because their deeds [are] evil and coming to Christ exposes their sins”

II.) How do Christians view the use of Scriptures in Christian Apologetics?

But Christians should use scriptures as part of their Christian apologetics

1. Using scriptures challenges the postmodern idea that truth is relative
2. Scripture is spiritually powerful c.f. Isa 55:11, Heb 4:12
3. Scripture contains in many places its own arguments for the validity of its claims

III.) As Christian apologists, how do we explain why we believe the bible is true?

- *Infallibility*
- *Inerrancy*

III.) As Christian apologists, how do we explain why we believe the bible is true?

Three Characteristics

1. The NT documents are historically reliable and credible
2. Jesus' Character is shown as trustworthy
3. Jesus Claims that the OT and NT were the word of God

III.) As Christian apologists, how do we explain why we believe the bible is true?

1. The NT documents are historically reliable and credible

- The New Testament record agrees *perfectly* with what we know of history elsewhere. The names of emperors and governors and places and events do not disagree with other sources that we have.

III.) As Christian apologists, how do we explain why we believe the bible is true?

1. The NT documents are historically reliable and credible

- The NT reads as a *historically reliable* document. For example, the NT text often shows its human authors in a bad light, as a historical account would. It contains events—such as the crucifixion—that are inconvenient for those seeking to project Jesus as the son of God. And it contains odd bits of details, such as places people stood, the state of the grass on a certain day (John 6:10), etc. that have the feel consistent with eyewitness accounts.

III.) As Christian apologists, how do we explain why we believe the bible is true?

1. The NT documents are historically reliable and credible

- The NT has *eyewitnesses of events* it describes who were still alive when scholars know that the documents existed. But we do not know of anyone who disputed the factual, historic events described in the NT – including Jesus' death and resurrection. In fact, the disciples who wrote large chunks of the New Testament – Paul, John, Peter – gave their lives for the message of the Bible. (Sidenote: Rarely do men die for what they know to be a lie.)

III.) As Christian apologists, how do we explain why we believe the bible is true?

1. The NT documents are historically reliable and credible

- The NT has *far more and earlier* manuscripts than any other ancient text. Respected scholar F.F.Bruce said “there is no body of ancient literature in the world which enjoys such a wealth of good textual attestation as the NT.”

Homer	900 BC	Earliest Copy, 400 BC	No. of copies, 643
NT	AD 40-100	Earliest Copy, AD 125	No. of copies, 24,000+

III.) As Christian apologists, how do we explain why we believe the bible is true?

1. The NT documents are historically reliable and credible

If the Bible is in fact true, then we should expect it to have three characteristics:

- A. It has a coherent message – its various parts all contribute to a clearly defined message
- B. It is internally consistent (doesn't contradict itself)
- C. It is externally consistent (historically accurate)

III.) As Christian apologists, how do we explain why we believe the bible is true?

1. The NT documents are historically reliable and credible

A. It has a coherent message – its various parts all contribute to a clearly defined message

- Despite the fact that it was written by many different men over 1500 years, *there isn't a single place where a Biblical author disagrees with another Biblical author.*

III.) As Christian apologists, how do we explain why we believe the bible is true?

1. The NT documents are historically reliable and credible

A. It has a coherent message – its various parts all contribute to a clearly defined message

- The Bible is *united in teaching its own authority*, despite the fact that it was written by so many authors.

III.) As Christian apologists, how do we explain why we believe the bible is true?

1. The NT documents are historically reliable and credible

A. It has a coherent message – its various parts all contribute to a clearly defined message

- The *unity of the Bible's message* is undeniable. Some said that the God of the OT is a God of judgment, while the God of the NT is a God of grace. OT has also God's tender descriptions of his love for his people in the prophets or the Pentateuch and then read Jesus' descriptions of judgment and maintain that opinion.

III.) As Christian apologists, how do we explain why we believe the bible is true?

1. The NT documents are historically reliable and credible

A. It has a coherent message – its various parts all contribute to a clearly defined message

Examples:

- Deut 30:1-6, 2 Chronicles 30:6, Nehemiah 1:9, Zechariah 1:3, Malachi 3:7
- John 8:24, James 4:8

III.) As Christian apologists, how do we explain why we believe the bible is true?

1. The NT documents are historically reliable and credible

A. It has a coherent message – its various parts all contribute to a clearly defined message

- The Bible all points to one man, Jesus. The same man whom the prophets foretold is the same man who revolutionized history, the God-Man, Jesus. The testimony of Scripture to Christ over so many centuries is quite remarkable.

“An incredibly rich array of symbols, types, prophecies, events, and poetic depictions converge inevitably and powerfully on Jesus Christ who, to most of the biblical writers, is to come centuries later.”

John Frame

III.) As Christian apologists, how do we explain why we believe the bible is true?

1. The NT documents are historically reliable and credible
 - A. It has a coherent message – its various parts all contribute to a clearly defined message
 - Fulfilled prophecies of Christ >300 in OT

Examples

- a. Born in Bethlehem **Micah 5:2, Matthew 2:1-6**
- b. Descendent of David **Jeremiah 23:5, Luke 3:31**
- c. Enter Jerusalem on a donkey **Zechariah 9:9, Matthew 21:1-9**
- d. Betrayed by a friend **Psalm 41:9, Matthew 26:47-50**
- e. Sold for 30 pieces of silver **Zechariah 11:12, Matthew 27:9**
- f. Money thrown in God's house **Zechariah 11:13, Matthew 27:5**
- g. Money given for potter's field **Zechariah 11:13, Matthew 27:7-8**
- h. Messiah's side, hands and feet pierced **Psalm 22:16, John 20:25**
- i. Messiah crucified with thieves **Isaiah 53:12, Luke 23:32-43**
- j. Clothes divided and lots cast for them **Psalm 22:18, John 19:23-24**
- k. Messiah's bones not broken **Psalm 22:17, Psalm 34:20, John 19:31-33**
- l. Messiah buried in a rich man's tomb **Isaiah 53:9, Matthew 27:57-60**

III.) As Christian apologists, how do we explain why we believe the bible is true?

1. The NT documents are historically reliable and credible

B. Internal Consistency – bible does not contradict itself

You may have heard people make claims like the following:

- In the OT, populations of armies are sometimes estimated differently in different places
- One passage in Exodus says that God parted the Red Sea; another says it was a wind

III.) As Christian apologists, how do we explain why we believe the bible is true?

1. The NT documents are historically reliable and credible

B. Internal Consistency – bible does not contradict itself

You may have heard people make claims like the following:

- The chronological order of Jesus life is not the same in any two of the gospels
- One account of the resurrection says that the women who went to the tomb saw two angels; another says there was only one

III.) As Christian apologists, how do we explain why we believe the bible is true?

1. The NT documents are historically reliable and credible

B. Internal Consistency – bible does not contradict itself

These can be answered easily by keeping some guidelines such as the following in mind:

- Ancient histories rarely claimed exact numbers, and symbolic numbers in relating symbolic events. Scripture is always *true*, but not always *precise*
- First and second causes do not exclude one another (God parted the Red Sea with a wind)

III.) As Christian apologists, how do we explain why we believe the bible is true?

1. The NT documents are historically reliable and credible

B. Internal Consistency – bible does not contradict itself

These can be answered easily by keeping some guidelines such as the following in mind:

- Don't hold the Bible to what it doesn't claim (only Luke claims something like chronological accuracy – in 1:3)
- Recognize that different accounts do not imply error (perhaps one woman saw two angels while the other saw just one) – remember to always read in context

III.) As Christian apologists, how do we explain why we believe the bible is true?

1. The NT documents are historically reliable and credible

C. External Consistency – Archeological evidence



During the excavations of Jericho (1930s) [archeologist] Garstang found something so startling that a statement of what was found was prepared and signed by himself and two other members of the team. In reference to these findings Garstang says: "As to the main fact, then, there remains no doubt: the walls [of Jericho] fell outwards so completely that the attackers would be able to clamber up and over their ruins into the city." Why so unusual? Because the walls of cities do not fall outwards, they fall inwards. And yet in Joshua 6:20 we read "... The wall fell down flat, so that the people went up into the city every man straight ahead, and they took the city."

III.) As Christian apologists, how do we explain why we believe the bible is true?

1. The NT documents are historically reliable and credible

C. External Consistency – Archeological evidence



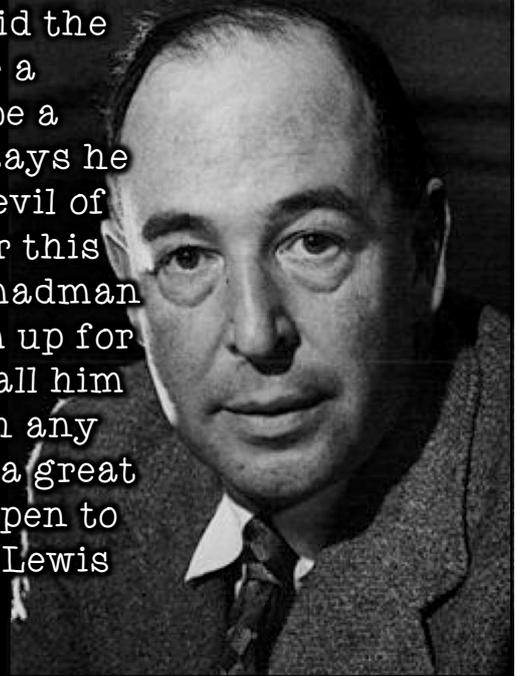
III.) As Christian apologists, how do we explain why we believe the bible is true?

2. Jesus' character is shown to be trustworthy

i.e. historical testimony about the character. Jesus is not merely a good teacher, He makes prophecies of not only future events, but himself and his own work. If he was a true prophet, then all his teaching must be taken seriously

"A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a **lunatic**--on the level with a man who says he is a poached egg--or he would be the devil of hell. You must take your choice. Either this was, and is, the Son of God, or else a madman or something worse. You can shut him up for a fool or you can fall at his feet and call him Lord and God. But let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about his being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us."

Mere Christianity - CS Lewis



III.) As Christian apologists, how do we explain why we believe the bible is true?

2. Jesus' character is shown to be trustworthy

- Some people assert the historical Jesus never existed – that he was a legend. But there is so much historical and archeological evidence to support his existence so he can't be a legend
- If Jesus were a liar, why would he die for his claim, when he could easily have avoided such a cruel death with a few choice words?
- And, if he were a lunatic, how did he engage in intelligent debates with his opponents or handle the stress of his betrayal and crucifixion while continuing to show a deep love for his antagonists?
- Christ said he was Lord and God. The evidence supports that claim.

III.) As Christian apologists, how do we explain why we believe the bible is true?

3. Jesus Claims that the OT and NT Books were the Word of God

OT

- In the gospel Jesus claims that the entire OT is trustworthy. Eg. John 10:34-35 that Scriptures can't be broken
- Many times, we see Jesus end his arguments by quoting from Scripture. As far as he was concerned, what scripture said was the end of the matter. In one case, Jesus even argues from the tense of a verb – that's in Matthew 22.

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OT

- that what is prophesied in the OT concerning Himself must be Jesus clearly assumes fulfilled. Evident in Matthew's gospel. And Jesus demands that others recognize that Scripture is fulfilled in him.
- Finally, Jesus establishes a pattern in Matthew 19 that is repeated in the rest of the gospels when he interchanges the phrases "Scripture says" with "God says." The OT for Jesus is not merely a record of the words of God; it is the word of God.

III.) As Christian apologists, how do we explain why we believe the bible is true?

3. Jesus Claims that the OT and NT Books were the Word of God

NT

Jesus himself laid the foundation for the NT. He taught that his teaching was to be viewed as the authoritative words of God.

- In John 7:16, he says, "My teaching is not my own. It comes from him who sent me."
- In Matthew (24:35), Mark (13:31), and Luke (21:33), Jesus said, "heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away."
- First reaction of crowd of Jesus' teaching after the Sermon On the Mount is people were amazed because Jesus taught as one with authority. (Matt 7:29)

III.) As Christian apologists, how do we explain why we believe the bible is true?

3. Jesus Claims that the OT and NT Books were the Word of God

NT

Jesus not only gives us reason to believe in the truth of his own words, but also in the words of his disciples. He told them that during times of persecution, "what you are to say will be given to you in that hour; for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you. (Matt 10:19-20).

- Jesus told them in John 14:26 that the Holy Spirit would bring to their remembrance all that he has taught them.

III.) As Christian apologists, how do we explain why we believe the bible is true?

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NT

- And he told them later that the Spirit would continue to teach them with his own authority even after he had departed. (John 16:12-13)
- Finally, after his resurrection, Jesus declared that his disciples would receive power when the Holy Spirit came on them so that they might be his witnesses. (Acts 1:8)

III.) As Christian apologists, how do we explain why we believe the bible is true?

3. Jesus Claims that the OT and NT Books were the Word of God

NT

The NT writers understood this authority that had been given to them, and they do not hesitate to cite it. (1 Co 2:13, Gal 1:6-12, etc.) Paul, for example, writes in I Cor 14:36 – 38:

“Did the word of God originate with you? Or are you the only people it has reached? If anybody thinks he is a prophet or spiritually gifted, *let him acknowledge that what I am writing to you is the Lord's command.* If he ignores this, he himself will be ignored.”

III.) As Christian apologists, how do we explain why we believe the bible is true?

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NT

There are even two places where NT writers cite other NT writings as Scripture – Paul does this with the gospel of Luke in I Ti 5:18, and Peter does this with the writings of Paul in 2 Peter 3:15-16

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3. Jesus Claims that the OT and NT Books were the Word of God

NT

The church accepted very early without question the authority of the writings of the NT, leaving other writings in an entirely different category. In fact, with the possible exception of 2 Peter and Jude, the NT canon as we have it today was universally recognized by the church by the early second century at the very latest. It wasn't for another 200 years that an official definition of the canon was deemed necessary.

III.) As Christian apologists, how do we explain why we believe the bible is true?

3. Jesus Claims that the OT and NT Books were the Word of God

NT

In summary, if we believe Jesus Christ to be the son of God, then we must accept his view of Scripture. And that would lead us to understand the entire Bible as not just being important, but the inerrant, infallible word of God.

IV.) Rebuttals to Common “Problems” with the Bible

1. The Bible is Full of Myths.

Charge: miracles, parallel accounts of the flood, and similarities with Greek gods.

Response: The Bible does not have a mythical literary style when compared with other ancient literature. Ruling our myths presupposes a naturalistic worldview. Challenge people to read the Bible!

IV.) Rebuttals to Common “Problems” with the Bible

2. The Bible Conflicts with Science.

Charge: This is perhaps one of the great challenges of the 20th century – the Scopes Monkey trial.

Response: The Bible describes nature from a phenomenological perspective – that is the world of nature is described as it appears to the naked eye. Furthermore, the scientific method is unable to examine any historical claim, since it can only comment on phenomenon which are observable and repeatable.

IV.) Rebuttals to Common “Problems” with the Bible

2. The Bible Conflicts with Science.

Response: The Bible has verses that touched on Science before even any Scientist discovered it.

The Bible and Earth's Free-Float in Space Job 26:7

The Scriptures speak of Invisible Structure Hebrews 11:3. Science has recently discovered the universe is made of atoms, whereas scripture knew of this for 2,000 years.

IV.) Rebuttals to Common “Problems” with the Bible

2. The Bible Conflicts with Science.

Response:

The Bible Reveals the Earth is Round Isaiah 40:22. The verse says the Earth is a circle. Isaiah was written between 740 and 680 B.C.E. and at least 300 years before Aristotle's book *On the Heavens*.

IV.) Rebuttals to Common “Problems” with the Bible

2. The Bible Conflicts with Science.

Response:

The Bible and the Science of Oceanography Psalm 8:8.

Matthew Maury (1806 - 1873), who is considered the father of oceanography and discovered many things after reading this Bible verse.

Scientific Facts in the Bible: 100 Reasons to Believe the Bible is Supernatural in Origin - Ray Comfort

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IV.) Rebuttals to Common “Problems” with the Bible

3. The Bible is full of contradictions.

Charge: The Bible is full of contradictions

Response: Like what ? How do you know, have you read it? There are some divergent accounts and writers do describe similar things from different perspectives. However, under close scrutiny, these passages are complementary, not contradictory.

IV.) Rebuttals to Common “Problems” with the Bible

4. The Bible is Historically Inaccurate

Charge: When new historical information comes to light, it detracts rather than lends credibility to the Bible.

Response: Really? Like what? Actually, the Bible is one of the most historically accurate texts of antiquity.

V.) Conclusion

As Christians, we finally surrender to the truth of God's revelation in the Bible and in history through Jesus – not our own reason. But we should not be afraid to use the Bible as we explain our worldview to unbelievers, and argue for the veracity and reliability of faith in Jesus.

V.) Conclusion

Finally, here are a few things to keep in mind:

1. If questions come up that you can't answer, remember that there are answers to be found. It's OK to say, "That's a good question. Let me check on how to best answer that for you."
2. Don't assume that your non-Christian friend will accept the Bible as authoritative.
3. Don't argue as if the Bible is not authoritative. As you describe your worldview, you are entitled to argue by your own rules – and that includes the authority of the Bible.

V.) Conclusion

4. Open the Bible with those that you are talking with: it is the Word of God and powerful for explaining human nature and the common experience that we have.
5. When you read your Bible, read it with confidence. God has spoken, that He has revealed Himself to us in the Scriptures, and we read the same Bible that was handed down by the first apostles of Christ's church.