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Can the Bible Be Trusted?

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Reuters--Jumana Elheloueh

Okay, so a few camels have caused some archaeologists to declare the Bible unreliable. For another look at the camel problem check out the article by clicking here.

This camel finding that supposedly disproved the trustworthiness of the Bible got me to thinking.

Good Reasons for Believing

According to a Gallup poll, one-third of the American adult population believes the Bible is the actual word of God to be taken literally word for word. While that statistic is impressive, and actually surprised me. I can't help but wonder how those people would answer if asked why they have such a belief. You see, I think it's important to understand there are good reasons for believing in the reliability of the Bible. After all, nothing is more important to the development of your faith than the Bible.

Consider this: all we know about Jesus and the salvation of man comes from its pages. If we're going to trust it without question and accept its guidelines without wavering, we need to know why it's "God's Word."

God-Breathed

Paul told Timothy that all Scripture is God-breathed" (2 Timothy 3:16-17). Every part of the Bible is dependable because God superintended the human authors, who using their own personalities, recorded without error, his revelation to man (that's a good working definition of the word "inspired.").

Because the Scriptures are the breath of God, they partake of God's nature. Therefore, in the original autographs, the Bible is flawless.

The Internal Evidence

The internal evidence of inspiration is overwhelming. The authors of the Bible believed they were writing inspired scripture (2 Peter 1:20-21). Many of them were eyewitnesses who honestly and accurately recorded what they had seen (Luke 1:1-3; 2 Peter1:16; 1 John 1:3).

Those who challenge the nature of Scripture need to consider what Jesus said. When he spoke of the Old Testament scriptures, Jesus made it clear he believed every detail of it was inspired (Luke 11:51; 24:44; John 10:31-36).

The External Evidence

The external evidence also verifies the reliability of the Bible. Consider for a moment how the number and quality of the existing New Testament documents, in the original language, compare with other pieces of literature. For instance, for Caesar's Gallic War (composed between 58 and 50 BC) there are several existing manuscripts, but only nine or ten are good, and the oldest is 900 years later than Caesar's day.

Of the 142 books of the Roman history of Livy (59 BC-AD 17), only 35 survive. These are known to us from no more than 20 manuscripts. And only one of them is as old as the fourth century. In other words, a lot of time separated the writing of the original from the copies. The greater the time span between the original and the copy the more likely the copy could be contaminated.

These are only two examples of ancient histories which are widely accepted in scholarly circles. There are many others with even less manuscript evidence. If they are considered reliable, how does the New Testament compare? There are over 13,000 manuscript copies of portions of the New Testament. And many of these copies were written around 150 AD--which means they were copied near the time of the originals (*Evidence that demands a Verdict*, Josh McDowell, Campus Crusade for Christ, 1972, pp. 46,52).

In terms of archaeological evidence, no archaeological discovery has ever disproved something the Bible said--including the recent camel findings. On the contrary, archaeological evidence has confirmed the teaching of the Bible. On those occasions when the evidence seemed to question the reliability of the Bible, later discoveries validated the Bible.

A Living Book

The Bible is not only inspired, it's unlike any other book in another way. It's Author constantly goes with it and empowers it according to his purpose. It's a living book because God's Spirit animates it (Hebrews 4:12).

Second Timothy 3:16 is a great verse and one worthy of committing to memory. As you meditate on it ask God to use his Word to teach, reprove, correct and train you in righteousness. One way to make sure you're on track is to ask yourself, "What change is God's Word bringing about in my life today?"