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Is The Bible True? (Part 2)



Individual Topics - Steve Gregg

In part two of his discussion on the reliability of the Bible, Steve Gregg argues that the Bible should be assessed primarily based on its testimony of Jesus Christ as the central figure of Christianity. He points to the detailed and credible accounts of the Gospels, as well as secular sources such as Josephus and Tacitus, in confirming Jesus' existence, crucifixion, and resurrection. Eyewitness testimony and the absence of credible alternative theories further support the Bible's account of Jesus' resurrection. By considering these factors, Gregg asserts that the Bible's truth and reliability depend on Jesus being true, and evidence suggests his claims are true, including his resurrection.

Transcript

I mentioned that the records of the life of Jesus are the most crucial thing for us to look at because if Jesus is who he said he is, then what he said about everything else becomes the determiner of what is reliable. If Jesus has credibility and is reliable, then what he said about Moses, the prophets, and even about Paul is reliable. So, Jesus is the center of Christianity.

It's true the Bible is the witness about Jesus that we have, but it's not even the Bible so much as Jesus himself. He's the living word, and the record of his life is in the Bible. And as we look at the Gospels especially, and they're not the only part that tell us things about Jesus, but the Gospels record his life in detail and his teachings in detail.

And as we see that they are reliable, it gives us a springboard into understanding the rest of the Bible's credibility too, as we examine what he says. I went through a long list, just before we took our break, of some of the standard arguments people give to try to discredit the Gospels and give us the impression that we shouldn't trust them. Not one thing on that list of objections holds water.

Many of them are just fabrications, and others are not reasoning clearly from the evidence. But the truth is that none of them carry any weight that should concern a person who's looking for truth and still considering that the Gospels might be the source of that truth. Here's what we can say factually about the Gospels.

Not only do the four Gospels tell us about Jesus, but also other sources tell us that Jesus existed. At least the myth theory can't be true because there's other historians who were not friendly toward Jesus at all, but who nonetheless confirmed that he existed. One of those was Josephus.

Now skeptics like to discredit the famous paragraph in Flavius Josephus where he talks about Jesus. Flavius Josephus was a Jew who lived in Jerusalem, and he was born there in Jerusalem about 33 AD. So right around the time Paul was converted is when Josephus was born and raised in Jerusalem at the time Peter and the others were preaching there.

He never became a Christian though. Like most of the Jews, he rejected the Gospel. In 70 AD or earlier, 66 AD or so, when the Romans attacked Israel and the war began, Josephus fought against the Romans on the side of the Jews.

He was a military man, a general actually, but early in the war he got captured. And when he got captured, he was able to see from the inside exactly how strong the Roman force was, and he knew the Jews were not going to be able to stand against them. So he began to try to persuade his fellow Jews to surrender.

This didn't make him popular with the Jews. Even to this day, the Jews don't think well of Josephus because he's seen as one who tried to get them to surrender to the Romans. Jeremiah did just the same thing in his day when the Babylonians were coming against Jerusalem.

Jeremiah urged the people to surrender so they wouldn't get wiped out. They put him in jail too, the Jews did. But when the Babylonians did destroy Jerusalem, they gave him his liberty and gave him the choice to go wherever he wanted.

Josephus also, because he tried to persuade the Jews to surrender, was favored by the Roman general Titus. He went back to Rome and he was commissioned to write the history of the Jews on the one hand. He wrote a big book called *The Antiquities of the Jews*, and also a history of the war which he was a participant in, and that's called *The Jewish Wars* or *The Wars of the Jews*.

In *Antiquities*, there is a paragraph where he mentions Jesus. Now in the Greek form of this paragraph that has survived, he says some things about Jesus that many people think Josephus would not have said, because he talks about Jesus fulfilling prophecy and being the Messiah and rising on the third day, and in the Greek form as it has come down to us, it seems like he's affirming these things to be actually true. And Josephus was not a Christian, and people say nobody but a Christian could have affirmed those things, therefore Josephus didn't really write that passage.

They say Christians stuck it in there later. We don't have the original Josephus any more than we have the originals of the Gospels. We have copies of copies, and the critics say

that Josephus didn't write that.

Some Christian put that in there. That's what they call an interpolation into the works of Josephus by Christians. Well, it's difficult to argue that.

The only reason they argue that is because there are some things in that paragraph that sound like they were written by a believer, and Josephus did not identify himself as a believer. But all the manuscripts of Josephus in the Greek have those features and have that passage. So no one can say, well, the older manuscripts don't have it, and it was added later.

All the manuscripts have it. The passage is written very much in the style that Josephus writes, and he's got a very distinctive style. If you try to read through Josephus, it's a great burdensome thing because he's very wordy.

His sentences are long and very wordy, and the passage is very much his style. So just from evidence of that type, we'd say, well, we have no reason to say that Josephus didn't write it. The main problem is that he, in the passage in the Greek form, which may have been changed in some ways through copying, he does seem to affirm that Jesus is the Messiah.

However, a list there actually brought to my attention just this in the past few months that a Jew, not a Christian, a Jewish scholar, and his name escapes me at the moment. I'm not concerned about his name that much, has the Arabic version of Josephus, the translation into Arabic, which does not have those questionable features in it. And here's, I've reproduced for you an English translation of the paragraph, and here's what he said.

And there's no evidence that this has been tampered with, and it does not have any of the features that would make it impossible for an unbelieving historian to write. Quote, at this time there was a wise man called Jesus, and his conduct was good, and he was known to be virtuous. Many people among the Jews and other nations became his disciples.

Pilate condemned him to be crucified and to die, but those who had become his disciples did not abandon his discipleship. They reported that he had appeared to them three days after his crucifixion, and that he was alive. Accordingly, he was perhaps the Messiah concerning whom the prophets have reported wonders.

And the tribe of the Christians so named after him has not disappeared to this day. Now there's enough hedging in the way that this is written that it does not make Josephus affirming that Jesus rose from the dead, or that he was the Messiah, or fulfilled prophecy. He said they claim they saw him three days afterwards alive, and they're still around these Christians.

And they said he was perhaps the Messiah, the fulfilling of prophecy, meaning that that's

what they were suggesting. Perhaps he was the Messiah. In any case, there's no textual reason in the writings of Josephus to doubt that he wrote this, and he lived very near the time of the, during the time of the apostles.

And it becomes a very important non-Christian witness to the fact that Jesus lived. Josephus has another passage. It's not anywhere near as useful, and it's not as controversial, but he does mention James, the death of James, and he refers to James as James, the brother of Jesus, the so-called Messiah.

Josephus does not say that Jesus was the Messiah, but Josephus says there was a Jesus, the so-called Messiah, and James was his brother. The Bible confirms that Jesus had a brother named James. The Bible does not tell us how James died, so Josephus telling us how he died could not have been borrowed from the Bible.

It's a separate witness. There are also Roman non-Christian historians who mention Jesus, not very many of the early period. The greatest of the Roman historians of the time of the Roman Empire was Cornelius Tacitus, and he did mention Christ.

Christus is the Latin for Christ. Tacitus wrote in his annals, Christus, from whom the Christians got their name, had been executed by sentence of the procurator Pontius Pilate when Tiberius was emperor. Now that's not much information, but it's coming from an anti-Christian source, a Roman historian who wrote the lives of the emperors, and who mentions that during the reign of Emperor Tiberius, when Pontius Pilate was governor, a man named Christus had been crucified.

If that tells us nothing else, it means that there are people who had no interest in corroborating the gospel stories, people who were not friendly toward Christianity at all, who nonetheless could not but acknowledge that Jesus did live, and that he was crucified at the very period of time the Bible says he was. And one of the witnesses suggests that the disciples said they saw him three days after his death. And so we do have at least acknowledgement from secular sources, Roman and Jewish, hostile to Jesus, that he did exist.

We don't need to go any further with that. The point is we have the most detailed information about Jesus from people who actually were with him, and that's how we would hope to have it. I would hope that the most detailed accounts were from the eyewitnesses, but the fact that he existed, that he was a good man, that he did mighty deeds, and people were impressed with him, he had disciples, he died, it was claimed that he rose from the dead, and it was the Messiah fulfilling prophecy, those things Josephus said.

Another important thing is that the empty tomb of Christ cannot be explained any way better than the way it's recorded in the gospels. The gospels mentioned that the tomb was empty on the third day, and that Jesus later appeared alive with the scars in his

hands and so forth to people, a wide variety of people. It's true the gospels don't always give the same lists of who saw him and in what order, nor is that very important in order for us to know that the event happened.

The point is many witnesses claim to have seen him, and the earliest witness to this that we have a record of is Paul. Though Paul didn't see Jesus, he wrote about the witnesses who did, and he wrote it in 1 Corinthians 15, which was written maybe 20 years before the gospels were written. Scholars agree that 1 Corinthians 15 is the earliest written document we have that gives lists of people who saw Jesus after his death, because Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John were all written after 1 Corinthians was.

And Paul talks about how when Jesus rose he was seen by James and by Peter and by the Twelve and by these different people, and he says, and once he was seen by more than 500 people at one time, and then he said some of them have died, but many of them are still alive. Now why would he say that? He's obviously saying some of these people are still living witnesses. They're not all still alive.

Some of them died, but a lot of them are still around, if you want to consult them. Paul was telling the story of the resurrection appearance of Jesus at a time when there were still hundreds of people around who could confirm his story. So the Bible gives a very credible historical testimony to the resurrection of Christ.

Apart from that story, we have no credible alternatives to explain why the tomb was empty so soon after Jesus died and was buried. Now if someone said, well, how do we know the tomb was empty? It was quite obvious. Not only did the disciples claim that the tomb was empty, but their critics could not prove otherwise.

People who wanted to disprove Christianity could easily have done so if they could simply have gone to the tomb of Jesus and produced his dead body. Obviously, they could show he wasn't risen from the dead, and Christianity would be false. The fact that they couldn't is not because they didn't know where it was.

The tomb belonged to a member of the Sanhedrin, a guy named Joseph of Arimathea. The Sanhedrin, the worst enemies Jesus had, could easily have gotten from him the location of the tomb and checked it. The Romans could too.

The Jews and the Romans both would have had an interest in disproving Christianity because they both persecuted Christians. And they both would have had the power, if it was possible, to prove the tomb was not empty and to find the body of Jesus. They did not.

The tomb was clearly empty. If it was not empty, then his enemies would have disproved the Testament of the apostles about that. Now how did the tomb get empty? Well, again, we have several witnesses that Jesus came out of the tomb alive.

He rose from the dead. What other theories could possibly work? Well, if he didn't walk out of there, someone carried him out. And who would have done that? Well, not the Romans or the Jews.

Even if they'd wanted to, and if they had moved it, they certainly would have had a vested interest in letting people know that's what they had done. Once they wanted to disprove the disciples' testimony about the resurrection, they would easily be able to send other... You guys, we moved the body. We buried it somewhere else.

We have it. Jesus didn't rise from the dead. There never was any announcement from the Jews or the Romans in the face of the testimony of the disciples that Jesus rose from the dead.

No one claimed that they had the body or they could disprove it. The body had disappeared. As far as the enemies of Christ were concerned, it was a mystery.

It's true, according to Matthew, that the Sanhedrin paid the guards at the tomb to claim that while they had slept, the disciples had come and stolen the body. Now, the idea that the disciples might have a motive to steal the body and keep it hidden is questionable. Why would they want to do that? And some might say, well, because they had followed Jesus.

They want people to think they weren't wrong and that he died, but he really came back. Well, do you know how many different false messiahs came and went in that general period of time who had sometimes hundreds, if not thousands, of followers? There were false messiahs very frequently in the first century AD. Josephus says there were pretenders being arrested every day in the later period of the century.

You know what? When those false messiahs died, none of their followers claimed that he rose from the dead. They simply gave up. They were disillusioned.

Oh, he's dead. The disciples were disillusioned, too, until they saw him alive. They would not be encouraged or become believers in Christ if they knew they had stolen the body themselves.

Besides, why would they want to? They weren't religious leaders. They didn't want to start a religion. They were fishermen, tax collectors, those kind of folks.

And once they'd realized that Jesus was dead, the only thought they had was, let's go back to fishing. Let's go back to work. You know, that was a great time with that Jesus, but he's gone.

They were disillusioned. They didn't have some kind of a secret they were keeping. We've stolen his body.

We're going to fool everybody and think he has risen from the dead. To what advantage? They weren't paid for the ministry, so they didn't do it for the money. They didn't get anything but persecution for their testimony.

So, it doesn't make any sense. They had no motivation. They weren't the type to start a religion.

But more than that, if they did have the motivation, could they have pulled it off? The tomb was guarded by armed guards. The guards were there because they expected the disciples to pull this off. So they put enough guards there to prevent it.

The guards had to claim that they were asleep when the disciples came. Why would they testify to that? Because there was no evidence that there'd been a struggle. If the disciples came to steal the body when the guards were alert, the guards would have either prevented it or died trying.

There would be some dead guards laying around, some wounds. If there'd been a struggle, there'd be evidence of a struggle. There was none.

They couldn't claim any such evidence. They'd say, we were asleep and they just came and took the body. Well, how can you testify what happened when you're asleep? If you're asleep, how do you know what happened? And are the Roman guards really so incompetent that sentries fall asleep? All of them? Sentries are not allowed to fall asleep.

They get killed for doing things like that in the Roman army, as well as modern armies. You know, maybe if one of them succumbed, would all of them succumb? And when the disciples were moving that big rock, wouldn't somebody wake up? There's none of the stories that make any sense except the resurrection. And the only reason that doesn't make sense to some people is because they've decided beforehand that those kinds of things just can't happen.

That again is a prejudice. It's not open-mindedness. I would say looking open-mindedly at all the evidence of the arguments for the empty tomb, there's none that works except the one that works, the one that fits the pattern of Jesus' life, of miracles, and of God's endorsement of him, and of Jesus even predicting that he was going to do so.

That kind of gives the gospel records some credibility because they have the only story about this, about a known fact. Even Tacitus, the historian, said that Jesus was crucified. The question is, what happened to the body after that? Well, the tomb was empty.

That's a given. I've been there. I can testify it's empty.

I can't say I've seen Jesus since then, but I do know I saw the tomb empty. By the way, a very interesting thing about the gospels. If this was fiction, you would think they would have given a very dramatic description of Jesus coming back to life.

Not one gospel writer describes Jesus rising. They describe the women coming after, and Peter and John, after Jesus was there and seeing the tomb empty, and then at a later point in the day, seeing Jesus. But no one describes Jesus rising.

The most important fact of the Christian faith is that Jesus rose from the dead, and not one of the gospel writers record any detail of him rising. You know why? Because they weren't there to see it, and they were honest. If they were myth makers, they would have really embellished that part.

You know, there'd be this bright light shining, and the stone blast into gravel. You'd have all this sensational stuff, and it's very tame, very, very unsensational, because no one was there to see it. They don't describe it.

It's a very strong evidence that these people were not making myths. They were just telling what they saw, and not telling what they didn't see. The four gospels are the stories that come from eyewitnesses.

Not all four of the gospel writers were eyewitnesses. Matthew was. John was.

Mark was not. But according to a very reliable early source named Papias, Mark, who we know traveled with Peter, because Peter mentions it in 1 Peter 5, that Mark was with him. According to Papias, Mark wrote down what Peter preached.

And so really, in Mark's gospel, we have the gospel according to Peter, as written down by Mark. So that's an eyewitness testimony too. Luke doesn't claim to be an eyewitness, but at the very beginning of his gospel, he said that he had associated with the eyewitnesses, that he had read other accounts that had been written of the life of Jesus before he wrote his, and that he had consulted with those who were there and who had seen it.

Now Luke traveled with Paul and was often in the company of the other apostles, especially in the early days. And there were other eyewitnesses too, that Luke had occasion to interview in Jerusalem and Caesarea, who had been around. So Luke says that his story, he doesn't claim he was an eyewitness, but he got his information from eyewitnesses.

So all four of these are really pretty much based on eyewitness stuff. And as I said earlier, if someone wants to say, well, we don't really know if Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John really wrote those, well then how do we account for their names being attached to them? Why would the early church who received these documents from their original authors want to forget who they were? These are the most sacred documents of the early church. Wouldn't the people who knew who wrote them want to preserve the knowledge of who wrote them? And why would they, if they weren't doing so, if they're making up names, why did they pick Mark and Luke, two of the most obscure men in the

New Testament, yet their names are attached to those books for no better reason, probably, than that they really wrote them.

No other reason can be given why they should be attached to them. The witnesses were not predisposed to believe these things. These witnesses were Jews, except for Luke.

And Luke, some people think he was a Jew too, but Matthew, Mark, and Luke were certainly Jews. All the disciples were Jews. Jews don't believe that God is a man or man is God.

Jews are monotheists. They would not believe that a man was God in the flesh unless something had persuaded them against all their prejudices as Jews. And they gained nothing, as I said earlier, by saying this was true.

Nothing would account for them believing this. Not their predispositions or their later lives would explain why they would say these things if they weren't, in fact, true. The records were circulated within the living memory of many witnesses.

Even if they were written just before 70 AD, there would still be many people alive who had heard Jesus preach. And as I said, no documents ever have been found of people writing to falsify the stories. And when you're writing for peer review, that is, you're writing something about recent history, and you know that contemporaries of the events are going to have a chance to read them, you're kind of on your guard to make sure you tell the truth, because you don't want to be embarrassed.

You don't want someone to point out that you were wrong. And so they would have reason to write honestly, because they were writing at a time where plenty of people could confirm or disconfirm what they were saying. Another interesting thing is that we have historical evidence from Roman historians, Suetonius, that Christianity was in Rome as early as 49 or 50 AD.

That's just 20 years after Jesus died in Jerusalem. The story that Jesus had risen from the dead had spread from Jerusalem to Rome in just 20 years. That's a really short period of time for anyone to forget what's true or to say something happened that didn't really happen, and to travel that far and have people all over the world that took it seriously.

Why would they take it seriously? People were not disposed to believe this kind of thing happened. It's because it did happen, and because the witnesses were credible. In fact, the witnesses were able to do the same kind of miracles Jesus did.

The apostles raised the dead and healed the sick too, which kind of added some credibility to their stories. They said, yeah, this Jesus who did these things, he's still doing it through us now. He's still operating through us.

How many of you know who Simon Greenleaf was? Simon Greenleaf was the founder of

Harvard Law School. He's the author of the three-volume Harvard text Rules of Evidence. He's an expert on evidence.

He said, quote, the presumption of law is the judgment of charity. It presumes that every man is innocent until he's proven guilty, that everything has been done fairly and legally until it has proved to have been otherwise, and that every document found in its proper repository and not bearing the marks of forgery is genuine. Now, this is precisely the case with the sacred writings.

If any document concerning our public rights were lost, copies, which had been as universally received and acted upon as the four Gospels have been, would have been received in evidence in any of our courts of justice without the slightest hesitation, unquote. In other words, when people say there's no evidence that the Bible is true, that the Gospels are true, well, here's a man who's an expert on evidence. A lot of times when people say there's no evidence, like when Richard Dawkins says that, he means there's no scientific evidence.

Well, historical facts come from witnesses. Historical facts are non-repeatable unique events. Therefore, they can't be repeated for experiment in a laboratory.

They're not in the realm of science to investigate. Science investigates repeatable, you know, natural events. History is something different.

History is something that everything happens just once, and no one's ever going to know about it unless someone saw it and reported it. And that's exactly the kind of evidence we use in courts of law to know if a crime occurred. Now, more and more, they are using other kinds of scientific evidence, like DNA evidence to confirm what the witnesses say or whatever.

There are, you know, forensic science is nowadays playing a much, much larger role than it did throughout history. And we do have scientific technological ways to test some of these things and find guilty parties. But still, for the most part, throughout history, crimes are known to have occurred because someone saw it happen.

If no one saw it happen, then they have to result to forensics. Anyway, the witness of eyewitnesses is a very good evidence that something happened. What I have concluded, for my money, for my life, I've committed myself to the belief the Bible is true because I believe Jesus is true.

Because I believe the gospel records are incredibly reliable. I believe that they give us the true picture of Jesus and his teachings. And from that picture, I deduce, just like anyone would if they were there, you'd expect them to anyway, to believe that he really is who he said he is.

I say anyone, not everyone did. Judas saw those things, and he chose not to believe. But

not because the evidence was bad, because he was a rebel.

There were plenty of people like the Pharisees who saw Jesus do things and they rebelled. They didn't want it to be true. Once again, they weren't being honest with the evidence.

But people who had no axe to grind who saw what Jesus did, they said, surely this is the son of David. Surely this is the Messiah. Surely this is the Christ, the son of the living God.

And honest people, I think, would all come to that conclusion. I'm an honest person. I wasn't there to see it, but I've got reliable witnesses.

And from those witnesses, I've made a very reasonable conclusion. Jesus is who he said he was. And I have a good record of what he said.

So what about the rest of the Bible? We've been talking about the gospels. What does that tell me about the Old Testament or about the other writings in the New Testament, which the apostles wrote? Well, I'm going to go with Jesus on these things. The apostles who wrote, like Paul did and Peter and John and James, who wrote New Testament books besides the gospels, these men were chosen by Christ to be his official witnesses.

That's what an apostle is. The word *apostolos* in the Greek means one who is sent. Sent in an official capacity to represent the person sending him.

Now, Jesus picked the twelve. One of them defected, but he got Paul in there later on. Paul was also an apostle, of course.

And Jesus picked them to be his official witnesses. And he revealed to them, or they saw with their own eyes in many cases, what they were to bear witness to. Now, Jesus said in John 13, 20, he that receives him that I send receives me.

Okay, if Jesus sent apostles, then for me to receive what they say is the same as receiving what Jesus said. He puts his authority upon their words. You receive them, you receive me.

If the apostles were not truly sent by Christ, there'd be a different story. But they were. And he knew who they were.

They knew who he was. And he said, I'm authorizing you to go out and tell the whole world about this stuff. So they wrote under his authorization.

Now, did they write under inspiration? Maybe. I grew up with that affirmation. They wrote under inspiration.

Maybe they did. They didn't say so, but they may have. But even if they didn't, a man

doesn't have to write under inspiration to write authoritatively.

If he's an ambassador sent by a head of state to come and do business and decide things on behalf of his state, he's authorized by his country. Well, what he says is true. And Jesus sent the apostles and he revealed all they needed to know.

And he trusted them. And I trust them too. If Jesus trusted them, so do I. If Jesus said, you receive whom I send, you receive me.

Well, I want to receive him. So I'll receive the ones he sent too. As far as I'm concerned, everything written by the apostles is got Jesus imprimatur upon them because he sent them and said, you receive the one I send, you receive me.

Now there's a couple things in the New Testament not written by apostles. I mentioned Mark was not an apostle and Luke was not an apostle. And yet they traveled with the apostles.

Mark did and Luke did travel with Paul. And they could not possibly have written what they wrote without the oversight and the approval of the apostles that they associated with. There's no way that Luke could issue his story of the life of Christ without Paul saying, hey, I want to read that first.

You know, I want to see what you wrote there. Or, or likewise, when he wrote Acts, Paul and Luke were together all the time up until the time Paul died. And so it's assumed and the church has always assumed this, that Luke could not have written and published his work without Paul's approval.

Mark, of course, did not publish his work without Peter's approval. Therefore, they have apostolic authority too. And for that reason, not only the gospels, but the other writings of the apostles are authoritative.

And what about the Old Testament? Well, the Old Testament divides into maybe four kinds of material to consider. One would be the laws. Did God really give those laws? Another would be the historical narratives.

Most of the Old Testament is historical narrative. Then there's, of course, the writings of people like David, what the Jews called the writings, Psalms being the primary example of that. And then there's the prophets.

Jesus had something to say about all of these. First of all, about Moses. The law is the term that the Jews gave to the first five books of the Bible, Torah.

Torah is the Hebrew word that means law. And the first five books were called the Torah, the law. And the Jews all believed that Moses had written them.

Moses was a prophet of God who met God at the burning bush and met him on several

other occasions and was chosen by God to speak not only to Pharaoh, but to the Jews for 40 years after that. And Moses went into the tent of meeting with God every day and had conferences with God and came out and he wrote the first five books of the Bible, the Torah. It's his work.

There are people who've questioned whether Moses really wrote it, but Jesus was not among those who questioned it. In fact, Jesus affirmed it. Jesus said in John 7, 19, did not Moses give you the law? And yet not one of you keeps the law.

He basically said that the Jews were correct, that Moses gave them the law. In Matthew chapter eight and verse four, when Jesus healed a leper, he says, go to the priest and show yourself to the priest and offer the sacrifices that Moses commanded. He's referring to Leviticus chapters 13 and 14.

Jesus said, Moses gave those instructions in Leviticus. In Mark 7, 10, Jesus said, for Moses said, honor your father and your mother and whoever curses father and mother, let him die the death. Well, that's in Exodus.

Both those statements are in Exodus. One's in the 10 commandments. The other is a few chapters later.

Jesus said, Moses said that in Exodus. In Luke 20 and verse 37, it says, even Moses showed in the burning bush passage that the dead are raised when he called the Lord, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. Moses wrote that story.

That's in Exodus. So we have confirmation from Jesus that Moses wrote those books. The Jews believed it anyway, and Jesus confirmed it.

They are from Moses, but they're also from God. Because if you look with me at Mark chapter 7, this is a really important thing to actually see with your eyes. In Mark chapter 7, verses 9 through 13, Jesus is speaking.

He says, all too well you reject the commandment of God that you may keep your tradition. For Moses said, honor your father and your mother and he who curses father and mother, let him be put to death. But you say, if a man says to his father or mother, whatever prophet you might have had from me is Corban, that is a gift to God, then you are no longer to let him do anything for his father or mother, making the word of God of no effect through your tradition.

Notice in verse 9, he talks about the commandment of God. And in verse 13, the word of God. What's referring to? The two commands he gives example which Moses said.

Jesus confirmed that the laws that Moses gave are the word of God and the commandment of God. That's what the Jews believed, but Jesus believed it too, and he confirmed it. And so Jesus also said that Moses spoke of him, and that the law must be

fulfilled.

Remember in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said, do not think that I have come to destroy the law and the prophets. I've not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not one jot or tittle of the law will pass until all is fulfilled.

Certainly every jot and tittle of the Torah must be fulfilled. Why? Who's demanding that? Well, God is. Why? Because it's his word.

If it wasn't God's word, there'd be no particular reason why it would have to be fulfilled. So Jesus confirmed that the law of Moses is authoritative and from God. Now what about the historical narratives? Well, Jesus assumed them to be reliable.

Many examples are given from the Torah of their reliability. Jesus said, for example, in John 3, to Nicodemus, he says, as Moses raised up the serpent in the wilderness, so also the Son of Man must be lifted up. So he said that Moses lifting up the serpent in numbers was a true story.

Jesus said when they asked him about divorce, they said, is it okay to divorce your wife for any cause? He said, have you not read that in the beginning God made them male and female? And he said, for this reason, a man shall leave his father and mother and cleave unto his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. He's quoting Genesis chapter 2 and chapter 1 also. He quoted two passages in Genesis, but he spoke of them as true stories.

That's part of the historical narrative of Genesis. He said, haven't you heard that this happened this way? Well, that's why we should observe it. In another place, Jesus said in Luke 11, he said that all the righteous blood that was shed from Abel to Zechariah, whom you slew between the temple and the altar, will come upon this generation.

It was the guilt of bloodshed will come upon that generation for all the bloodshed from Abel on. Well, if Abel was not a true story, Cain killing Abel, how could his blood guilt come on anyone if he wasn't a real character? It's like telling people someone's gonna have to, you know, Humpty Dumpty fell off the wall and he broke and no one could put him together. Someone's got to pay for that, you know.

Well, no one's going to pay for that. It's not true. There was no Humpty Dumpty, but there was an Abel and he did shed his blood.

And all the martyrs from Abel on, Jesus takes the whole historical narrative from Abel to the end of Chronicles. Zechariah, son of Jehoiada, was killed. And he says all those people killed in that time, someone's going to have to answer for that.

You're going to answer for it. It's going to come on this generation. It really happened.

All that stuff really happened. When Jesus said in Matthew 24, as it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be. In the days before the flood, they ate, they drank, they married wives.

They didn't know until the flood came, took them all away. In Luke 17, Jesus said, and as it was in the days of Lot, they bought and sold until the fire came down from heaven on them. You see, Jesus is taking these historical things, many of them from Genesis, but also including the whole Old Testament.

He said all the martyrs from Abel to Zechariah. He takes the whole historical narrative and acts like it's all true. And if he thought it was true, so do I. The historical narratives are agreeable with everything we know archaeologically.

That's one thing that archaeology can test. Archaeology can't test theological propositions or prophecies, but archaeology can test historical claims. Archaeologists have never been able to find anything that disproves a historical claim of the Old Testament.

William F. Albright, Professor Emeritus of Johns Hopkins University, in his lifetime, considered to be the world's most respected expert on the Orient in archaeology. He said, there can be no doubt that archaeology has confirmed the substantial historicity of the Old Testament tradition. And he was not a Christian, by the way.

Daniel chapter 5 mentions that Babylon fell when Belshazzar was reigning in Babylon. Remember, the writing on the wall, and Daniel was called in to interpret it. Well, there was a problem with that because until 1853, Belshazzar was not mentioned in any known historical documents.

And scholars all believed that another man named Nabonidus was the king of Babylon at the time that it fell. In fact, Herodotus had said so, the Greek historian writing 400 years before Christ. He said that the last king in Babylon was Nabonidus.

But the Bible said it was Belshazzar. And for, actually for a very long time, critics of the Bible said, well, see, the Bible's fiction. Because the historians tell us it was Nabonidus, and Daniel says it was Belshazzar.

Well, what happened was, in 1853, there was an inscription found in a temple to a pagan god, and this inscription was written by Nabonidus. Now, remember, Nabonidus is the one that the historians already knew about. They believed he was the last king in Babylon, and that Belshazzar was not, because they never heard of him from anywhere except the Bible.

But this inscription, written by Nabonidus, said this, May I, Nabonidus, king of Babylon, not sin against thee, he's writing to a pagan god, and may reverence for thee dwell in the heart of Belshazzar, my firstborn favorite son. Now, when this inscription was found

162 years ago, it was the first time anywhere outside of Daniel that the name Belshazzar had ever been discovered. Daniel knew about Belshazzar, but 400 years before Christ, Herodotus had already forgotten about him.

Daniel was closer to the facts than Herodotus was. In fact, Belshazzar was so non-memorable that no historian had mentioned him except Daniel, but Daniel was there in Babylon. He was there when Belshazzar called him in and so forth, and Daniel alone among the historians remembered Belshazzar and was vindicated by archaeology since then.

It's now known that in the final years of Babylon, before it fell to the Medes and the Persians, Nabonidus, the father, was in semi-retirement in Arabia, and he had left his son Belshazzar in Babylon to kind of run things for him, so that Belshazzar and Nabonidus were jointly ruling. And so it's true that Nabonidus was the last king, but so was Belshazzar, his son. They jointly ruled, but only Daniel remembered Belshazzar.

And this is how archaeology again and again has confirmed the Bible. Miller Burroughs is a Yale archaeologist, and he wrote this. He says, On the whole, archaeological work has unquestionably strengthened confidence in the reliability of the scriptural record.

More than one archaeologist has found his respect for the Bible increased by the experience of excavation in Palestine. That would mean they weren't believers when they went in, because you can't increase the respect for the Bible if you already believe it's the God. He says, More than one archaeologist has increased his respect for the Bible by the experience of excavating things in Palestine.

Archaeology confirms it. In fact, Nelson Gleck, who's a renowned Jewish archaeologist, he wrote, It may be stated categorically that no archaeological discovery has ever controverted a biblical reference. They've never found one thing archaeologically that contradicts what the Bible says about something historically.

Time Magazine back in 1974 ran a cover story about the Bible and about the controversies about the Bible's reliability. And it sort of went through some of the controversies and so forth. And here's how it concludes.

Time Magazine, by the way, is not a Christian publication, not even very friendly toward Christianity. And here's what the writer of Time Magazine said in their cover story of the Bible. This was December 30th, 1974.

Quote, After more than two centuries of facing the heaviest scientific guns that could be brought to bear, the Bible has survived and is perhaps the better for the siege. Even on the critics' own terms, historical fact, the scriptures seem more acceptable now than they did when the rationalists began the attack. For 200 years, anti-Christians have tried to find all the evidence they could from archaeology and other places to prove the Bible

is wrong.

And Time Magazine says, you know, after 200 years of that, the Bible seems more believable now than it did when they started. Why? Because archaeology confirms that these things happen. So that Jesus was not naive and the Jews were not naive in thinking the historical narratives in the Old Testament were true.

Even the pagans and the scientists have had to admit these things apparently are true. At least the ones that can be verified have all come out verified as opposed to anything contradicting it. That leaves only the Psalms and the Prophets to consider.

Jesus said in Mark 12, 36, that David, through the Holy Spirit, wrote, The Lord said unto my Lord, sit here at my right hand until I make your enemies your footstool. Jesus said that David wrote that through the Holy Spirit. He believed that David was inspired.

The Psalms contain a lot of prophecies. In fact, the New Testament writers quoted from the Psalms more often than they quoted from any other Old Testament book in pointing out things that Jesus had fulfilled. There's an interesting statement by Jesus in Luke chapter 24, which includes his assessment of the Psalms as well as the Law and the Prophets.

In Luke 24, verse 44, he said to the disciples, These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning me. Now Jesus said that the Prophets and the Law and the Psalms all wrote about him and they had to be fulfilled. Why? Because they were inspired prophecies.

They had to be fulfilled because Jesus recognized the Psalms as inspired. By the way, Peter, one of the apostles obviously, in Acts chapter 2, referred to David as a prophet and he quotes Psalm 16 and says that David spoke that as a prophet. So obviously the Psalms are considered to be inspired by Jesus and his disciples.

Finally, of course, the Prophets. Now the Prophets are one of the greatest proofs that the Bible is true and that it's the Word of God because you could prove that a book is historically accurate or at least that you couldn't prove anything in it to be historically inaccurate, but that wouldn't prove it was inspired. You could find that a book had given very lofty principles that everyone admired, but it wouldn't prove it was inspired.

But the one thing that proves that the Bible is inspired is the one thing that God called upon as the proof it was inspired and that was his ability to predict the future. People can't do that. False gods can't do that and in Isaiah chapter 41, God is challenging the false gods that Israel was worshiping on this very point.

If you look at Isaiah 41 verses 21 through 23, God is challenging the false gods. He says, present your case, says Yahweh. Bring forth your strong reason, says the King of Jacob.

Let them bring forth and show us what will happen. Let them show the former things what they were that we may consider them and know the latter into them or declare to us things to come. Show the things that are to come hereafter that we may know that you are gods.

What God is saying is, you false gods, if you're real gods, you should be able to tell the future. He's obviously implying, I can do that. I'm God.

I can tell the future. Can you? You can't? Well, then you aren't gods. Show us what's going to happen after this so that we can know that you are gods.

And God, who puts that challenge out to the false gods, is very willing to take it up himself. And the books of the prophets are not the only places, but they are among the places where God proved himself capable of predicting the future. Remember, Jesus had everything written in the law and the prophets and the Psalms concerning what had to be fulfilled.

God prophesied about Jesus in all parts of the Old Testament. The prophets also spoke about other things besides Jesus. They talked about the fall of Babylon, the fall of Assyria.

They talked about the fall of Moab and Edom and things like that long before they occurred and gave details. The fall of Tyre and Sidon. It's a remarkable prophecy in Ezekiel that actually describes how the invaders are going to scrape the city like the top of a rock and throw its debris into the water, which is what Alexander the Great did to conquer the city.

I won't go into that detail now, but there's a lot of things like that. Jeremiah predicted the Jews would go into Babylon for 70 years and then God would bring them back. There's a prophet in 1 Kings who predicted that a man named Josiah would defile an altar and burn the bones of the false prophets on it.

He did that, I think he predicted 200 years before Josiah was born. Isaiah himself predicts that a man named Cyrus will conquer Babylon and tell the Jews they can go back to Jerusalem and rebuild the temple. He wrote that 150 years before Cyrus was born, yet he named him.

This kind of stuff, this is God showing off a little bit, showing off for people that he really can do what no one else can do. He can tell the future. There are hundreds of prophecies in the prophets that make specific predictions about events that have been fulfilled.

This is the way that God credentials himself. Jesus in the upper room with his disciples said, I tell you these things before they happen so that when they do happen, you'll know that I am he and you'll believe. That's why God predicted the future.

It gives credentials to his spokesman. A prophet who can say, thus says the Lord, this is going to happen, and it does, has just proven himself to be a prophet of the Lord. In fact, we were warned in the Bible that there'd be false prophets.

Moses said in chapter 18 of Deuteronomy, how will you know if a man's a false prophet? If he says something's going to happen, it doesn't happen, he's a false prophet. The true prophets can tell the future. And the fact that they do so, and it really happens the way they predicted it, proves they were true prophets.

And Jesus believed there were true prophets. Remember, Jesus said all things written in the law and the prophets and the Psalms have to be fulfilled concerning me. So Jesus recognized the entire canon of the Old Testament, the one, the canon of the Old Testament that the Jews already recognized, the 39 books in our Old Testament, Jesus recognized as inspired, authoritative scripture.

He likewise authorized his own disciples who wrote the New Testament. And therefore, if Jesus is the truth and the reliable witness about things, then the rest of the Bible must be true too, because he said so. He authorized it.

So how can we know that the Bible's true? We can know that if we know that Jesus is true. And if Jesus is true, then the Bible is true because he said so, and he believed it, and he ought to know. So the real question is, is Jesus true? Well, once we've read the records and looked at them objectively, the general tendency of those who do that is to decide he is, that his claims are true.

More than one atheist has set out to disprove Christianity by going and looking at the historical records, especially trying to disprove the resurrection of Christ, and come away from it as believers, because they actually were skeptical, they looked at the evidence, and they concluded the evidence, if you're going to be honest, it all points one way. And it does. I've hardly scratched the surface here tonight because I have so little time, but this is an overview of how we can know the Bible is true.

And anybody who says it isn't is embarrassing themselves, because they are simply ignoring evidence, or they either have never heard it, or they're not giving it an honest evaluation. And that's why I've said that people who aren't Christians either are ignorant, that is, they don't know the evidence. Most people don't.

Most people never heard it, or they're dishonest, because once they see the evidence and can really look at it, if they reject it, they are applying a critical standard and a skeptical standard to the evidence that they don't apply to any other evidence about anything else. They have an agenda.