

Hiding God: Divine Revelation vs. World Religion

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The Bible & Religious “Holy Books”: Divine Revelation, or Myth?

- ▶ How can we truly know?

Examine --

1. Internal Evidence:

- ▶ **Authenticity**
- ▶ **Uniformity**
- ▶ **Prophecy**

2. External Evidence

- ▶ **Archeology**
- ▶ **Cosmology**
- ▶ **Astronomy**

Bible Authenticity

Old Testament Writings

- ▶ *The Dead Sea Scrolls* (300 B.C. to 70 A.D.) – all of Isaiah and portions of all OT books, except Esther found (1947)
 - ▶ → **900 documents & 40,000 fragments**
- ▶ Other prominent manuscripts include the *Geniza Fragments* (400 A.D.) and the *Ben Asher Manuscripts* (950 A.D.).
- ▶ OT writings 90% without variants
- ▶ 10 % remaining variants are insignificant (most relate to an obvious slip of the pen, inadequate knowledge of the Hebrew language by the translator, or dialect differences.
- ▶ With proper textual criticism a textual purity exceeding 95 percent results. The remaining uncertainties mostly are simple discrepancy in word order.

Example: Comparison of the oldest Masoretic Text (800 AD) to the DSS Isaiah scroll (300 B.C.): Of 166 words in Isaiah 53, only 17 letters were different; 10 were spelling variations; 4 pertain to minor stylistic changes, the remaining 3 composed the word “light” in verse 11 – the passage meaning unchanged.

Bible Authenticity

New Testament Writings

- ▶ **5,600+ copies of Greek Manuscripts**
- ▶ **10,000+ copies of Latin Vulgate**
- ▶ **9,300+ copies of early versions**
= approximately 25,000 NT manuscripts
- ▶ **86,000 NT quotations by early church fathers**
 - ▶ **Reconstruct all of New Testament, but 11 verses**
- ▶ **NT writings scientifically proven to 99.5 % authentic to autographs.**



The Authenticity of Religious “Holy Books”

Hinduism: Hindu Vedas is a 1200 year collection of religious writing relating to a diverse conglomeration of doctrines, cults, and ways of life.

- ▶ One God vs. many gods.
- ▶ Divine origin of man vs. the caste system.
- ▶ Hindu ethics vs. ethics of the gods.
 - ▶ Concept of human monogamy vs. the gods polygamy.
 - ▶ Human self-control vs. revelry of the gods.

Buddhism: Buddha sought to reform Hinduism.

- ▶ Oral teachings – nothing written down for 300 years.

Judaism: Talmud/Rabbinical writings have replaced OT law: Prayer, repentance, good deeds now replace blood atonement (substitutional sacrifice).



The Authenticity of Religious “Holy Books”

- ▶ **Islam:** Mohammad could not read or write (Surah 29:48)
 - ▶ Uthman ordered a collection of informal writings 24 years after Mohammad’s death – vast disagreement
 - ▶ Quran was composed by non-prophets; many different early versions
 - ▶ Quran has many internal disagreements and historical problems
- ▶ **Mormonism:** Supposedly translated by Joseph Smith from gold tablets inscribed with Egyptian symbols.
 - ▶ Used seer stone in a hat and received help from angel
 - ▶ No plates can be produced
- ▶ **Works-based Christianity** – Replacing the Bible with Church Tradition (e.g. Canon Law).



What About the Authenticity of other “Holy Books”

▶ Jehovah’s Witnesses

- ▶ For over 70 years, the Jehovah’s Witnesses relied on the KJV or the ASV in their organizational writings.
 - ▶ There were too many Jehovah’s Witness doctrines which could not be reconciled with these Bible translations, an effort was launched in the late 1940s to create one that would: the *New World Translation*.
 - ▶ The NT was available in 1950 and the OT in 1961.
 - ▶ Interestingly, only six individuals served on the New World Translation committee (This is a very small committee compared to other Bible translation committees).
 - ▶ Only one committee member, Frederick William Franz, had any formal training in Bible Languages. It is noted that Franz could not read Hebrew – the original language of nearly all of the OT.
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The Uniformity of Bible

- ▶ God used various literary forms in the OT, including word-pictures, prophecies, shadows, types, allegories, symbols, and plain language, to present a consistent message throughout: the revelation of His gift to the World – His own Son.
- ▶ New Testament is shown to be the fulfillment of Old Testament.
 - ▶ **Principle of First Mention**
 - ▶ **Types and Shadows**
 - ▶ **Numbers**
 - ▶ **Names**
 - ▶ **Metal/Materials**
 - ▶ **Colors**
 - ▶ **Symbols**



Uniformity of Religious “Holy Books”

Mormonism

- ▶ 3900 changes in 170 years (many doctrinal changes)

Islam:

- ▶ Is there or is there not compulsion in religion? The Quran contradicts itself (2:256, 9:3, 5, 29).
- ▶ Was the first Muslim Muhammad (39:12) or Abraham (2:132) or Jacob (2:132) or Moses (7:143)?
- ▶ Does Allah forgive or not forgive those who worship false gods? The Quran disagrees (4:48, 4:116, 4:153).
- ▶ What was man created from? These all can't be true!
 - a. “A (mere) clot of congealed blood” (96:2)
 - b. “From clay, from mud molded into shape” (15:26)
 - c. “From dust” (3:59)
 - d. “Out of nothing” (19:67; 52:35)
 - e. “From a sperm-drop” (16:4)

Fulfilled Bible Prophecy

- ▶ The Bible proves its validity by accurately foretelling thousands of future events -- many of which are now verifiable history
- ▶ This same prophetic content is not apparent in the Hindu Vedas, Quran, the sayings of Buddha or Confucius, the scriptures of Shintoism, the Book of Mormon or for any other religious writings
 - ▶ Dozens of prophecies by Joseph Smith and Charles Russell are known to be incorrect
- ▶ Approximately one fourth of the Bible is prophetic in content
 - ▶ Through prophetic statements, God puts His name on the line again and again to show the world that He is the one true God and that the Bible is His message to humanity (Isa. 48:5).



Prophetic Portrait of Messiah

- ▶ There are over 200 first advent Messianic prophecies in the OT
 - ▶ Written by over a dozen prophets
 - ▶ Written some 1,600 to 400 years prior to Christ's coming.
 - ▶ Written from different geographical locations and social climates
- ▶ Sixty-nine major unquestionably first advent Messianic prophecies which are historically quantifiable and not redundant.
- ▶ The combined probability that the Lord Jesus Christ fulfilled all sixty-nine of these major prophecies by chance, is estimated to be **one chance in 5.32×10^{72} attempts.**



The Bible & Religious “Holy Books”: Divine Revelation, or Myth?

- ▶ How can we truly know?

Examine --

External Evidence

- ▶ **Archeology**
- ▶ **Cosmology**
- ▶ **Astronomy**
- ▶ **Paleontology**
- ▶ **Oceanography**



External Evidence: Science & Bible

▶ Though scientists do not agree on the initial cause/timing of nature, many would agree with the following biblical insights, whether he or she were a creationist or a naturalist:

1. All that is visible came from what was invisible (Heb. 11:3).
2. Before creation, time did not exist (1 Cor. 2:7; 2 Tim. 1:9).
3. Universe continues to expand (Job. 9:8; Ps. 104:2; Isa. 44:24).
4. Universe is winding down/will eventually “wear out” (Ps. 102:25-26).
5. The universe has innumerable number of stars (Gen. 22:17; Jer. 33:22). Note: only about 3000 can be seen with naked eye.
6. Every star is unique, differing in magnitude (1 Cor. 15:41).
7. “In the beginning (time), God created the heavens (space) and the Earth (matter)” (Gen. 1:1). The relationship of time, space, and matter is acknowledged in the first verse of the Bible.
8. Genesis 1 order of biological development: God created something out of nothing (Gen. 1:1), then created unconscious life – vegetation (Gen. 1:11), then conscious life – sea life, birds, land creatures (Gen. 1:20-21, 25) and lastly human life (Gen. 1:26-27).



Astronomy

The Sun has a Circular Path

- ▶ *“Its [speaking of the sun] rising is from one end of heaven, and its circuit to the other end; and there is nothing hidden from its heat” (Ps. 19:1-6).*
- ▶ Skeptics once asserted that these verses were incorrect; the sun doesn’t travel on a circular path – it’s just the planets that do.
- ▶ The sun moves in a “circuit” or circular course through space, at speeds approaching 600,000 miles per hour, within one of the spiral arms of the Milky Way Galaxy.
- ▶ The Milky Way is hurtling through space at an estimated speed of 2,000,000 miles per hour.



Paleontology

Why does the fossil record not support evolution?

1. Life suddenly appears in the bottom fossil-strata level, the Cambrian, with no precursors.
2. When these lowest life forms appear (they are small slow-moving, shallow-sea creatures), they are abundant, numbered in the billions of specimens, and quite complex.
3. No transitional species are to be found at the bottom of the strata, the Cambrian.
4. Just below the Cambrian, in the Precambrian, there are no fossil specimens [other than some surface algae & debated bacteria].
5. Higher taxa (forms of life) appear just as suddenly in the strata farther up. These higher types (such as beavers, giraffes, etc.) suddenly appear with no hint of transitional life forms.
6. When they appear, vast numbers of these life forms are to be found.

Paleontology

- ▶ The fact is that subsequently no new phyla have appeared, and no new classes and orders. This fact, which has been long ignored, is perhaps the most powerful of all arguments against Darwin's generalization.
 - G. R. Taylor, in *The Great Evolution Mystery* (1983), p. 138.
 - ▶ Paleontology is now looking at what it actually finds, not what it is told that it is supposed to find. As is now well known, most fossil species appear instantaneously in the record, persist for some millions of years virtually unchanged, only to disappear abruptly.
 - T. Kemp, "A Fresh Look at the Fossil Record," *New Scientist*, December 5, 1985, p. 66.
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Meteorology and Oceanography

- ▶ Valleys exist on the bottom of the oceans (*2 Sam. 22:16*)
- ▶ Mountains in the Sea (*Jon. 2:5-6*).
- ▶ Wind blows in circular paths about the Earth (*Eccl. 1:6*)
- ▶ David wrote (*3000 years ago*) “the paths in the sea” (*Ps. 8:8*)
 - ▶ → 19th century naval officer Matthew Fontaine Maury to explore the oceans for prevailing sea currents

▶ The Weight of Air

It was not until after Italian physicist Evangelista Toricelli constructed the first barometer in 1643 that atmospheric pressure was measured and understood. Yet, 3,500 years ago Job said: “*For He looks to the ends of the Earth, and sees under the whole heavens, To establish a weight for the wind, and apportion the waters by measure*” (*Job 28:24-25*).

Cosmology and Astronomy

- ▶ The earth is circular (*perhaps spherical; Isa. 40:22*)
- ▶ Water cycle maintains life on Earth (*Isa. 55:10; Job 36:27-28*)
- ▶ Some 3500 years ago the Lord asked Job, “*Can you bind the cluster of the Pleiades, or loose the belt of Orion?*” (*Job 38:31*)
 - ▶ Taurus constellation has grouping of stars in gravitation lock, called “Pleiades” or “Seven Sisters”
 - About 440 light years away, seven are discernable with naked eye
 - ▶ Constellation Orion is composed of stars throughout our galaxy
 - ▶ The Milky Way is expanding

Science and Reality

- ▶ “One thing I have learned in a long life, that all our science, measured against reality, is primitive and childlike.”

-- *Albert Einstein (1879–1955)*

- ▶ “No true finding of science will ever contradict the Bible, because the secrets of science were placed in the universe by the same One who wrote the Bible, God Himself. But many so-called ‘facts’ of science are in reality nothing but unproven theories.”

--*William MacDonald (1917-2007)*

- ▶ **Truth cannot contradict itself**

Does Science Valid World Religion?

Hinduism:

- ▶ Hindu Vedas contains many scientific errors:
 - ▶ That the earth is held up on the back of four elephants.
 - ▶ The moon is 1500 miles above the sun.
 - ▶ That the moon shines with its own light.
 - ▶ That the earth is flat and triangular in shape.



Does Science Valid World Religion?

Mormonism:

- ▶ No Book of Mormon names, places, cities, nations, artifacts have been found.
- ▶ Archeological findings of pre-Columbian Indians contradict the cultural statements contained in the Book of Mormon.
- ▶ DNA testing has proven the Book of Mormon's claim as to how native Indians originated as false.
- ▶ It has now been proven that men do not live on the moon or the sun as early Mormon prophets claimed.
 - ▶ President Brigham Young taught that both the moon and sun were inhabited: (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 13, p. 271) "He described the men as averaging near six feet in height, and dressing quite uniformly in something near the Quaker style." (*THE INHABITANTS OF THE MOON*, 1892 LDS pub.).



The Bible and Archeology

- ▶ If the Bible is God's revelation to mankind, would we expect archeology to be in agreement with Scripture?
- ▶ Archaeology does not directly prove the Bible's inspiration
 - it does prove its historical reliability
- ▶ Archaeology has verified numerous ancient sites, civilizations, and biblical characters
 - their existence was questioned by the academic world
- ▶ Biblical archaeology discoveries continue to support facts of the Bible

The Bible and Archeology

Example -- Assyrian Tablet Receipt

- ▶ 2007 -- discovery of a Babylonian financial account
 - ▶ documents the payment of 0.75 kg of gold to the temple in Babylon by Nebo-Sarsekim
 - ▶ The tablet is dated to the 10th year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar II, 595 B.C.
- ▶ Jeremiah 39:3 identifies Nebo-Sarsekim as one of Nebuchadnezzar's generals present at the fall of Jerusalem in 587 B.C.
- ▶ Michael Jursa (Assyriologist professor from Vienna) called the tablet the most important find in Biblical archaeology in 100 years

The Bible and Archeology

Example -- The Hitties

- ▶ Hittites were a powerful force in the Middle East, 2250 B.C. -- 1200 B.C. (*Gen. 15:20, 2 Sam. 11, and 1 Kings 10:29*)
 - ▶ No archeological evidence of the Hittites, until...
 - ▶ Late 19th C.: Archaeologists in Turkey discovered a city which proved to be the capital of the Hittite empire -- In the city they discovered a massive library, thousands of tablets
 - ▶ Recent excavations uncovered clay tablets from Assyria and Egypt, which speak of the Hittites and recorded 'a fierce battle' between Rameses II and the Hittites at Kadesh on the Orontes River in 1287 BC

The Bible and Archeology

Example -- Jericho:

- ▶ Current leading archaeologists on Jericho: Dr. Bryant Wood
- ▶ His research shows that archaeological evidence matches perfectly with the biblical record in the book of Joshua (massive collapse of the city's walls, not decay)

Example -- Luke's Geography Record:

A. N. Sherwin-White comments:

- ▶ “Luke names thirty-two countries, fifty-four cities, and nine islands without error.”
- ▶ “For Acts the confirmation of historicity is overwhelming... Any attempt to reject its basic historicity must now appear absurd. Roman historians have long taken it for granted.”
(ref. Luke & Acts)

The Bible and Archeology

- ▶ **Cyrus Cylinder** discovered in 1879 records Cyrus' overthrow of Babylon and his subsequent deliverance of the Jewish captives.

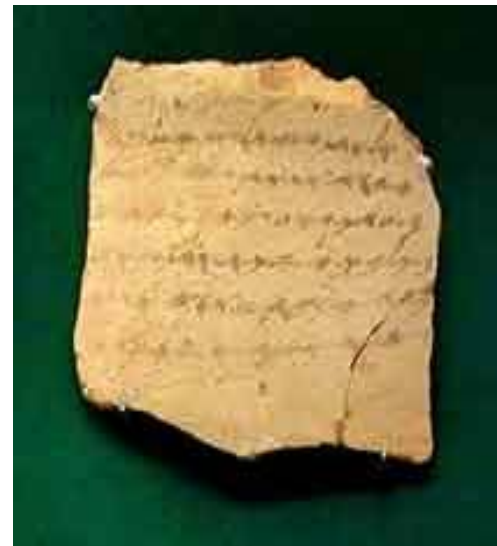


The Bible and Archeology

- ▶ **Moabite Stone** discovered in 1868 at Dibon, Jordan
 - confirmed Moabite attacks on Israel as recorded in 2 Kings 1 & 3



- ▶ **Lachish Letters**
 - discovered 1932-1938, 24 miles north of Beersheba
 - described the attack of Nebuchadnezzar on Jerusalem in 586 BC.



The Bible and Archeology

- ▶ **Ebla Tablets:** The skeptics who questioned the existence of the biblical cities of Sodom and Gomorrah were silenced by the discovery of the Ebla Tablets in northern Syria.
- ▶ Since 1974, 17,000 tablets have been unearthed from the era of the Ebla Kingdom. The Ebla tablets refer to all five cities of the Jordan plain, which were overtaken by Chedorlaomer and three other Mesopotamian kings in the time of Abraham (Gen. 14).
- ▶ One tablet actually lists the cities in the exact same order as Genesis 14:2 (Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboiim and Zoar).⁸



The Bible and Archeology

- ▶ The **Babylonian Chronicles** were found in 1956; these 4 tablets date to 600 BC.
- ▶ These tablets record the historical events associated with the rise of the Babylonians: the conquering of the Assyrians, Egyptians and then Judah. All these events are well documented in the Bible (2 Kings, 2 Chronicles, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel).
- ▶ The Babylonian Chronicles confirm military events such as the battle at Carchemish in 605 B.C. as recorded in Jeremiah 46:2 and 2 Kings 24:7-17.



Summary of Archeology Evidence

- ▶ “No fact of archaeology so far discovered contradicts the Biblical records.”
 - ▶ Donald Wiseman, Professor Emeritus of Assyriology at London University (*D Wiseman, Digging for Truth, Viewpoint no:31; ISCF*)
- ▶ “Of the hundreds and thousands of artifacts found by the archaeologists, not one has ever been discovered that contradicts or denies one word, phrase, clause or sentence of the Bible.”
 - ▶ -- *Dr. Jo Kinnaman*
 - ▶ **Archaeology confirms accuracy of biblical records**

Summary of Archeology Evidence

- ▶ “No archaeological discovery has ever controverted a biblical reference.”
 - ▶ Nelson Glueck, renowned Jewish archaeologist
- ▶ “There can be no doubt that archaeology has confirmed the substantial historicity of the Old Testament.”
 - ▶ Dr. William Albright, foremost authority in Middle East archaeology in his time

At this time, the number of archaeological discoveries that relate to the Bible are hundreds of thousands

Conclusion

- ▶ Internal and external evidence confirm that the Bible is True:

Authenticity

Archeology

Uniformity

Cosmology

Prophecy

Astronomy

- ▶ Man uses science to converge on reality, but absolute truth rests with God
 - ▶ What God has revealed, man is accountable to obey (Deut. 29:29).
- ▶ The ultimate truth that God wants man to know and obey is: *“Jesus said, ‘I Am the way, the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but by me’”* (John 14:6)
 - ▶ God judged His righteous Son for the sins of mankind in order to extend an opportunity for man to be reconciled to Him