

## Reasons to Believe Your Bible - Logical Reasons

Sign Title: Logical Reasons to Believe Your Bible

January 9, 2011

Good morning! My name is Kurt and I am one of the pastors. I would like to welcome you in the name of Christ. We live in a world going through many changes. One of the big changes is the loss of truth. Truth is no longer something that *is* true *all the time*. Today, truth is what *feels* true to me *at this time*. Let me give you some examples. If you are on the net, you know about Wikipedia, the on-line encyclopedia. It is a great encyclopedia but it has a danger to it. The articles are not necessarily based on truth, they are based on consensus. Truth has become what *most people think*, not what the experts know is true.

Another example is on-line shopping. I did some on-line shopping this past week for vitamins and wanted to find what experts in the field thought about the products I was considering. It was almost impossible to find. All I could find was star ratings and user opinions. Even the experts had star ratings and user opinions next to them. While that is helpful, I didn't want peoples uneducated opinions, I just wanted the truth and that can be hard to find on-line.

How does this relate to this morning? We live in a culture where fifty years ago, what the Bible said was considered true. The opinions of our culture have shifted. If you would get star ratings and user opinions on the Bible today, you would find it doesn't fare that well. Most people believe the Bible is riddled with errors. They believe it was written by men and not God. They believe it is a book science and archaeology have proven wrong. Most people believe the Bible is

no different from the other books in the constellation of religious options given us today.

While that may be how the world rates the Bible, I am not interested in what everybody thinks, I want to know the truth.

In this series we will discover the truth about the Bible. This morning we will examine the Bible from the discipline of logic. In the weeks that follow, we will examine the Bible from the disciplines of archeology, science and prophecy. We will look at high school biology text books and the claims of evolution versus the Biblical claim of special creation. We will look at Dan Brown's *DaVinci Code* and learn how the books in our Bible really came together.

Students and young adults, I know sometimes you doubt your faith. I know it is hard to give an answer for your faith to your friends. This series is for you. What we will cover in the next two months is essential if your faith will survive the onslaught of a postmodern world. When your parents ask you to skip church and go skiing, tell them you want to stay home and go to church.

Because we have a lot to cover, we are diving right into the discipline of logic. Here is the point of this weeks message.

*We can trust the Bible is God's Word is because it claims to be!*

I know what you are thinking. Pastor Kurt, I learned this in college. That is called circular reasoning. You are simply assuming the point you want to prove. It is like saying, "I believe you are telling the truth because you said you are telling the truth." That doesn't prove anything. If that is my lead argument for

believing the Bible, you are going to tell Pastor Kurt to go back to the drawing board.

Before you get too hasty in dismissing what the Bible has to say about itself, let us suppose a foreigner from another country was dropped off in the center of Spirit Lake. If we wanted to find out who he is, where he came from and what brought him there, what would we do?... We might call in experts in genetics to test his blood, experts in ethnic history to examine his features to learn more about him; but before we did all that, why wouldn't we just ask him to tell his story? After all, the story he told could yield evidence about him that scientists could never reveal. After all, he may simply be telling the truth.

We will let scientific disciplines cross-examine the Bible in future weeks, but let's begin by letting the Bible simply tell its story. Let's see what we can learn from the logic of that.

### **The Bible claims to be the Word of God.**

Open the Old Testament and it doesn't take long to find what the Bible claims.

### **The Bible claims to contain the very spoken words of God.**

It claims to contain the actual spoken words of God.

And God spoke all these words, saying, "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. "You shall have no other gods before me. Exodus 20:1–3 (ESV)

And the Lord said to Moses, "See, I have made you like God to Pharaoh, and your brother Aaron shall be your prophet. Exodus 7:1 (ESV)

There are many times the Bible claims to contain the actual words God spoke. For instance, it records some of the words God spoke to Adam and Eve.

It records conversations God had with Abraham. It records God talking with Moses at the burning bush. Human language is not a barrier for God. The Bible claims to be a record of some of God's actual words.

**The Bible claims to contain the words of God spoken through prophets.**

I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers. And I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him. And whoever will not listen to my words that he shall speak in my name, I myself will require it of him. Deuteronomy 18:18–19 (ESV)

The Bible says God put His words into the mouths of his prophets and the prophets spoke God's words to the people. Not only does the Bible claim to have God's own spoken words but it claims to have God's Words spoken through His prophets to His people.

And Samuel said to Saul, "You have done foolishly. You have not kept the command of the Lord your God, with which he commanded you. For then the Lord would have established your kingdom over Israel forever. But now your kingdom shall not continue. The Lord has sought out a man after his own heart, and the Lord has commanded him to be prince over his people, because you have not kept what the Lord commanded you." 1 Samuel 13:13–14 (ESV)

Samuel said Saul did not keep the command the Lord gave him. Who gave the command? The Lord didn't speak to Saul directly. The Lord spoke to Saul through Samuel. Samuel spoke with the authority of God because he was speaking God's Words, so when Saul broke Samuel's word, he was breaking God's word. That is only one of many times when a prophet claimed to be speaking with authority because he was speaking God's Words.

...I will put my words in his mouth,... Deuteronomy 18:18 (ESV)

God's spoken words and the words God spoke through his prophets are unique because the Bible claims they are flawless.

The words of the Lord are pure words, like silver refined in a furnace on the ground, purified seven times. Psalm 12:6 (ESV)

The word *pure* here means *freedom from imperfections*.

This God—his way is perfect; the word of the Lord proves true; he is a shield for all those who take refuge in him. Psalm 18:30 (ESV)

The word *true* here means *flawless*.

In fact, if you were to take the books of the Old Testament and look through them you would find that almost all of them claims this authority. They either claim to be recording God's Words or someone speaking God's words.

### **The New Testament claims to be God's Words.**

When you come to the New Testament, it just as clearly claims to contain both God's spoken Word and his Words spoken through his prophets.

All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work. 2 Timothy 3:16–17 (ESV)

This is one of the clearest and best-known verses in the Bible. It has a primary and a secondary reference. Its primary reference is to the Old Testament, its secondary reference is to the New Testament itself. Some of your translations say *All Scripture is inspired by God*. Many people think the word *inspired* means that after the Bible was written, God *breathed into* these books and made them his words. As the ESV helps us see, the Greek word here means *breathed out*, not *breathed in*. So this says all the words of the Bible are literally *breathed out* from God.

Amazingly, the early church recognized new Scripture was being given to them from God as the New Testament was being gathered.

as he does in all his letters when he speaks in them of these matters. There are some things in them that are hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other Scriptures. 2 Peter 3:16 (ESV)

When Peter writes 2 Peter he considers Paul's letters as Scripture. This is the same word used to describe the Old Testament Scriptures. Peter says Paul's writings have the same authority as the Old Testament Scriptures.

And we also thank God constantly for this, that when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men but as what it really is, the word of God, which is at work in you believers. 1 Thessalonians 2:13 (ESV)

Paul claims his letter contained the word of God, not the words of men. Paul realizes his letter had the authority of Old Testament Scripture. He was speaking for God.

since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God; for "All flesh is like grass and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls, but the word of the Lord remains forever." And this word is the good news that was preached to you. 1 Peter 1:23–25 (ESV)

Peter quotes from Isaiah in the Old Testament and tells those to whom he is writing they had God's Word preached to them. Peter was aware he was writing God's Words and they would endure forever.

Now if you go through the Bible and find how many times the Bible claims to be the Word of God, how many times do you think you would find that claim? 50? 100? 200?... Try over 1,500. It is almost as if God made sure he signed every page of the book. There is absolutely no question about what the Bible claims for itself. It claims to be the Word of God.

Why is this important? Logically we are left with only two options. Either the Bible is telling the truth, and if it is, we need to know it, study it, teach it, and

orientate our lives around it OR the Bible is the most fraudulent book ever written because it lies about its origins 1,500 times. Please, do not make the illogical claim that the Bible is a book of good moral teachings and principles that are the words of men. How can that be true if it has flat out lies about its origins 1,500 times. Logically there is no middle ground.

### **The Bible has supernatural unity in spite of amazing diversity.**

Not only does the logic of the Bible's claims for itself lead us to believe it, but the logic of it's background compared to it's message brings us to the same conclusion.

#### **Unity with history**

Let me begin by showing you a contrast. Joseph Smith, the founder of the Mormons, claimed to receive a special message from God that he wrote down. That message is, "The Book of Mormon." Most likely you have never read it so let me take a moment to tell you about it. It is a record of a lost civilization that existed in America. The book of Mormon contains the details of coinages, descriptions of mountains, cities, rivers and intricate details of a past civilization that Joseph Smith claims existed in America.

As I studied Mormonism, I learned they have a problem. Not one geographic site mentioned in the book of Mormon ties into archeological history. Not one shred of evidence substantiates ANY piece of the Book of Mormon. I posted on my web site under this sermon a copy of a letter from the *National Geographic Society Institute for Religious Research* where they clearly state...

Archaeologists and other scholars have long probed the hemisphere's past and the society does not know of anything found so far that has substantiated the Book of Mormon.<sup>1</sup>

The Book of Mormon has no archeological evidence behind it. When you talk with the Mormons you ask them how they can believe in the book and do you know what they say? “We take it by faith, just like you take the Bible by faith.”

Wait a minute. There is a world of difference between the Bible and the Book of Mormon. There are museums filled with historical evidence that document the Bible as historically accurate and reliable. That sets the Bible in a class by itself. Next week, we will spend a whole Sunday looking at this stuff. Suffice it to say this morning, archaeology hasn't proven the Bible wrong, it proves the Bible right.

### **Unity of Authorship**

While the Mormons claim the book of Mormon is just like the Bible, a closer look reveals startling differences. Unlike the Book of Mormon, which was written by one individual who claimed to be speaking for God, the Bible shows amazing unity in spite of diversity.

The Bible is not just one book but is actually a library of 66 different books, written by over 40 authors, in 3 different languages over a period of 1,500 years.

Find another book that took 1,500 years to write. During that time empires rose and fell, cultures came and went, yet none of that affected the unity of the message of the Bible. There was no general editor who trimmed and adjusted the Bible's message to make it fit together.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://irr.org/mit/national-geographic.html>



The 40 different authors came from different professions. Some were kings, others were fishermen, one worked for an ancient version of the IRS, others were shepherds and one was even a medical doctor.

It would be difficult to find a more diverse collection of writers. They run the gamut from Moses, who was highly educated; to Peter, who was a fisherman. Though they wrote in different periods of world history, their writings fit together like pieces of a jigsaw puzzle.

The books were penned under different circumstances and in different countries and cultures such as Asia, Africa, and Europe. Paul wrote from a dungeon in Rome, James wrote from Jerusalem, Moses from Sinai, Daniel from Babylon.

The Bible discusses diverse theological matters such as the nature of God and his purposes, the characteristic of good and evil angels, and the nature of man and God's plan to restore a relationship with Him. It would be difficult to get ten men to agree on one of these things, much less forty men over 1,500 years from vastly different cultures.

This unity is unparalleled by any other piece of written material in the world. It is as if God was building a cathedral using forty different architects from different corners of the world who did their work separately over 1,500 years, and when all the pieces were shipped to one location for assembly, they fit perfectly.

Admittedly, in some instances the writers of the Bible knew what previous authors wrote. They even quoted them. For instance, Malachi probably was acquainted with other books of the Old Testament. But Daniel would never have

know, what Ezekiel wrote. Paul didn't know what John was writing. James didn't know what Paul was writing, yet they wrote consistently and agreeably about Christ and the things of God. How does that happen?

### Unity of Theme

The Bible writers wrote on different topics but in all that diversity, there is one central theme. It is the theme of our separation from God because of sin and the only way that relationship can be restored is through Christ. The Bible is not 66 different stories but the story of God's redemption through Christ seen written through 66 different pieces. Jesus even tells us this.

You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me, John 5:39 (ESV)

For if you believed Moses, you would believe me; for he wrote of me. John 5:46 (ESV)

And he said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?" And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself. Luke 24:25–27 (ESV)

To quote the great mathematician Pascal,

Jesus Christ, is the one whom the two testaments regard, in the old he is the hope, in the new he is the model, and in both he is the center.

Logically, the Bible is unique. There is no other book that claims to be from God that has such a diverse background of authors, cultures, languages and times of history but such unity of message about God, the problem of sin, and the hope of Christ. We all know the two things you never talk about are politics and religion because nobody agrees. The only way such unity can be

found in such diversity is if God is behind it and these are the actual words of God to us, like they claim to be.

The Bible is a unique book. It has been on the best seller list for the last 300 years. The printing press was invented to produce more of the Bible. At one time, the British and Foreign Bible Society needed to publish one copy every 3 seconds to meet demands. That is 22 copies every minute, 1,369 copies every hour, 32,876 copies a day.

It is interesting to watch how many people have tried to extinguish this book but instead, the Bible eclipsed them. In 1778, Voltaire, the French Infidel, predicted that within 100 years of his life Christianity and the Bible would be swept out of existence. Less than 50 years after his death the Geneva Bible society purchased his house so they could use his printing press to keep up with the growing demand for the Bible in Europe.

### **Take Action**

Looking at the bold claims of the Bible putting it in an all or nothing position means that logically we need to give the Bible serious consideration. The unity of the Bible in spite of its diverse background means God had to be the author behind this book.

That leads us to the third logical implication of this morning. If the Bible is what it claims to be, we need it more in our lives so I have three ways I want us to apply this message today. Take your registration card out. I am going to ask you to make some commitments and you can do that by indicating that on your card today.

**1. Read the Bible** - I am challenging everyone to read at least three chapters of the Bible a week during this series. If you are new to reading the Bible, begin in the book of John or the book of Romans. Those are some of my favorite books in the Bible and they talk about Christ. I hope many of us will read and study more, but let's start by keeping the bar low for everyone. If you will make that commitment, check your card today.

**2. Memorize Scripture** - The Bible tells us to hide this word in our heart. It is VERY powerful. Beginning this Sunday, we are starting a new practice as a church for 2011, church wide memory of Scripture. We are focusing on learning one verse every two weeks that dovetails into our Sunday morning teaching. We will read the verse each Sunday morning, you will read it at the beginning of Faith U classes, and the beginning of your Small Group times. The youth groups are working on the same verses and so is all CE and AWANA.

Fathers, here is your challenge. Man up and lead your home spiritually. Get the verse out and have your family read it at dinner and breakfast. Help your kids commit Scripture to memory and begin by being a man and doing it yourself. If you are going to make that commitment to lead this way, husbands and fathers, check it off on the card.

You will notice the cards are double-sided. One side has a longer adult version and the other side a shorter youth version. Use the one that is age appropriate.

You will notice we are learning the ESV version. Many of us learned our verses in the NIV version. Why aren't we using the NIV? Quite simply, while the

NIV is good, the ESV is even more precise. When the ESV is different from the NIV, it is because the ESV changed the wording to make it more faithful to the original Greek or Hebrew. I know it feels a little weird to memorize in the ESV when you grew up on the NIV but the reasons I am doing this is because I love you and want you to have the clearest copy of God's Word in your hands and in your hearts.

**3. Read "My Professor Says the Bible is a Myth"** - If you are a student, when you go to college, you will be told archeology doesn't support the Bible. You will get out your trusty Bible handbooks to show your professor the Bible is true and he will say that research is no longer accepted as valid. Much of the archaeological research of past 100 years that supports the Bible is no longer accepted. Amazingly, there is a movement among non-Christian ancient scholars that are now realizing there needs to be a whole redefinition of historic dating methods. This is a seismic shift in ancient history. Amazingly, if those changes are made, Biblical history falls back in line as being right after all. This is very cutting edge and if you are in school, you need to know this. Everyone else should know this. The book, [My professors says the Bible is a myth](#) just came out a little over 2 months ago. It presents this research and is essential for defending your faith in the modern world. So I am challenging everyone to read this book. I will have 40 copies available to you hopefully by Monday afternoon.

Now comes the exciting part. Dr. Tom Tribelhorn, the author of the book, was the associate pastor of my church when I was a kid. I called him up and asked him if he would come and present this books material. He agreed. So he

is teaching at Cambridge in January, then coming to the bustling metropolis of Spirit Lake, Iowa for the last weekend of February to close out our series. After that he is presenting this material at the Central District Conference of the Evangelical Free Church to other Evangelical Free Church pastors. Very exciting stuff folks.

When we were discussing costs of him coming that weekend, he made an interesting proposition. He told me he really wants to get this book in as many hands as possible; in particular, he has a heart for college kids so they don't get slaughtered by liberal Bible professors and lose their faith like he almost did. He said, if we can sell 200 copies of the book he will cover all the costs for his coming. Folks, I don't know if we can sell 200 copies of his book, but I am up for trying. Time for some belated Christmas gifts.

As you can see, we have an action packed January and February. I am going to ask the worship team to come forward and close us with a song. As they come, if you decided to follow any of the *Take Action* steps this morning, will you please stand as a way of publicly signaling your intent.

## **Benediction**

As we close, I want to read a quote from Robert Chapman about the Bible.

This book contains the mind of God, the state of man, the way of salvation, the doom of sinners, and the happiness of believers. Its doctrines are holy, its precepts binding, its histories are true and its decisions are immutable. Read it to be wise, believe it to be safe, and practice it to be holy. It contains light to direct you, food to support you, and comfort to cheer you. It is the traveler's map, the pilgrim's staff, the pilot's compass, the soldier's sword, and the Christians' character. Here paradise is restored, heaven opened, and the gates of hell disclosed. Christ is its grand subject, our good its design, and the glory of God its end. It should fill the memory, test the heart, and guide the feet.

Read it slowly, frequently, prayerfully. It is a mine of wealth, a paradise of glory and a river of pleasure. It is given you in life, it will be opened at the judgment, and be remembered forever. It involves the highest responsibility, rewards the greatest labor and condemns all who will trifle with its sacred contents.

Lord, thank you for the Bible. In 2011, we recommit ourselves to this book. Amen.



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