

## Why the Bible?

Shaun Roberts

G.K. Chesterton:

- *"The riddles of God are more satisfying than the solutions of man."*

Today I want to talk about this magnificent Word. Let me start off by saying that I went through a journey over a number of years where I really dived deep into the historicity of the Bible. Ps Paul knows how many times I asked him about various books or advice on tracking and understanding how the Bible came to be, and what lends it so much credence. I must be entirely honest, I went through a phase myself where I was extremely anxious about the Bible's authenticity, and this was because I had been challenged by very persuasive atheists who presented strong arguments against the Word. Suffice to say, by the time I had reached the end of that particular journey, I was more thoroughly convinced in scripture than ever before. If you doubt God's scripture, don't worry, there is sufficient grace for you, and if you ask the Lord and allow him to lead you, He will guide you to a place where you can be assured of what you believe in.

Why is a firm belief in the veracity of scripture so important? Simply because we draw our entire faith from it. The Word articulates every aspect of our beliefs, and we look to it as our literal voice of God. Many people put forth the argument that the Bible was for a particular people and a particular time, and that things have changed - so called "progressive Christianity". The overriding idea is that the Bible is no longer relevant.

Consider these two quotes:

Atheist quote - Bertrand Russell:

- *"I regard the Bible as a work of man, not of God; the truth that it contains is the truth men were able to perceive at the time."*

Believer quote - Charles Spurgeon:

- *"Nobody ever outgrows Scripture; the book widens and deepens with our years."*

I'll be honest, I prefer Spurgeon's! The Bible is for all time. The Bible is unchanging, because once God speaks, **His words do not return to Him void, nor does He change like shifting shadows.** If the Biblical revelation is complete (as we believe) no one can subsequently add to or subtract from it:

### **Hebrews 1:1-3 NIV**

In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, **but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son**, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom also he made the universe. The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word.

Now I am going to cover seven reasons for why you can believe in the veracity of the Bible. I'll split these between reasons "within the Word" and reasons "outside the Word". It's important to make this distinction, because as Christians, we trust in the Word of God because we believe that it is the God-breathed Word. Inspired Word of God = God-breathed! Men were only the instruments used to physically write it. Thus, we can look from within the Word for reasons why we should trust it. There is a concept called **expository apologetics**. This is where you use the Bible itself to answer anything about it. The Bible is self-contained and complete, it explains itself. However, when dealing with sceptics or non-believers, it is often a point of contention for them, and they insist that we cannot refer to the Bible when defending the Bible. To their minds, they require reasons outside the Word to justify its truth.

To begin, here is a core passage that grounds and elaborates on our faith in scripture as presented in the Bible:

## **2 Peter 1:16-19 NET**

For we did not follow cleverly concocted fables when we made known to you the power and return of our Lord Jesus Christ; no, we were **eyewitnesses** of his grandeur. For he received honor and glory from God the Father, when that voice was conveyed to him by the Majestic Glory: "This is my dear Son, in whom I am delighted." When this voice was conveyed from heaven, **we ourselves heard it, for we were with him on the holy mountain**. Moreover, we possess the **prophetic word** as an **altogether reliable thing**. You do well if you pay attention to this as you would to a light shining in a murky place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts.

### **A. Extra-Biblical reasons**

#### **Reason #7 - Archaeological / Geological / Secular Evidence**

There are countless archaeological discoveries that confirm the Bible's veracity in some way. I mean it is no secret that archaeologists and researchers who ply their trade in the Middle East literally turn to the Bible as their starting point before they commence their excavations or studies.

##### **Archaeology**

- There are at least 25,000 archaeological digs related to the subject matter of the Bible. Many of these digs end up discovering ruins or artifacts that relate to some historical element of ancient Israel, or any other peoples, dynasties or events of that time.
- There is immense archaeological evidence substantiating much of the figures or events precisely as recorded in scripture.
- Here are just three examples:
  - **Jericho's Walls:** Archaeological evidence suggests that the ancient city of Jericho was indeed fortified and underwent destruction, aligning with the Biblical account of the walls falling (Joshua 6).
  - **The Tel Dan Stele (around 900 BC):** This fragment of a victory stele mentions the "House of David," which is significant as it refers to the dynasty of King David, corroborating the biblical description of a Davidic dynasty. This was discovered in 1993 in northern Israel. Up until this time, people would comment that David was a myth - now disproven!
  - **Pontius Pilate Inscription (around 26-36 AD):** An inscription discovered in Caesarea mentions Pontius Pilate, the Roman prefect of Judea, corroborating the New Testament account of Pilate's role in the trial and crucifixion of Jesus. This was discovered in 1961.

##### **Geology**

- There is a (secularly) recorded earthquake between 26 AD and 33 AD in Israel. Big deal right? YES! Very big deal when you read the gospel accounts, in particular that of Matthew, and read the following:

### **Matthew 27:51 NKJV**

Then, behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; **and the earth quaked**, and the rocks were split, and the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised; and coming out of the graves after His resurrection, they went into the holy city and appeared to many. So when the centurion and those with him, who were guarding Jesus, **saw the earthquake** and the things that had happened, they feared greatly, saying, “Truly this was the Son of God!”

Interestingly enough, there are records too of this earthquake causing damage to the temple as well. How about that, perhaps at the same time the temple veil was torn in two?

## **Secular sources**

- Within 150 years of Jesus' death, we have 10 different Non-Christian sources that mention Jesus, plus 33 Christian sources (Church fathers etc) that confirm his life and death.
- The non-Christian sources accurately report the existence of Jesus:

Two examples:

Josephus (c. 37-100 AD):

- **Antiquities of the Jews:** Flavius Josephus was a Jewish historian. He mentions Jesus in two passages in his Antiquities of the Jews. The most significant mention is in the Testimonium Flavianum, wherein he refers to Jesus as a wise man and a doer of wonderful works who had followers, was condemned to the cross by Pontius Pilate, and was believed to have risen on the third day.

Tacitus (c. 56-120 AD):

- **Annals:** Roman historian Tacitus refers to Jesus while discussing the persecution of Christians by Nero following the great fire of Rome in 64 AD. He writes that a Christus, the founder of the name Christian, was put to death by Pontius Pilate, procurator of Judea during the reign of Emperor Tiberius.

**Believer Quote - Isaac Newton:**

*“There are more sure marks of authenticity in the Bible than in any profane history.”*

## **B. Intra-Biblical reasons**

### **Reason #6 - Manuscript evidence**

The manuscript evidence for the Bible is staggering, particularly when compared to other ancient texts, or indeed any other text in existence for that matter! Let's consider some aspects of this often misunderstood concept.

#### **Quantity of Manuscripts**

1. New Testament: There are over 5,800 known Greek manuscripts of the New Testament, in addition to thousands more in Latin, Coptic, Syriac, Armenian, and other languages. This brings the total number of New Testament manuscripts to over 25,000.

2. Old Testament: The Hebrew Bible has fewer surviving manuscripts, primarily because Jewish scribes often buried old worn-out manuscripts according to religious customs. There are a few thousand complete manuscripts of the Masoretic Text. This is the authoritative Hebrew text of the Jewish Bible, produced during the medieval period. Besides these, the Dead Sea Scrolls are the oldest substantial set of Hebrew Old Testament manuscripts.

## Proximity to the Original Writings

1. New Testament: The Gospel of Mark is widely agreed to have been written around 60-73 AD. This is profound, because this is within a matter of a couple of decades of Jesus' death!

Some of the earliest New Testament manuscripts date back to the 2nd century AD. Examples of these are fragments like the Papyrus P52, which contains parts of the Gospel of John and is dated around 125 AD. This is again relatively close to the original writing, assumed to be around 90-110 AD. Complete books and major portions come from around 200 AD onward, with full New Testament codices like Codex Sinaiticus and Codex Vaticanus dating to the 4th century AD.

2. Old Testament: The Dead Sea Scrolls are the oldest substantial set of Hebrew Old Testament manuscripts, dating from around 250 BC to 100 AD. The Dead Sea Scrolls include texts that are about a thousand years older than the previously known Hebrew manuscripts and have been invaluable in showing the Old Testament's textual stability over time. Before their discovery, the earliest complete books of the Hebrew Bible were from around 1000 AD.

## Correlation with Modern Texts

The vast number of manuscripts allows for a robust comparison and verification process, leading to a high degree of confidence in the accuracy of current editions of the Bible. It's worth noting that variations do exist among the manuscripts. However, most of these are minor and **none** of these affect the fundamental doctrines or theology of the texts. For instance, the comparison of the Isaiah Scroll from the Dead Sea Scrolls with the Masoretic Text shows remarkable consistency, with only minor variations. What you will invariably find is that atheists and critics like to zero in on these variants and call into question the veracity of scripture. What is important to consider however is two things - 1) a variant is likely introduced by copyist error, thus **the original text as written by the original author does not contain this “error”**, 2) these variants relate to things like numbers, names, and certain inclusions or omissions. (I have detailed some of these categories in the notes for your reference.)

Most of these discrepancies can be categorized into a few general types:

1. **Orthographic Differences:** These are simple spelling variations. For example, the same word may be spelled differently in different manuscripts without changing the meaning of the text.
2. **Grammatical Adjustments:** Copyists sometimes made grammatical corrections or alterations according to the linguistic standards of their time, or to conform to parallel passages elsewhere in the Bible. These changes often involve verb tenses, noun cases, or word order.
3. **Scribal Omissions or Additions:** These occur when a scribe might accidentally omit a word or line (often due to a feature called "homoeoteleuton," where two lines end similarly, and the scribe's eye skips from the first to the second). At other times, a scribe might inadvertently repeat a line or word ("dittography"). Additions might involve explanatory words or phrases that a scribe thought would clarify a passage or harmonize it with similar texts elsewhere.
4. **Harmonization:** Often, when parallel accounts exist (such as in the Gospels), a scribe might alter the text of one Gospel to make it more consistent with another. This was typically done in good faith, as an attempt to resolve perceived discrepancies.
5. **Theological or Doctrinal Emendations:** Though less common, there are instances where it seems copyists may have made changes to support established theological views or to

avoid interpretations deemed heretical. These are relatively rare and usually well-documented due to the scrutiny they attract.

6. **Lectio difficilior potior (the more difficult reading is stronger):** Sometimes, scribes might choose a simpler variant of a text, perhaps assuming a more complex phrase was an error. Conversely, when textual critics observe a more challenging version of a text, they often consider it more likely to be original, assuming that scribes would be more prone to simplify than complicate the text.

## Handling of Copyist Errors

Scribes employed various techniques to minimize errors:

- Repetition and Vocalization: Especially in the Jewish tradition, methods such as reading aloud what was written and writing with extreme care were practiced.
- Colophons: Scribes sometimes added colophons at the end of a manuscript indicating the completion and reviewing process.
- Cross-checking: Multiple copies and widespread distribution of the texts allowed cross-referencing to correct errors. Communities and religious leaders who found discrepancies could consult other copies.
- Masoretic Annotations: From the 6th century AD onward, Jewish scribes known as Masoretes added vowel points and annotations to the text to preserve pronunciation and reduce ambiguity in reading the consonantal Hebrew text.

In summary, the Biblical manuscript tradition is characterized by a high volume of manuscripts, relatively early dating, and rigorous copying practices, which together contribute to a text of considerable historical reliability. The traditions and practices surrounding the copying and preservation of these texts have been both meticulous and reverent, aimed at maintaining accuracy across generations.

## Reason #5 - Authorship and Style

### Atheist quote - Sam Harris:

- "The Bible is not a book that is divinely inspired, but a collection of myths, fables, and some good advice, mixed with a lot of bad advice."

A lot of critics like to suggest that the Bible is this mishmash of totally unrelated stories or myths pulled together arbitrarily or perhaps strategically by some devious individuals over the ages. Have any of you read the entire Bible? Like all the way from Genesis to Revelation? Can you do that and in your honest opinion say that the books of the Bible are unrelated? That the OT and NT are two religious texts thrown together to "form a new religion"?

The way in which the books and verses in the Bible tie together seamlessly astonishes me. There is this series by a fantastic late Bible teacher, **Chuck Missler**, it's called "**Bible in 24 Hours**". Absolutely amazing series - he runs through the entire Bible in 24 hours, which is impressive enough, but what makes it so powerful is how he ties together the patterns that start in the prophecies and stories of the Old Testament and play out again and again including especially within the NT. Similarly, for those of you who know the **Bible Project**, **Tim Mackie and Jon Collins**, those guys are incredible at tracing themes through the entirety of scripture. I highly recommend checking them out if you want to see how the Biblical themes that begin in Genesis continue throughout scripture to Revelation.

Here is the point - we must consider that the Bible is actually just **one story** - this is a remarkable statement, because it's a single story spread across **66 different books**. Those 66 books are written by over **40 different authors**. Yes, 40 different people! These authors wrote in **3 different**

**languages** (Hebrew, Greek and Aramaic). The recorded happenings took place in **3 different continents** (Europe, Africa and Asia) (and really the entire planet if you count Genesis!).

Bear in mind too that the Bible was written over a period of **at least 1500 years**. The authors were from **completely different walks of life**. You have a physician in Luke, a tax collector in Matthew, a persecutor of the very faith, Paul, writing a major portion of the New Testament. Think about that - if you wanted to fabricate a religion, it's perhaps best not to get your most vehement enemy to write a portion of your scripture! Then there is David - literally, a king, who wrote most of the Psalms. Daniel, a prisoner captive in Babylon, yet contributed significant prophetic texts to the Word.

There is no other book like the Bible. Not even close. Only God himself could have brought this kind of harmony into a story that has been told through so many different lenses and diverse contexts.

#### **Reason #4 - Eyewitness accounts**

It goes without saying that the Bible was not just written arbitrarily by individuals who in no way were associated with the events therein.

Think about it, the gospels, written by Matthew, Mark, Luke, John.

- Matthew was very clearly a first-hand witness to all the events during Jesus' ministry, as he was one of the disciples. Matthew was the tax-collector Jesus had called to follow him.
- Mark's gospel is essentially Peter's gospel, as he was writing all of this from the perspective of Simon Peter, another of the disciples. Mark, having been Peter's understudy.
- John too was one of the disciples, one of the closest ones in fact.
- Luke had this to say on the matter - very powerful, as the whole aim of his gospel is to provide a true, orderly account:

#### **Luke 1:1-4 NET**

Now many have undertaken to compile an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us, **like the accounts passed on to us by those who were eyewitnesses and servants of the word from the beginning**. So it seemed good to me as well, because I have followed all things carefully from the beginning, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may know for certain the things you were taught.

There are tons more examples like these - we have Moses who wrote most of the Pentateuch. Moses was actively involved in these situations that he wrote about. He was the one leading the Israelites out of Egypt, he received direct revelation from God.

Another example is David - David wrote many of the Psalms, this is even more relevant given that so many of the Psalms are prophetic and foretell the coming of Christ. We will touch more on prophecy in a second, but again this is an example of someone who was a Biblical author and yet also a very real individual therein.

All of these instances of actual eyewitnesses recording the historical events of the Bible lends immense credence to its content. It is not someone who is writing a story thousands of years after the events, but rather someone who was living through them themselves.

Not only this, but take note that many of the books of the Bible were also written **DURING** the lifetime of other eyewitnesses. This is important because it means that the Bible is **falsifiable**. It means that anyone living at the time could've taken one look at the words and said "Nope, that didn't happen".

1 Corinthians 15:6:

Then he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers and sisters at one time, **most of whom are still alive**, though some have fallen asleep.

Another interesting concept to consider is that many of these same authors, in the New Testament at least, faced **martyrdom** for their beliefs. They so fervently believed what they knew and had learnt from Jesus, that they were willing to undergo horrific deaths as a consequence. Why would someone do such a thing, unless they were utterly convinced that Jesus was the son of God? It's a difficult one for atheists to answer.

One last point here - there are many things in scripture that just don't add up if one assumes that the whole thing is a fabrication. Look at Peter's denial of Jesus as a case in point - why would they include this? Or the women being the ones to find Jesus' tomb empty, and believing that He had risen, rather than the men who were all doubtful until they saw Jesus themselves? Women in this time were not considered highly as credible witnesses, so why record it in this manner? Why make the disciples look like fools?

### **Reason #3 - Prophecy**

This one is a massive one. The Bible is full of prophecies. Many of these relate to the coming Messiah, but let me give a mere glimpse into some of the others:

#### **The Fall of Babylon (Isaiah 13:19-22; Jeremiah 51:37-43):**

Isaiah and Jeremiah both prophesied that Babylon would fall and become desolate. Isaiah specifically mentioned that it would never be inhabited again. Babylon's gradual decline began after it was conquered by the Persians in 539 BC, and over the centuries, it fell into ruin, as predicted, and has never regained its former glory.

#### **The kingdoms prophesied in Daniel 7-11:**

The prophecies recorded in the book of Daniel are absolutely incredible in their historical accuracy. Daniel sees a ram with two horns (representing the Medes and Persians) that is defeated by a goat with a prominent horn between its eyes (representing Greece, specifically Alexander the Great). The goat charges from the west across the face of the whole earth without touching the ground, symbolizing the swiftness of Alexander's conquests. The large horn is broken at the height of its power (Alexander's untimely death), and four notable ones toward the four winds of heaven replace it. This symbolizes the division of his empire among his four generals. These four kingdoms eventually become just two, the "kingdom of the North" (interpreted as the Seleucid Empire) and the "kingdom of the South" (interpreted as the Ptolemaic Empire). These two kingdoms were eventually defeated by Rome, who rose to power until the time of Christ and beyond. This is a historical fact.

This is a mere smidgeon of the prophetic in the Word, but for the sake of time I will move on.

### **Reason #2 - Biblical claim of divine origin**

One last point here - remember what I mentioned earlier about expository apologetics - we can look to the Bible itself for validation. One of the most interesting things in the Bible is that it literally claims to be of divine origin. It's not something a human brought about by their own claims, it is claimed within the very words of scripture. Check this out:

#### **2 Peter 1:20-21 NET**

Above all, you do well if you recognize this: **No prophecy of scripture ever comes about by the prophet's own imagination**, for no prophecy was ever borne of human impulse; rather, men carried along by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.

So the Word of God within its own pages claims to be divinely written by God. As a Christian, that is certainly more than enough for me.

But wait, there is one last reason, and I have saved the best one for last.

### C. The One and Only Reason

#### Reason #1 - Life, Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ

Look, here's the literal crux of this whole message. All of these reasons are mere embellishments when you consider this - the Bible records for us an event so significant that, if true, every single person on this planet should sit up straight and pay attention. That event is the life and death **and life** of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour.

The Bible provides us with a record of the life of Jesus. How he was born in Bethlehem, the city of David (as prophesied in **Micah 5:2**), how he was born of a virgin (as prophesied in **Isaiah 7:14**), how his parents had to take him to Egypt because of Herod and God subsequently called him back to Israel (as prophesied in **Hosea 11:1**). The Bible records how he rode into Jerusalem as a king on donkey (**Zechariah 9:9**), how he was betrayed for thirty pieces of silver (**Zechariah 11:12-13**), how he would be pierced, and we would mourn when he is pierced, as one mourns for their first born son (**Zechariah 12:10**).

Or how about this one - who do you think this is about?

#### **Psalm 22:1, 6-8, 14-18 ESV**

**My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?** Why are you so far from saving me, from the words of my groaning? But I am a worm and not a man, **scorned by mankind and despised by the people**. All who see me mock me; they make mouths at me; they wag their heads; “He trusts in the Lord; let him deliver him; let him rescue him, for he delights in him!” **I am poured out like water**, and all my bones are out of joint; my heart is like wax; it is melted within my breast; my strength is dried up like a potsherd, and **my tongue sticks to my jaws**; you lay me in the dust of death. For dogs encompass me; a company of evildoers encircles me; they have **pierced my hands and feet** — I can count all my bones — **they stare and gloat over me**; **they divide my garments among them**, and **for my clothing they cast lots**.

No man has ever died and come back to life again, much less a man predicting that he'd die and come back to life again. This is exactly what Jesus did. It is evident in how his disciples reacted after his death, it is evident in how the church was created, it is evident in the way the whole of history revolves around Him.

The Bible is magnificent, but bear this in mind - Jesus is the very Word of God. We see this in the verse:

#### **John 1:1-3, 14 NET**

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was fully God. The Word was with God in the beginning. All things were created by him, and apart from him not one thing was created that has been created. ....

**14 Now the Word became flesh and took up residence among us.**

This is why the entire Bible is essentially all about Him. From start to finish, the entire Word is summed up in Him. He is our salvation and our Redeemer. He is the one who validates all of scripture. He is the one on whom we build our faith. There is no other rock as sure as the

cornerstone that the builders rejected. Let us remember that it is all about Him when we share why we believe the Bible, because people need Him and Him alone as their salvation.

Amen

Fourfold witness John 5 - Moses  
Exercise in futility, commenting, changing subjects  
Subjective truth, rebellion, postmodernism  
Conspiracies

**Charles Spurgeon:**

"This volume is the writing of the living God: each letter was penned with an Almighty finger; each word in it dropped from the everlasting lips, each sentence was dictated by the Holy Spirit. Albeit, that Moses was employed to write his histories with his fiery pen, God guided that pen. It may be that David touched his harp and let sweet Psalms of melody drop from his fingers, but God moved his hands over the living strings of his golden harp. It may be that Solomon sang Canticles of love, or gave forth words of consummate wisdom, but God directed his lips, and made the Preacher eloquent. If I follow the thundering Nahum when his horses plough the waters, or Habbakuk when he sees the tents of Cushan in affliction; if I read Malachi, when the earth is burning like an oven; if I turn to the smooth page of John, who tells of love, or the rugged, fiery chapters of Peter, who speaks of the fire devouring God's enemies; if I turn to Jude, who launches forth anathemas upon the foes of God, everywhere I find God speaking: it is God's voice, not man's; the words are God's words, the words of the Eternal, the Invisible, the Almighty, the Jehovah of this earth. This Bible is God's Bible; and when I see it, I seem to hear a voice springing up from it, saying, "I am the book of God: man, read me. I am God's writing: open my leaf, for I was penned by God; read it, for he is my author, and you will see him visible and manifest everywhere."

**Notes and interesting sites and resources:**

Armstrong Institute of Biblical Archaeology:

<https://armstronginstitute.org/980-top-10-biblical-archaeology-discoveries-of-2023>

Walls of Jericho:

<https://biblearchaeology.org/research/conquest-of-canaan/3625-the-walls-of-jericho>

<https://christiananswers.net/q-abr/jericho.html>

Tel Dan Stele:

<https://www.biblicalarchaeology.org/daily/biblical-artifacts/the-tel-dan-inscription-the-first-historical-evidence-of-the-king-david-bible-story/>

Pontius Pilate Inscription:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pilate\\_stone](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pilate_stone)

Earthquake in Israel (26 - 36 AD):

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/229810999\\_An\\_early\\_first-century\\_earthquake\\_in\\_the\\_Dead\\_Sea](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/229810999_An_early_first-century_earthquake_in_the_Dead_Sea)

<https://deadsequake.info/EarthquakeCatalogOfTheDeadSea/JerusalemQuake.html#:~:text=This%20earthquake%20is%20referred%20to,Matthew%20in%20the%20New%20Testament.>

Antiquities of the Jews - Flavius Josephus:

<https://www.gutenberg.org/files/2848/2848-h/2848-h.htm>

Chuck Missler Bible in 24 Hours:

[https://youtube.com/playlist?  
list=PLRj8AJuzeJRwHdeFua3pzmwPB\\_JCS0mlq&si=liL\\_p7sd9Hjmeejn](https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLRj8AJuzeJRwHdeFua3pzmwPB_JCS0mlq&si=liL_p7sd9Hjmeejn)

Bible Project:

<https://youtube.com/@bibleproject?si=s1UT1fEnuMfW40xY>

Manuscript digital library:

<https://manuscripts.csntm.org/>

Dead sea scrolls online:

<http://dss.collections.imj.org.il/>

Textual variants:

<https://www.logos.com/grow/differences-biblical-manuscripts/>

<https://www.logos.com/grow/two-bible-translations-disagree-one-right/>

## Assignments

1. **Essay Assignment:** Write an essay on the historical reliability of the Bible, using both internal and external evidence. Include at least three archaeological findings that support the Bible's accounts.
2. **Research Project:** Conduct a comparative study between the manuscript evidence for the New Testament and another ancient text of your choice. Discuss the number of manuscripts, their dating, and their geographical distribution.
3. **Creative Assignment:** Create a multimedia presentation that illustrates the fulfilment of at least five prophecies mentioned in the Bible. Include both Old and New Testament references and explain their significance.

## Reflection Questions

1. What does G.K. Chesterton's quote about the riddles of God suggest about the nature of faith and understanding?
2. How does personal doubt about the Bible's authenticity impact one's faith journey, and what steps can be taken to address these doubts?
3. Why is it significant that the Bible is seen as unchanging according to the speaker?
4. How can the Bible explain itself, and what are the implications of this for apologetics?
5. In what ways does Charles Spurgeon's view of the Bible differ from Bertrand Russell's?
6. What role does archaeological evidence play in supporting the Bible's historical accuracy?
7. How does the manuscript tradition of the Bible compare to other ancient texts, and why is this important?
8. What is the significance of having eyewitness accounts in the Bible, and how does this add to its credibility?

9. Why would the Bible include details that seem to undermine its own narrative, such as Peter's denial of Jesus or the women discovering the empty tomb?
10. How does the prophecy in the Bible serve as evidence for its divine inspiration, and what are some examples that stand out to you?

