

Chapter 10. The Bible as History

“The Bible stands like a rock undaunted, through the raging storms of time. Its pages burn with the truth eternal, and they glow with the light sublime.” Haldor Lillenas, 1917.

Session overview

- Five key aspects of the Bible are explored, best, inspired, believable, logical, and eternal
- Review several unique attributes of the Bible within a historical context
- Bible is not hearsay or heresy, rather it is clear and reliable history

The Bible is simply the *Best* Book

1. The Bible was written over a 1,500 year span and by over 40 authors. These authors include Moses, a political leader, trained in the University of Egypt, Peter, a fisherman, Amos, a herdsman, Joshua, a military general, Nehemiah, a cupbearer, Daniel, a prime minister, Luke, a doctor, Solomon, a king, Matthew, a tax collector, Paul, a rabbi, and so on.
2. The Bible was written in different places: Moses in the wilderness, Jeremiah in a dungeon, Daniel on a hillside and in a palace, Paul inside prison, Luke while traveling, John on the isle of Patmos, and so on.

3. The Bible was written at different times: David in times of war, Solomon in times of peace. It was written in different moods: Some were at the height of joy; some were in the depths of despair.
4. The Bible was written on three different continents, Asia, Africa, and Europe
5. The Bible was written in three different languages, Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek
6. The Bible covers literally hundreds of controversial subjects. These subjects are addressed in harmony and continuity from Genesis to Revelation.
7. The Bible has one singular theme: God's redemption of man

8. The Bible is deeply coherent. According to F.F. Bruce, “Any part of the human body can only be properly explained in reference to the whole body. And any part of the Bible can only be properly explained in reference to the whole Bible.”
9. The Bible corresponds with empirical observations today. Karl Barth notes, “Take your Bible and take your newspaper, and read both. But interpret newspapers from your Bible.”¹

¹See *Time Magazine*, May 1, 1966. Quoted by Pastor Geoff T. Sinibaldo at <https://sinibaldo.wordpress.com/2015/03/05/on-barth-the-bible-and-the-newspaper/>.

10. The Bible is the number one best seller of all time.

According to Guinness World Records, “Although it is impossible to obtain exact figures, there is little doubt that the Bible is the world's best-selling and most widely distributed book. A survey by the Bible Society concluded that around 2.5 billion copies were printed between 1815 and 1975, but more recent estimates put the number at more than 5 billion.”² No other book comes anywhere close.

²See <https://www.guinnessworldrecords.com/world-records/best-selling-book-of-non-fiction>.

CHALLENGE: Take ten authors, all from one walk of life, one generation, one mood, one continent, one language and just one controversial topic, would all these authors agree? What would you have if you did this? You would not get the deep coherence found within the Bible.

Personally, the deep wisdom and insights given in the Bible related to personal finance are astounding. The Biblical perspective of wealth management has been personally helpful and has benefited many that have taken Bible-based personal finance classes.³

³For the detailed curriculum, see <http://www.robertebrooks.org/project/personal-finance/>.

The Bible is *Infallible*, *Inerrant*, and *Inspired*

- The Bible asserts to be inspired by God
- Infallible indicates that it is absolutely trustworthy
- Inerrancy indicates that it is absolutely without error

Premise> God cannot err and is trustworthy

Observation> Bible is God's Word

Conclusion> Bible cannot err and is trustworthy

- The Bible itself asserts to be inspired or God-breathed

2 Timothy 3:16

All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness,

- The Apostle Paul states he spoke in words taught by the Spirit.

1 Corinthians 2:13

And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual.

- Frequently, Biblical authors quoted scripture with authority. For example, 80 different times the Bible uses the phrase, “It is written.” A few selected verses are given below. For example, when wise men came to Jerusalem from the east, they asked King Herod where the King of the Jews would be born. The religious leaders knew immediately and their answer is recorded in Matthew 2:5-6.

Matthew 2:5-6

⁵They told him, “In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it is written by the prophet: ⁶“And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel.””

- The religious leaders in Jerusalem that quoted Micah 5:2 understood it to refer to the coming Messiah. Note that Micah was likely written during the last third of the eighth century B.C.

Micah 5:2

But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose coming forth is from of old, from ancient days.

- Jesus could not control where he would be born. Jesus quoted the Old Testament as authoritative and historically reliable.

Matthew 4:4

But he answered, “It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.’”

Luke 24:46

⁴⁶and said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead,

- Paul also quotes from the Old Testament numerous times as if it were authentic and reliable.

Romans 1:17

¹⁷For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, “The righteous shall live by faith.”

- Jesus said the Old Testament spoke of him

Luke 24:27

And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.

Luke 24:44

Then he said to them, “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.”

John 5:39

You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me,

Hebrews 10:7

Then I said, ‘Behold, I have come to do your will, O God, as it is written of me in the scroll of the book.’”

- Jesus said that not even the smallest part of a Hebrew letter could be broken

Matthew 5:18

For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished.

- The New Testament refers to the written record as the "oracles of God."

Romans 3:2

Much in every way. To begin with, the Jews were entrusted with the oracles of God.

Hebrews 5:12

For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the basic principles of the oracles of God. You need milk, not solid food,

- Writers are warned not to alter words

Jeremiah 26:2

“Thus says the LORD: Stand in the court of the LORD's house, and speak to all the cities of Judah that come to worship in the house of the LORD all the words that I command you to speak to them; do not hold back a word.

Revelation 22:18-19

¹⁸I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book, ¹⁹and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book.

The Bible is *Believable*

- The Bible, compared with other ancient writings, has more manuscript evidence than any ten pieces of classical literature combined
- The Bible has withstood vicious attacks of its enemies as no other book. Many have tried to burn it, ban it, discredit it, outlaw it, disprove it, yet the Bible stands.
- Voltaire, who died in 1778, said that in one hundred years from his time Christianity would be swept from existence and passed into history. What actually happened? Voltaire was swept into history, while the circulation of the Bible continues to grow. Interestingly, only 50 years after Voltaire's death, Voltaire's printing press and his house were used by the Geneva Bible Society to produce Bibles!

- The Bible has withstood scholastic attacks like no other document. The “assured results of higher criticism” continue to fall by the wayside and the Bible stands. For example, the critics use to claim that Moses could not have written the Pentateuch (the first five books of the Bible) because, obviously and clearly, writing was not in existence at the time of Moses. The discovery of the “black stele,” which contained the detailed laws of Hammurabi, demonstrated conclusively that writing existed before Moses. Dating methods indicate that the “black stele” was written three centuries before Moses' time. The critics also claimed there were never any Hittites. The results of archaeology have produced hundreds of references overlapping 1,200 years of Hittite civilization.

- The Bible is the very foundation of the Christian worldview
- As C. S. Lewis notes, “If you see through everything, then everything is transparent. But a wholly transparent world is an invisible world. To ‘see through’ all things is the same as not to see.”⁴
- The clarity through which the Bible can explain current events and challenges is outstanding

⁴C. S. Lewis, *The Abolition of Man*, p. 81.

The Bible is very *Logical*

Ecclesiastes 7:25

I turned my heart to know and to search out and to seek wisdom and the scheme of things, and to know the wickedness of folly and the foolishness that is madness.

Isaiah 1:18

“Come now, let us reason together, says the LORD: though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool.

Acts 1:3

He presented himself alive to them after his suffering by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God.

- The Greek word for “proofs” in Acts 1:3 is tekmerion meaning signs, indubitable tokens, or clear proofs
- There is no other event in ancient history so well documented as the resurrection of Jesus Christ
- Within personal finance, the Bible is deeply logical. For example, numerous cautions are given related to debt and diversifying is encouraged.

Deuteronomy 28:43-45

⁴³The sojourner who is among you shall rise higher and higher above you, and you shall come down lower and lower. ⁴⁴He shall lend to you, and you shall not lend to him. He shall be the head, and you shall be the tail. ⁴⁵“All these curses shall come upon you and pursue you and overtake you till you are destroyed, because you did not obey the voice of the Lord your God, to keep his commandments and his statutes that he commanded you.

Proverbs 22:7

The rich rules over the poor, and the borrower is the slave of the lender.

Ecclesiastes 11:1-5

¹Cast your bread upon the waters, for you will find it after many days. ²Give a portion to seven, or even to eight, for you know not what disaster may happen on earth. ³If the clouds are full of rain, they empty themselves on the earth, and if a tree falls to the south or to the north, in the place where the tree falls, there it will lie. ⁴He who observes the wind will not sow, and he who regards the clouds will not reap. ⁵As you do not know the way the spirit comes to the bones in the womb of a woman with child, so you do not know the work of God who makes everything.

The Bible is *Eternal*

2 Peter 3:10

But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed.

Psalms 119:89

Forever, O LORD, your word is firmly fixed in the heavens.

Matthew 24:35, Mark 13:31, and Luke 21:33

Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

Bible as history and personal finance

- The key financial insight here is that the true worldview actually implemented lead to human flourishing
- We cannot live on hearsay or heresy, but a true and living history is a completely different matter
- After 40 years of wandering and being attended to by God, the Israelites knew the importance of God's word

Deuteronomy 8:3

And he humbled you and let you hunger and fed you with manna, which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that he might make you know that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.

- Jesus picks up on this during His first temptation in the wilderness

Matthew 4:1-4

¹Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. ²And after fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. ³And the tempter came and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread.” ⁴But he answered, “It is written, “‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.’” (See also Luke 4:1-4.)

- After feeding the 5,000 and walking on water, Jesus declares clearly that God's living word is nourishment enough for life's challenges including financial struggles

John 6:35

Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.

- Real human flourishing comes from working within reality wherein we are placed

- If a fish sought to survive on land it would die even though an abundance of food is all around
- Rejecting the God-infused reality of life around us will eventually cause significant damage

Illustration of fish working within its environment



- As followers of Jesus, we were meant to do more than just survive in the living water and with the bread of life
- We were meant to soar: As eagles catch the thermal drafts to soar so we too should entrust our lives to the living God by believing in Jesus and feasting on His precious Word.

Illustration of soaring within its environment



The Bible Stands

Haldor Lillenas, 1917

The Bible stands like a rock undaunted,
through the raging storms of time.
Its pages burn with the truth eternal,
and they glow with the light sublime.

The Bible stands every test we give it,
for it's author is divine.
By faith alone I accept to live it,
and to know it and make it mine.

The Bible stands though the rocks may tumble,
it will firmly stand though the earth may crumble.
I will plant my feet on its firm foundation,
for the Bible stands.

Summary

- We briefly explored several unique attributes of the Bible within a historical context
- Based on the evidence, we showed significant evidence that the Bible is not hearsay or heresy
- The Bible is clear and reliable history
- What remains is whether you plant your feet on the Bible's firm foundation or not
- The choice is yours

Questions?

Case Study #1:

Jan, your work colleague, laments to you about all the hypocrites that attend churches. “Don’t they know that the Bible is simply at best hearsay and at worst heresy!” How would you respond?

Case Study #2:

“The Bible is simply a fiction written around 350AD to support a growing cultural movement seeking political power.” Appraise.

Case Study #3:

Mike, a seeking friend of yours, is struggling with the concept of “faith.” He says, “As a I need evidence to believe that Jesus was God’s son sacrificed for sin as I have no interest in entrusting my life to a blind leap of faith.” How would you respond?

Your feedback will help improve this material.

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