

S.W.A.T. SERMON SERIES

“So What About The Bible”

(Why I Believe The Bible)

INTRODUCTION: It is a sad but nevertheless true statement, that all too many CHRISTian believers the world over are not adequately equipped and qualified to both share and defend their faith to non-believers!

For many CHRISTians today, we talk a good talk, but fail to walk the good walk. All too often we are able to provide the words to popular songs of praise, but are not able to produce Scriptures to support our position as CHRISTians.

On far too many occasions when we are asked about why we believe what we believe, many believers we are left dumbfounded as to what to say.

There are far too many accounts of CHRISTians who- in a matter of minutes fall prey to non-CHRISTian (*non-CHRISTians that possess a wrong faith in the wrong thing*)- simply because the non-Christian is more familiar with their well orchestrated lie, than we are with the truth that is ours through **CHRIST**.

Today, as we kick off this first sermon in the S.W.A.T. series, it is my hope to address from a Biblical perspective the subject of: “*Why I believe the Bible*”. Moreover, it is my prayer and hope that at the conclusion of this sermon series each of us will be better equipped to declare and defend our faith with proof positive that the Bible is without question what it claims to be ... namely, The holy Word of **GOD!**

As we begin this sermon this morning, I want to point out several things, but three things in particular by way of introduction.

-Consider the following important reasons to know ‘Why we believe the Bible:

1. *Our faith is based on the validity of this book.*
2. *Our families at their best- are governed by the precepts in this book.*
3. *Our eternal future is found in this book.*

~ Note the dynamic differences that can come about when we are confident in knowing the history of how the Bible was formed and preserved by **GOD!**

1. *We can defend our faith with a new-found confidence to those who ask.*
2. *We can declare our faith with a better boldness in the world.*
3. *We can direct the new CHRISTian in the proper way.*

1. **THE AUTHENTICITY & ACCURACY OF THE BIBLE**

According to the book: *Introduction in Research in English Literary History*, C. Sanders (*a professor of military history, not a theologian*); gives 3 tests of reliability that are employed in historiography (historiography= the art or employment of a historian); and literary criticism. The area of testing are: *Bibliographically, Externally, and Internally*.

We can test the authenticity of the Bible in these 3 ways:

- i. we can test it *Bibliographically*: the history of books. Specifically, **the written/textual evidence** from the original document to the copies of that same document today.
- ii. we can test it based on *External evidence*: Specifically how the Bible **lines up/matches facts, dates, persons and events of it's own time.**
- iii. we can test it based on *Internal evidence*: Specifically what **the Bible has to say about itself!**

FIRST THE OLD TESTAMENT:

Questions?

- Who copied, the earliest copies of the Bible?
- What kind of care was taken to ensure the copies of Scripture are reliable as close to the original as possible?

Let's Look At The Four Ways the Bible (and the Old Testament in particular); has been written and recorded in historically:

a. The **Scribe**: a professional position, handled by a professionally trained and proficient, normally devout Jewish man. The Scribes believed they were writing the very Word of GOD and thus took great pains to be absolutely accurate at every turn.

b. The **Talmudists** (A.D. 100-500)

The word 'Talmud' or 'lamad' literally means: "To teach". And speaks according to Webster's 1828 dictionary of:

"The body of the Hebrew laws, traditions and explanations; or the book that contains them. The Talmud contains the laws, and a compilation of expositions of duties imposed on the people, either in Scripture, by tradition, or by authority of their doctors, or by custom. It consists of two parts, the Mishna, and the Gemara; the former being the written law, the latter a collection of traditions and comments of Jewish doctors."

- A 'Talmudist' is one versed in the Talmud.

Check out what Samuel Davidson in his book: *The Hebrew Text of the Old Testament*, 2nd edition., page 89, as cited in James Hastings edition 'A Dictionary of the Bible, IV, tells us some of the disciplines/practices of the Talmudists in regard to copying the Scriptures were.:

1. "A synagogue roll must be written on the skins of clean animals,
2. Prepared for the particular use of the synagogue by a Jew.
3. These must be fastened together with strings taken from clean animals.
4. Every skin must contain a certain number of columns, equal throughout the entire codex.
5. The length of each column must not extend over less than 48 or more than 60 lines; and the breadth must consist of thirty letters.
6. The whole copy must be first-lined; and if three words be written without a line, it is worthless.
7. The ink should be black, neither red, green, nor any other color, and be prepared according to a definite recipe.
8. An authentic copy must be the example, from which the transcriber ought not in the least deviate.
9. No word or letter, not even a yod, () must be written from memory, the scribe not having looked at the codex before him ...
10. Between every consonant the space of a hair or thread must intervene;
11. Between every new parashah, or section, the breadth of nine consonants;
12. Between every book, three lines.
13. The fifth book of Moses must terminate exactly with a line; but the rest need not do so.
14. Besides this, the copyist must sit in full Jewish dress,
15. Wash his whole body,
16. Not begin to write the name of God with a pen newly dipped in ink.
17. And should a king address him while writing the name he must take no notice of him."

THIS IS THE CARE WITH-WHICH THOSE WHO COPIED THE SCRIPTURES TOOK WHEN COPYING THE OLD TESTAMENT!

Question? What book (s) can we name today- book (s) from the past or present that have been this carefully copied?

Answer: NONE!

c. The Massoretic Text: The word 'Massoretic' comes from the word "massora", meaning: "Tradition" In the early 916 A.D. there was a group of Jews called the Massorettes. These Jews were meticulous in their copying.

One writer writes: “*The Massoretes were well disciplined and treated the text with the greatest imaginable reverence, and devised a complicated system of safeguards against scribal slips.*”

Example of safeguards:

1. They counted the number of times each letter of the alphabet occurs in each book;
2. They pointed out the middle letter of Pentateuch and the middle letter of the whole Hebrew Bible.

.....according to Wheeler Robinson, *Ancient and English Versions of the Bible*, (1940)

An example of this can be seen in the example of copying the book of Isaiah. When they were through they would total up the number of letters. Then find the middle letter of the book.

If it was not the same, they made a new copy.

Every copy of the Hebrew text, in our present day- from this period are in remarkable agreement.

Quote: Sir Frederick Kenyon says:

*“...They numbered the verses, words, and letters of every book.
They calculated the middle word and middle letter of each.
They enumerated verses which contained all the letters of the alphabet,
or a certain number of them: and so on.
these trivialities, as we may rightly consider them,
and yet the effect of securing minute attention to the precise transmission of the text. ...
The Massoretes were indeed anxious that not one jot nor tittle, not one smallest letter nor
one tiny part of a letter, of the Law should pass away or be lost.”*

Key Question: Is there anymore proof that the information from the Scribes & Massoretes is accurate?

Answer: YES! *The Discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls!*

d. **The Dead Sea Scrolls:** The discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls is without question one of the greatest archeological discoveries ever!

Here's the story: In 1947 a young sheep/goat herdsman found some clay jars in caves near the valley of the Dead Sea at Qumran (*hence the name Dead Sea Scrolls*).

The discovery of these scrolls revealed several things:

1. a commune of monastic farmers flourished in the valley from 150 B.C. to 70 A.D. (*it is believed that when they saw the Romans invade the land they put their cherished leather scrolls in the jars and hid them in the caves on the cliffs northwest of the Dead Sea*)
2. a reported 40,000 inscribed fragments. (*from these fragments more than 500 books have been reconstructed. Many of the books shed light on the religious community of Qumran*).
3. a complete copy of the book of Isaiah
4. fragments of almost every book in the Old Testament.
5. the majority of fragments are from Isaiah, the Pentateuch (*Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy*); a tattered copy of the book of Samuel, two complete chapters of the book of Habakkuk.

e. **The Septuagint:** The Septuagint or the *Greek translation of the Old Testament*, also confirms the accuracy of the copyists who ultimately gave us the Massoretic text.

The New Testament:

The Greek evidence is astounding! More than 4,000 different ancient Greek manuscripts containing all or portions of the New Testament that have survived to our time.

They were written on different materials

~Papyrus: A durable reed from the Nile Valley was glued together like plywood and allowed to dry in the sun.

~Parchment: Made from the skin of sheep or goats.

Note: Paper came in the late Middle Ages.

Codex Vaticanus and Codex Siniaticus

The external manuscript evidence for the New Testament bridges an outside source for the authenticity and accuracy of the Bible that goes back to almost the end of the first century.

In addition to the 4,000 Greek manuscripts, there are more than 1,000 copies and fragments of the New Testament in ...

Syria
Coptic,
Armenian
Gothic
Ehiopic

There are also 8,000 copies of the Latin Vulgate

Insert goes here:

Work	When Written	Earliest Copy	Time Span	Number of Copies
New Testament	AD40-100	AD 125	25 yrs	>24,000
Old Testament	400 BC	AD 900	1300 yrs.	Superior Transcription
Dead Sea Scrolls	400 BC	150 yrs.?	250 yrs.	Unique
Homer Iliad	900 BC	400 BC	500 yrs	643
Plato Teralogies	427-347 BC	AD 900	1200 yrs	7
Sophocies	496-406 BC	AD 1000	1400 yrs	193

2. THE AWESOME 'AT ONE-NESS' OF THE BIBLE:

⇒ It Starts With GOD!:

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”

-Genesis 1:1

*“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God,
and the Word was God.”*

-John 1:1

⇒ It Stays With GOD!:

*“If anyone does not love (continuing action?) the Lord Jesus Christ,
let him be accursed. O Lord, come!”*

-I. Corinthians 16:22 ()=mine

*“ I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ,
to a different gospel, which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to
pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other
gospel to*

you than what we have preached to you. Let him be accursed.

*As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to
you*

Than what you have received, let him be accursed.”

-Galatians 1:6-8

⇒ It Stars **GOD!**:

Point: Of all the religious documents that claim holiness, the Bible is the only one that stars GOD Himself from beginning to end!

The Koran seems to star the reportedly adulterous Elijah Mohammed

- Literature from the *Church of Scientology*, stars the late L. Ron Hubbard and his theory of
- The *Jehovah's Witnesses* incorrect translation of the Holy Scriptures called '*The New world Translation*' along with their other major writings for reference which include '*Reasoning from The Scriptures*,' '*Watchtower Magazine*' and star the arch angel Michael as **JESUS CHRIST**, the “first created thing” of **GOD** the Father.
- The infamous writings of Mormonism which include the “*Pearl of Great Price*”, the “*Book of Doctrines & Covenants*”; star Satan as the brother of **JESUS** and the men as gods under construction who posses a place of priority and pre-eminence over their wives to such a degree that reportedly when they are resurrected they (*that is the Mormon husband*); will have the choice of either allowing or not allowing his wife (*or wives as the case were*); to come up and be with him.

Buddhism-

Unlike all these other books, the Bible Stars **GOD!**

In Genesis He is ...

In Exodus He is ...

In ...

It Stops with **GOD!**

*“I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End,
who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.”*

-Revelation 1:8

*“And He said to me, ‘It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega,
the Beginning and the End, ... “*

-Revelation 21:6a

*“I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End,
the First and the Last.”*

-Revelation 22:13

3. **ADDITIONAL AMAZING EVIDENCE IN SUPPORT OF THE BIBLE:**

* **Manuscript Evidence:**

* **Archaeological Evidence:**

* **Prophetic Evidence:** Dr. Tim LaHaye in his famous Prophecy Study Bible lists 125 prophetic references to the First Coming of **CHRIST** and their corresponding New Testament text's.

Beginning with Genesis 3:15 – corresponding to Matthew 1:20 & Galatians 4:4 to Malachi 3:1 – corresponding to Matthew 3:1, 2 & John 1:23

In this same Prophecy Study Bible, Dr LaHaye provides 329 prophetic references to the Second Coming of Christ in both the Old and New testaments, beginning with Genesis 5:24 – to Revelation 22:20!

4. **THE AIM OF THE BIBLE!**

- To teach mankind GOD'S foundation for living:

Life & Death	-	Adam & Eve
Love & Hate	-	The LORD JESUS and Lucifer
Despair & Hope	-	Job
Heaven & Hell	-	The rich man & beggar, in Luke 16:19-31
Singleness & Separation	-	I. Corinthians chapter 7
Marriage & Divorce	-	Matthew 5:31, 32 & Ephesians 5:1-1-33
Money	-	Malachi 3; Matthew chapter 6 & II. Corinthians chapters 8 & 9

- To give mankind eternal salvation with GOD! The Bible is ...

- | | | |
|---------------------------------|---|------------------|
| 1. <i>For the sinner</i> | - | <i>salvation</i> |
| 2. <i>For the sin sick</i> | - | <i>salve</i> |
| 3. <i>For the backslider</i> | - | <i>recovery</i> |
| 4. <i>For the brokenhearted</i> | - | <i>surgery</i> |

The Bible is true in its declaration as the Word of **GOD**

“ “

“ “

by the **WORD** of **GOD!**

by the witness of other
believer's.

by looking at the world!

*“The heavens declare the glory of God:
and the firmament shows His handiwork.*

Day unto day utters speech, and night unto night reveals knowledge.”

-Psalm 19:1, & 2

V. **THE BIBLE DECLARES ITSELF TO BE GOD'S WORD!**

There are several references to this effect, but for the sake of time I'll deal exclusively this morning with those found in the New Testament book of Hebrews

- | | | | |
|----|--------------|---|--|
| 1. | Hebrews 1:1 | = | Confirms the Old Testament as GOD'S WORD! |
| 2. | Hebrews 1:2 | = | Confirms the New Testament as GOD'S WORD! |
| 3. | Hebrews 2:2 | = | Confirms the external witness of angels |
| 4. | Hebrews 2:3a | = | We have the witness of The LORD JESUS CHRIST! |
| 5. | Hebrews 2: b | = | We have the witness of the crowds who heard CHRIST! |
| 6. | Hebrews 2:4a | = | The witness of signs, wonders & miracles. |
| 7. | Hebrews 2:4b | = | The witness of The HOLY SPIRIT! |

3. THE ACCURACY OF THE BIBLE

4. THE AWESOME CLAIMS OF THE BIBLE

5. THE AIM OF THE BIBLE
(Is To address the Aches of Mankind)

Work	When Written	Earliest Copy	Time Span	Number of Copies
New Testament	AD 40-100	AD 125	25 yrs	<24,000
Old Testament	400 BC	150 yrs?	250 yrs	Unique
Homer Iliad	900 BC	400 BC	500 yrs	643
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