

Can I Trust The Bible?

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In 2014, a Christian movie named God Is Not Dead was released. It was wildly successful making \$62 million dollars while it only cost a mere \$2 million to produce. What made the film so successful? The film's goal was to encourage students to rethink atheism. While atheism is the dominant view in our society, this film pointed out that the world is full of evidence that God exists and is involved in everyday life.

While atheism is taught by high school teachers and college professors to undermine belief in God, there is an even more pressing debate being held on college campuses today. That debate is about the nature and authority of the Bible. Is the Bible a book we can trust? Isn't it true that the Bible is filled with mistakes? This low view of the Bible is well articulated by liberal Swiss theologian Karl Barth who holds to this view.

The prophets and apostles as such, even in their office, even in their function as witnesses, even in the act of writing down their witnesses, were real historical men as we are, and therefore sinful in their action, and capable and actually guilty of error in their spoken and written word.¹

In many secular universities like Duke and the University of Chicago, Karl Barth's claims are repeated in the halls of academia. What is surprising is that Karl's claim that the Bible is riddled with errors so it cannot be trusted is also repeated in Christian colleges. The schools we send our children to have their

¹ Karl Barth, *Kirchliche Dogmatik*, I.2., cited by R. C. Sproul in 'The Case for Inerrancy: A Methodological Analysis', in *God's Inerrant Word*, ed. John Warwick Montgomery, Bethany Fellowship Inc., p.256.

faith built up are the very schools that are working to tear our children's faith down.

I have personally talked to a number of students who left CrossWinds believing their Bible and loving their Jesus but when they returned from four years in a Christian college they didn't trust their Bible and they no longer knew what to think about Jesus because their professors pounded into their heads the claim that the Bible couldn't be trusted. They claimed the Bible was only reliable in general concepts, not specific words.

What do you think? Pick up your Bible. Hold it in your hand. Is this book just general truths mingled with errors or are its words absolutely true so they can always be trusted? How you answer that question is one of the most important decisions of your life.

This morning, I am going to show you why we can trust the Bible. There are a number of ways to show the trustworthiness of the Bible. We can look at the words of other scholars or the evidence of archaeology. While both of these are good ways to show the Bible's trustworthiness, I think there is a better way.

We simply need to ask the Bible to see what the Bible says about itself. Does the Bible claim to be trustworthy authoritative infallible Word of God? If it doesn't, we should never make that claim. If it does, we must respect that claim. To show what the Bible claims about itself, let's use as our key text, 1 Peter 1:10-12. We will look at many other verses this morning but we will begin with 1 Peter. Let's read it together.

Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours searched and inquired carefully, inquiring what person or time the

Spirit of Christ in them was indicating when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories. It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you, in the things that have now been announced to you through those who preached the good news to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, things into which angels long to look. 1 Peter 1:10–12 (ESV)

In these verses, Peter tells us the Bible is the infallible Word of God. First, he tells us we can trust the Old Testament, then he tells us why we can trust the New Testament.

What does the Old Testament say about itself?

Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours searched and inquired carefully, inquiring what person or time the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories. 1 Peter 1:10–11 (ESV)

The Old Testament considers itself the flawless words of God.

Peter began by talking about our *salvation*. Salvation means God has a plan to save us. The Bible says God's plan is to save us from our enemy, Satan, sin, and death. God's plan was to save us from Satan, sin, and death by sending his son, Jesus, to conquer them. I know this sounds churchy, but in actuality it is very modern. This is the same story line is the same as a Marvel Comics action movie.

In a Marvel movie, everyone on Planet Earth is also hopelessly defeated by a powerful enemy which will destroy the planet. The only hope for saving the world is for someone who is like us but much greater than us to come into the world to rescue us. In Marvel Comics, the hero that is like us but greater than us is Captain America or Thor. In the Bible, the hero who is just like us but sufficiently better than us to save us is Jesus. Marvel movie storylines and the Bible's storyline are almost identical.

The sad part of Marvel movies is that their storylines are always fantasy. There is no hero coming to rescue us. The good news of the Bible's storyline is it is reality. Jesus is reality. The entire story of the Bible is about God coming to the rescue to save us through Jesus.

Peter then said, "...the prophets prophesied" about this salvation coming to us through Jesus. **Who were the prophets?** The prophets were men raised up by God to be his spokesmen in their generations. Many of them preached God's Word. Many of them wrote God's Word. Some did both. What makes the Bible unique is that more than 25 percent of it was prophetic when written. That means the Bible gives specific details about the future on things that had not taken place. A quarter of the Bible was about things yet to take place when it was written. This makes the Bible unique among all religious books. The Quran, the Bhagavad Gita and the Book of Mormon do not have prophecy in them. They don't have an opportunity to be wrong about the future because they refused to speak about the future. The Bible is completely different. It is filled with prophecy. There is huge opportunity for the Bible to be wrong about the future, but amazingly, the Bible has never yet been proven wrong about the future. It has only been proven right about the way God said things would unfold. This is what sets the Bible apart from all other religious books.

We must remember that all biblical prophecy is revelation about the future. It is not speculation about the future. Speculation is guessing at the future. Revelation is God revealing to people how the future will unfold because he holds the future. This is why the Old Testament prophets said more than 3,800

times a version of, “Thus saith the Lord.” The prophets were speaking for God when they proclaimed the way the future would unfold and they knew it.

How could the Old Testament prophets speak about the future with accuracy? The question naturally arises, “How were the Old Testament prophets about to speak out the future with such accuracy?” As Peter continued, he told us. He said “the Spirit of Christ was upon them.” That is the Holy Spirit. Just as the Holy Spirit was upon Jesus and it was Jesus’ complete dependence upon the Holy Spirit in his humanity that enabled him to live a perfect life, the same Holy Spirit was upon the Old Testament prophets and the Holy Spirit enabled them to speak about the future with perfect accuracy. As Jesus lived perfectly by the Holy Spirit, the prophets prophesied perfectly by the Holy Spirit because they were controlled by the Holy Spirit.

Peter was saying the only perfect thing we have on the planet today is the Bible.

This is what we believe at CrossWinds. We believe the words of the Bible are flawless and without error in their original writings. We believe that if God couldn’t communicate what he wanted to communicate to us without error when he was giving it to us, then he isn’t God.

Theologically this is called **Verbal Plenary Inspiration**. This is something we believe in at CrossWinds. Let me explain it.

- **Verbal** means we believe the words of the Bible, not just the concepts in the Bible, are inspired by God. The words of the Bible are without error.

- **Plenary** means full. We believe all of the words of the Bible are inspired, not just some of the words. Many people criticize this. We stand by this. This is what the Bible says about itself so this is what we believe. We will learn more about this in a moment. God doesn't stutter. God doesn't mumble. God doesn't make mistakes when he speaks. Everything that God said was perfectly said.
- **Inspiration** means it is inspired — that is written — by God. We believe the entire Bible is written by God even though he did it by human authors. God is the ultimate author behind the entire book.

The Old Testament is about Jesus.

Peter said the spirit of Christ wasn't simply inspiring the prophets to speak prophecies about their immediate future. The Holy Spirit inspired the prophets about the coming of Christ in the distant future. The Holy Spirit inspired the prophets to prophecy many details of Christ' suffering, resurrection and subsequent glories.

If Peter was right, we should be able to look at the Old Testament and see prophecy about Jesus woven into the fabric of the Old Testament all over the place, if the entire Bible is about Jesus.

Let me show you some of the ways Jesus shows up in the Old Testament.

Jesus shows up in direct prophecy.

Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. Isaiah 7:14 (ESV)

We read this verse at Christmas. Isaiah wrote this prophecy 700 years before Christ was born. He told us about the arrival of the great hero of the

Bible, the real life Marvel Comics superhero of our world. “This is how you can recognize him when he comes. Look for a pregnant virgin.” That is a clue.

Pregnant virgins don’t happen every Wednesday. “This pregnant virgin will have a son. His name was to be Immanuel, which means ‘God with us.’ A virgin will give birth to a baby boy. This baby boy will not have a human father. He will be God in the flesh. That is a sign you should be looking for.” This sounds like it would be hard to fake. This was prophecy about Jesus written 700 years before Jesus came. The reason these specific details about Jesus’ arrival could be given this far in advance was because the Holy Spirit was inspiring the prophets and controlling the prophets to speak exactly what the Holy Spirit wanted them to say. He was dropping clues about Jesus along the way.

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. Micah 5:2 (ESV)

Here Micah, who was a contemporary of Isaiah, also wrote prophecy by the Spirit of God 700 years before Christ’s birth. This savior, the hero of the Bible, would come out of Bethlehem. Bethlehem was a small dumpy rural town where everybody married his or her cousin because few people lived there. That was where the hero of the world was to come from, a dumpy rural town that wasn’t even on the map..

Even though our hero would be a newborn baby, he was not new. His origins were from of old, from ancient of days. That literally means our saviors origins were from eternity. He never had a beginning. He has always existed and was never created. That was a sign to look for. The hero that was coming to

save us from Satan, sin and death would come out of the dumpy rural town of Bethlehem. He would be born of a virgin. He would have no human father. He has always existed and was never created. Is anybody smelling Jesus in this one? These amazing details about Christ's coming were written prophetically 700 years before Jesus arrived! The prophets could write these things because the Holy Spirit was inspiring them and writing through them.

“Behold, I send my messenger, and he will prepare the way before me. And the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple; and the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight, behold, he is coming, says the Lord of hosts.”
Malachi 3:1 (ESV)

Malachi lived 400 years before Jesus. He said there was to be a messenger who would prepare the way for the hero of the Bible before he arrived on the world scene. We know the messenger that prepared the way as John the Baptist.

It also says when Jesus our hero came, he would suddenly come into the temple.

What makes it interesting is this prophecy could not be fulfilled today. Did you notice there is no temple in Jerusalem. The temple was destroyed in 70 A.D. by the Romans and the Dome of the Rock built over it by Muslims a few hundred years later. For this prophecy to be fulfilled, it needed to transpire between 400 B.C. when Malachi wrote it and 70 A.D. when the temple was destroyed. The only one who could fit the bill in Jesus.

Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; then shall the lame man leap like a deer, and the tongue of the mute sing for joy. For waters break forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert... Isaiah 35:5–6 (ESV)

Isaiah spoke prophetically that when the hero the world desperately needs comes, you would be able to recognize him because he would be constantly healing people. Blind people would see. Deaf people would hear. Lame people would walk. Mute people would sing. The healings would not be modest. They would be complete reversals. Lame people would run. Mute people would not just speak, they would sing. You could know the hero arrived on the scene of world history because he would constantly be pushing back the curse of sin, sickness and death for everyone. Did Jesus heal anybody? As we study the Gospel of Mark, that is what we see all over the place. Jesus was healing thousands of people of every disease. God prophetically spoke through his prophet that when these superabundant healings arrived, that was the sign they were looking for. The hero to save the world from the curse of sin was known because he constantly pushed back the curse of sickness, and death in his life. The Holy Spirit inspired Isaiah to write these things 700 years before Jesus came!

Then I said to them, "If it seems good to you, give me my wages; but if not, keep them." And they weighed out as my wages thirty pieces of silver. Then the Lord said to me, "Throw it to the potter"—the lordly price at which I was priced by them. So I took the thirty pieces of silver and threw them into the house of the Lord, to the potter. Zechariah 11:12–13 (ESV)

Here we see the Holy Spirit telling Isaiah to take his wages of 30 pieces of silver and throw it into the temple. Zechariah didn't fully understand the reason why but he obeyed what the Holy Spirit told him to do. That was all prophetic. Jesus, the hero of the story, would eventually be betrayed for 30 pieces of silver, and the money, when it was received by Judas, was thrown into the temple. That

is exactly what Judas did. There are a couple of things that are interesting. Notice Judas betrayed Jesus for 30 pieces of silver, just like the Holy Spirit inspired Zechariah to tell us would take place, not 29 or 31... 30! It was very specific. It was pieces of silver, not gold, not dollars, not pesos, not bit coins. It was silver. When it was received, it was to be thrown into the temple, which is exactly what Judas did.

It also meant this prophecy needed to transpire before 70 A.D. because the temple was destroyed in 70 A.D. Do you see how the Holy Spirit guided the prophets to say exactly what the Holy Spirit wanted them to say? Do you see the Holy Spirit lacing details about Christ through the Old Testament? The prophets made none of these things up in their own heads. The Holy Spirit inspired them to say exactly what he wanted said.

For dogs encompass me; a company of evildoers encircles me; they have pierced my hands and feet... Psalm 22:16 (ESV)

This Psalm gives specific prophetic details describing the death of Jesus. This Psalm provides great details of death by crucifixion, in particular, details about Jesus' death by crucifixion. The problem is crucifixion wasn't invented until a few hundred years after this Psalm was written. The Holy Spirit wove specific details of Christ's crucifixion into this Psalm before crucifixion was invented. The Old Testament prophets were saying exactly what the Holy Spirit wanted them to say. Peter said the Old Testament prophets were speaking the exact words God wanted them to speak but they were struggling to put together and understand the pieces of prophecy God gave them about Jesus. It was like putting together pieces of a jigsaw puzzle. Every prophet had some pieces but even when they

looked at God's prophetic word over the years they were struggling to put together all the pieces to understand the details about Jesus.

He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth. By oppression and judgment he was taken away; and as for his generation, who considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living, stricken for the transgression of my people? And they made his grave with the wicked and with a rich man in his death, although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth. Isaiah 53:7–9 (ESV)

We could spend a lot of time on these verses. Isaiah 52-53 is line by line of detailed prophecy about the life and death of Jesus all given hundreds of years before it happened. Just like it says, Jesus suffered his crucifixion and death in silence. Just like it says, he made his grave with the wicked. Christ died between two thieves. Christ was with a rich man in his death. Joseph of Arimathea, a rich man that was a secret disciple of Jesus, gave his tomb to be used by Jesus, just as the Holy Spirit foretold would take place through Isaiah 700 years before it happened. We could go on for a long time. Line after line of specific details of Christ's life are prophesied in the Old Testament because the prophets were not speaking by speculation; they spoke by revelation *exactly what the Holy Spirit wanted them to say without error.*

Jesus shows up as the Angel of the Lord.

Sometimes people ask me, "Where was Jesus in the Old Testament?" He is absent for a few thousand years then magically appears in Bethlehem. Is that what happened?

In addition to direct prophecy about Jesus' birth, life and death, Jesus showed up multiple times in the Old Testament in cameo appearances before he

took on flesh in Bethlehem. He was the angel that walked with Abraham. He appeared to Moses in the burning bush. He was with Shadrack, Meshack and Abednago in the fiery furnace. In December 2008, I gave a sermon titled, Where was Christ before the Manger? In that sermon, I showed a figure called the angel of the Lord showing up consistently in the Old Testament. Interestingly, the angel of the Lord in the Old Testament has the same qualities as Jesus in the New Testament. For example, the angel of the Lord in the Old Testament is about the business of saving God's people. That is the same thing Jesus does in the New Testament. In addition, while the angel of the Lord is active in the Old Testament, once Jesus appears in the New Testament, we never hear from him again. They are one and the same.

Jesus shows up in the Old Testament in figures and events that are tastes of Christ.

All kinds of figures and events in the Old Testament are mini foretastes of what Christ came to do in the New Testament. Let me show you some examples.

- The priesthood, which enabled God's people to relate to God, prefigured Christ, our great high priest. He is the ultimate priest who enables a much better relationship with God than any earthly priest ever could.
- David, and other Old Testament kings, prefigured Jesus, the once-for-all great king of all kings who will rule God's people for not just a few years but forever.
- Moses, the great prophet who spoke for God to the Israelites, prefigured Jesus, the greatest prophet of all who spoke a better word than Moses from God for the people.

- Animal sacrifices in the Old Testament prefigured the once-for-all perfect sacrifice of Jesus for all our sins in the New Testament.
- The temple, which represented God's presence among his people in the Old Testament, prefigured Jesus, who is the ultimate expression of God dwelling among his people forever. As Jesus said in John 2:21 to the religious leaders, "Destroy this temple and I will raise it in three days," but the temple he spoke of was his body.
- Unlike the first Adam who failed his test in a garden, Jesus, the second Adam, passed his test in a garden.
- In the Old Testament, Isaac carried his own wood and laid his life down to be sacrificed according to the will of his father. He prefigured Jesus who would also carry his own wood and lay his life down to be sacrificed according to the will of his father.
- In the Old Testament, Joseph served as the righthand man to the ruler of the world. He used his power to forgive the brothers who betrayed him and save their lives. In the New Testament Jesus serves at the right hand man to the ultimate ruler of the world, God the Father. He used his power to forgive our sin, the brothers and sisters who betrayed him, and in so doing also saved our lives.
- Just as Moses inaugurated a covenant between God and man, Jesus is the greater Moses who inaugurated a new and greatly improved covenant between God and man.

- In the Old Testament, Job suffered at the hands of the devil so God might be glorified while Job's dumb friends were of no help. In the New Testament, Jesus suffered at the hands of the devil so God might be glorified while his friends were no help.
- In the Old Testament Jonah spent three days and nights in the belly of a great fish. He was as good as dead until God brought him out of a watery grave so he could preach salvation to a lost people. In the New Testament Jesus is the greater Jonah. Jesus spent three days and nights in an actual grave until death gave him up and he also came back from the dead and preached salvation to a lost people.
- In the Old Testament, Hosea married an unfaithful wife that he continued to pursue and love even when she was constantly unfaithful to him. In the New Testament, Jesus is the greater Hosea. He is married to us, the church. We also are unfaithful to him but he continues to pursue and love us even we are not faithful to him.

Peter's right. The Old Testament is not mere speculation filled with errors. Every bit of the Old Testament is revelation inspired by the Holy Spirit so God spoke through the prophets exactly what he wanted spoken. That is why the Old Testament is full with scores of specific prophetic details of Christ's life, death, and burial. That is why the meta storylines of the Old Testament themselves are foreshadowings of what Christ came to accomplish. The entire Bible is about Jesus, the hero of this book. Even the Old Testament is about Jesus.

How did Jesus view the Old Testament?

Rather than creating our own view of the Old Testament, if we can trust Jesus to save our souls when we die, we should be able to trust what Jesus had to say about the Old Testament. Let's see how Jesus viewed his Old Testament.

Jesus viewed the Old Testament as the flawless words of God.

“Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. 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.” Matthew 5:17–18 (ESV)

Jesus claimed he fulfilled everything in the Old Testament. He claimed not an iota or a dot would pass away until every detail in the Old Testament was accomplished. An iota is the smallest letter of the Hebrew alphabet. It is the size of an apostrophe. A dot is the smallest vowel mark in Hebrew. It is the equivalent of our period. Jesus said not the smallest consonant or the smallest vowel will pass away from any part of the Old Testament until all of it is accomplished. Jesus claimed the actual letters and vowels of each biblical word were inspired by the Holy Spirit and are exactly what God wanted to say. Jesus has an extremely high view of the Old Testament. He claimed every letter of every word was inspired by the Holy Spirit.

Let me show you another example of the accuracy and authority Jesus claimed the Old Testament holds.

‘I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob’? He is not God of the dead, but of the living.” Matthew 22:32 (ESV)

In context, Jesus was arguing with the religious leaders about the existence of life after death. Jesus argued for the existence of life after death

based on the tense of one Hebrew verb. Jesus said that because the Old Testament says, “I am the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob” not “I was the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.” The existence of a present tense Hebrew verb means Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are still alive. Jesus considered the tense of the verbs in the Old Testament to be inspired by the Holy Spirit and so authoritative that the existence of life after death can be proven from them.

Jesus had a very high view of the accuracy and authority of the Old Testament.

Jesus viewed the Old Testament as all about him.

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)

In context, Jesus was arguing with the religious leaders of the day and telling them they didn’t know their Bibles. These religious leaders were big brains. They didn’t just learned their AWANA verses. They memorized large portions of the Old Testament in Hebrew — at least the first five books! We have a hard reading the Bible in English. They memorized the Hebrew Bible. Jesus told them if they would look in their Old Testaments, they would see him all over the place, because Jesus said the entire Old Testament is all about him! We just did a brief fly-over a few minutes ago to show you that is true. The entire Bible is about Jesus, not just the New Testament. Unfortunately, even though these religious leaders memorized huge portions of the Bible, they missed seeing Jesus in their Old Testament, even though he is the main point of their Bible.

To show you that the entire Old Testament is about Jesus, let me show you what Jesus did for his disciples after he rose from the dead.

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)

After Jesus rose from the dead, he walked along the Emmaus road with some disciples. They were confused and perplexed about Jesus’ death and resurrection. Jesus began explaining to them everything from the Old Testament to show them God spoke about Jesus’ birth, life, death, and resurrection in the Old Testament hundreds of years before things unfolded. Nothing was out of control. Jesus’ life unfolded exactly the way God the Father planned and the way the Holy Spirit inspired the prophets to prophesy in the Old Testament.

What does the New Testament say about itself?

Let’s return to 1 Peter and see how Peter moves from arguing for the authority of the Old Testament to arguing for the authority of the New Testament.

It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you, in the things that have now been announced to you through those who preached the good news to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, things into which angels long to look. 1 Peter 1:12 (ESV)

Just as the Holy Spirit ensured the prophets wrote the Old Testament accurately, the Holy Spirit ensured the apostles wrote the New Testament accurately.

Just as the prophets were God’s chosen spokesmen in the Old Testament and were inspired by the Holy Spirit so what they spoke was exactly what God wanted to say without error, the apostles were God’s chosen spokesmen in the New Testament. The apostles were also inspired by Holy Spirit to speak only what God wanted spoken. In addition, they were also the best firsthand eyewitnesses of Jesus.

Speaking to his disciples, Jesus told them the Holy Spirit would come and enable them to write the New Testament accurately.

But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.
John 14:26 (ESV)

Here we see Jesus promising the apostles the Holy Spirit would enable them to accurately remember all that Jesus said to them so when they recorded Jesus' words they would record it accurately.

When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth... John 16:13 (ESV)

In addition, the role of the Holy Spirit is to guide people into truth. He would guide the apostles to speak the truth about Jesus. It is hugely important to remember the New Testament was based on the eyewitness accounts of the apostles. If anybody knew the truth about Jesus, it was the apostles who spent three years with Jesus 24-7. They were the eyewitnesses. They were also guaranteed by the Holy Spirit to accurately remember the truth of Jesus.

Professors, philosophers and college teachers who come 2,000 years later do not have better comprehension on the truth of Jesus than do the apostles who were the eyewitnesses who lived with Jesus for three years. It is the height of arrogance for a college professor to claim an apostle didn't record the truth about Jesus.

Some books in the Bible were not directly written by an apostle. For example, the Gospel of Mark was written by John Mark, who was not an apostle. As we have learned studying this book, John Mark was the traveling companion of the apostle Peter. John Mark wrote this Gospel by accurately recording all that

the apostle Peter had to say about Jesus. The Gospel of Mark is therefore based on Peter's firsthand eyewitness account of Jesus.

Look what Peter said about the apostles' testimonies.

For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For when he received honor and glory from God the Father, and the voice was borne to him by the Majestic Glory, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased," we ourselves heard this very voice borne from heaven, for we were with him on the holy mountain. 2 Peter 1:16–18 (ESV)

Peter said the apostles and writers of the New Testament didn't make stuff up. They were eyewitnesses to the miracles, to Christ's death, Christ's beatings and his resurrection. Jesus is alive. Peter said he was there on the Mount of Transfiguration when Jesus met with Moses and Elijah and revealed his glory. Peter heard God the Father say Jesus was his son. Note to self: When God speaks, we should listen. When God says Jesus is the one who is the hero we all need, just go with it.

Paul said the same thing.

All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness... 2 Timothy 3:16 (ESV)

This means *all of the Bible* is literally spoken by God. Even though the Bible was written by many different men over thousands of years, all of them were inspired by the Holy Spirit to say exactly what God wanted spoken. This is why all of the Bible is God's words before it is man's words.

God used the authors' personalities, gifts, and skills, but he controlled them so they only said exactly what God wanted them to say without error.

Peter said the same thing.

...knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. 2 Peter 1:20–21 (ESV)

Peter said nobody made the Bible up. A guy wasn't smoking weed in a cave and came up with an idea of a pregnant virgin giving birth to God so everybody would have a winter holiday with presents. Nobody made up the fact that everybody is a sinner going to hell apart from Jesus and our simple trust in him.

Peter said when the prophets prophesied, they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. That is a sailing term. It is when a sailing boat is in a storm and the wind is so strong the boat is forced to surrender to the wind and be carried exactly where the wind wants it to go. That is exactly what happened to the writers of the Word of God. The wind of the Holy Spirit carried them along so they said exactly what the Holy Spirit wanted them to say.

Peter said no part of the Bible is mere human speculation. It is all God's revelation. The prophets only spoke exactly what the Holy Spirit wanted them to say. If the Bible wasn't exactly what God wanted spoken, why would there be so many detailed prophecies about Christ and biblical types of Christ that were given in the Old Testament with razor sharp precision? If the Bible wasn't accurate, why would Jesus argue for its accuracy down to letters, vowels and even tenses of the verbs?

The Bible tells us to treat the books of our New Testament with the same authority as the books of our Old Testament.

And count the patience of our Lord as salvation, just as our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you according to the wisdom given him, 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 3:15–16 (ESV)

Some people admit the Old Testament is the Word of God, but they claim the New Testament shouldn't be considered the Word of God. They reason that it was only hundreds of years later that men gathered at councils and declared Peter's letters, Paul's letters and other parts of the New Testament to be part of the Bible. If Peter, Paul and others knew their writings were added to the Bible and considered authoritative Scripture, they would be mortified.

That is not true. Look what Peter said — Paul's letters were circulating. Paul's letters were considered by many to be authoritative Scripture even while Paul was alive, but not everyone agreed on this. People asked Peter, the head of the apostles, the leader of the early church, what authority they should give Paul's writings. Should they listen to them?

What did Peter say about Paul's letters? Peter called Paul's writings Scripture. Peter gave Paul's letters the same authority as the Old Testament Scriptures. Paul's letters were considered authoritative Scripture from the very beginning. This means Peter considered them to be infallible and inspired by the Spirit of God just like the rest of the Old Testament.

The Bible has a very high view of itself. The church councils eventually did publish lists of the books that were accepted as the Word of God but realized they didn't create the New Testament at that time. They only formally recognized the book of the New Testament in written lists to formally recognize what was already recognized by the people of God to be the accepted Word of God.

Application: Don't put yourself over the Bible. Put yourself under it.

There are two ways to look at the Bible. Many people put themselves over the Bible. They are like plastic surgeons. They nip and tuck the Bible to remake it according to their liking. They remove the parts they believe are wrong and agree with the parts they feel are right. That part about homosexuality was just cultural, we can ignore it. We are much more sophisticated than those ancient peoples. That part about love your neighbor, it doesn't apply to me. You haven't met my neighbor.

That is arrogance. It is pride to place yourself as an authority over the Word of God. If Jesus considers the Word of God to be accurate down to the very letters, vowels, and tense of the verbs, what right do people like Karl Barth and others have to claim that the Bible is full of errors?

I began with an example from Karl Barth who holds a very low view of the Bible. Let me give you another example from the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America. This is the position they hold about the Bible.

(the Biblical) writers sometimes provide differing and even contradictory views of God's word, ways and will... We sometimes conclude either that the writer's culture or personal experience (e.g., subordination of women or keeping of slaves) seems to have prompted his missing what God was saying or doing, or that God now is saying or doing something new.²

That is unbiblical. It is directly against what the Bible claims for itself. It is against what Jesus claims about the Bible. It is completely untrue.

² <http://www.elca.org/What-We-Believe/New-or-Returning-to-Church/Dig-Deeper/The-Bible.aspx>

At CrossWinds, we put ourselves under the Bible. The Bible is the authority over us. In humility we stand under it. We never stand over it and reinterpret it according to our own liking.

Conclusion

The movie God is Not Dead made the case that atheism doesn't make sense. For many people today, what is on trial is not God's existence but the reliability and trustworthiness of God's Word.

To find out how we should treat our Bible, we simply need to ask the Bible what it says about itself. The Bible claims to be the one infallible book in this world that we can base our lives upon, no matter what college professors and liberal denominations may claim.



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