A close-up photograph of a person's hand holding a thick, orange leather-bound Bible. The person is wearing a dark, long-sleeved shirt. The background is a soft-focus outdoor scene with green grass and trees under bright, natural light. The overall tone is contemplative and serene.

SO... HOW DO WE KNOW THE BIBLE IS REALLY GOD'S WORD, ANYWAY?

Examining the Evidence



**HARVEST
BIBLE
CHAPEL**

PITTSBURGH NORTH

DISCIPLESHIP SERIES

Harvest Bible Chapel

Discipleship Series

According to recent surveys, Bible readership is on a steady decline. It is a disturbing trend, especially among younger respondents. As people distance themselves from the Bible we see the devastating effects in our culture. Wickedness is running rampant: traditional marriage is under assault, people are experiencing gender identity crisis, violence is escalating at an alarming rate, abortion is being celebrated as a virtue, and on and on...

There is a direct relationship between how our culture views the Bible and the societal decay that we're experiencing. If people really believed that the Bible was God's direct message to them... if they really believed that the Bible was God's way of revealing Himself, exposing our sinful human nature, and what God's requirements of humans are... then there would be massive revival in our land. This is the heart of the issue: for whatever the reasons may be, many people (self-proclaimed Christians included) simply do not believe the Bible is God's way of communicating to us. They have a hard time with the fact of the Bible being God's book. Our sincere hope is that they might be convinced, however, if presented with the facts.

The evidence for the Bible being the very Word of God is both overwhelming and undeniable. The purpose of this course is present a convincing body of evidence so that Christians will know why they believe what they believe concerning the Bible. After all, Christians are called upon to give a reasonable explanation for the hope that lies within them (1 Peter 3:15). For the skeptics, this course will hopefully provide enough truth to break through any doubt they may have.

Disclaimers

Some of the content of this course has been the result of study and data collection over a number of years from different places and the sources may not have been cited at the time. However, throughout the course, attempts were made to cite sources where possible.

The basic outline of the class and some of the information is based off of sections in Josh McDowell's book: "The New Evidence that Demands a Verdict".

Scripture quotations taken from the New American Standard Bible® (NASB),
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Harvest Bible Chapel

Discipleship Series



- 1). To honor the divine Author of scripture by having a higher and loftier view of His Word, trembling with holy reverence each time we open the Bible.
- 2). To obtain an increased confidence that the Bible really is what God said it is in 1 Thessalonians 2:13, 'the Word of God' which is sufficient for all matters of faith and conduct. We want to have an increased trust in the veracity and accuracy of the Scriptures.
- 3). To be better equipped to give, to those ask us, a reason for the hope that lies within us (1 Peter 3:15).
- 4). To meditate upon, memorize and believe what the Apostle Paul told his son in the faith, Timothy, regarding the Word of God:

"All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

- 2 Timothy 3:16-17



Manuscript Evidence

There are many manuscripts available that have been used to create our modern translations of the Bible. This manuscript evidence will not be discussed here since it is such a vast and complex topic. Briefly, however, it is important to note that the manuscripts found for the New Testament far outnumber the manuscripts available for some of the ancient classic writings and respected writers. If we are going to dismiss the Bible for lack of manuscript evidence, then we must also do away with the classic literature as well.

We have over 24,000 copies of New Testament manuscripts that were written over a 30 year time span!

Author	When Written		Earliest Copy	Time Span	No. of Copies
Homer (Iliad)	900 BC	400 BC		500 years	643
Cesar (The Gallic Wars)	100 - 44 BC	900 AD		1,000 years	10
Plato (Tetralogies)	427 - 347 BC	900 AD		1,200 years	7
Aristotle	384 - 322 BC	1,100 AD		1,400 years	49
Herodotus (History)	480 - 425 BC	900 AD		1,300 years	8
Euripedes	480 - 406 BC	1,100 AD		1,500 years	9
New Testament	50 - 90 A.D.	130 AD		30 years	24,000

Fossil Record

Fossils are the remains of dead plants or animals pressed into rock layers all over the earth caused by a catastrophic event. That event can be explained by Noah's Flood, an account we read about in Genesis. Fossils of fish have been found in some of the highest points in elevation, confirming the fact that the flood was not a localized flood, but rather a global flood.



Genesis 7:17-22

17 Then the flood came upon the earth for forty days, and the water increased and lifted up the ark, so that it rose above the earth.

18 The water prevailed and increased greatly upon the earth, and the ark floated on the surface of the water.

19 The water prevailed more and more upon the earth, so that all the high mountains everywhere under the heavens were covered.

20 The water prevailed fifteen cubits higher, and the mountains were covered.

21 All flesh that moved on the earth perished, birds and cattle and beasts and every swarming thing that swarms upon the earth, and all mankind;

22 of all that was on the dry land, all in whose nostrils was the breath of the spirit of life, died.

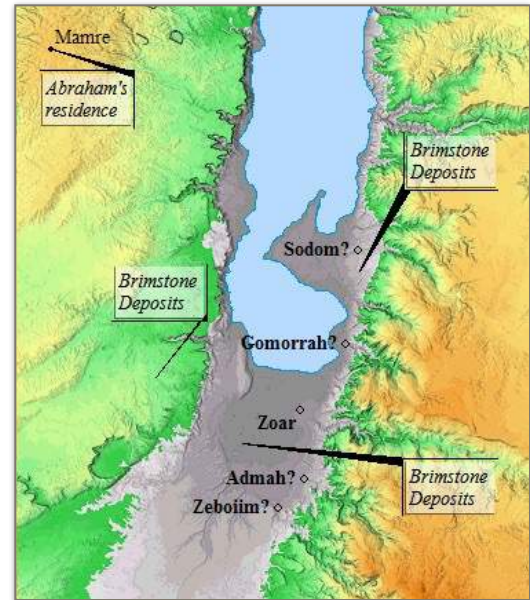


Note that according to the scriptures in Romans 5:12, that death came as a result of sin. **There was no death before Adam and so there could have been no dead plants and no dead animals, and consequently no fossils.** This also means that the claim that dinosaurs lived and died millions of years before man arrived on the scene is a false claim.

Sodom and Gomorrah

These ancient Bible cities are thought to be south of the Dead Sea, previously covered up by the sea. But recent receding of the waters has exposed areas for archaeological excavations revealing interesting discoveries that seem to confirm the Biblical account of Sodom and Gomorrah.

The area is rich with a substance called 'bitumen' which is a highly flammable oily material, often used for things like asphalt. The area is also known for earthquakes due to a fault line existing in this region. When the conditions are right, an earthquake would cause bitumen to spray from the ground which could be ignited by lightning, which would explain a hailstorm of 'fire' raining down from the heavens.



Buildings were found which had been burned from the inside out. A roof that was on fire from burning bitumen landing on it would collapse into the dwelling and burn it from the inside out.



Bab edh-Dhra (believed to be Sodom)



Excavation area at Numeira (believed to be Gomorrah). Textiles, string, rope, seeds, and even a cluster of grapes survived amazingly well. Every room was filled with ash and burned debris from the dreadful holocaust that overtook the city.

<http://www.biblearchaeology.org/post/2008/04/The-Discovery-of-the-Sin-Cities-of-Sodom-and-Gomorrah.aspx>

Genesis 19:24-25

24 Then the Lord rained on Sodom and Gomorrah **brimstone and fire** from the Lord out of heaven, 25 and He overthrew those cities, and all the valley, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and what grew on the ground.

Hittite Civilization

Genesis 23:10

10 Now Ephron was sitting among the sons of Heth; and Ephron **the Hittite** answered Abraham in the hearing of the sons of Heth; even of all who went in at the gate of his city, saying,

11 “No, my lord, hear me; I give you the field, and I give you the cave that is in it. In the presence of the sons of my people I give it to you; bury your dead.”

2 Samuel 11:3

3 So David sent and inquired about the woman. And one said, “Is this not Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of **Uriah the Hittite**?”

There are at least **50** mentions of the Hittites in the Old Testament, but yet people doubted the existence of these people. Why? Because there was previously no physical evidence of this civilization.

But, in 1906, archaeologist Hugo Winckler visited a Turkish city (Boghaz Koy) to do archaeological research.

His excavations found:

- Five temples
- Numerous sculptures
- Fortified castle
- 10,000 tablets revealing that Boghaz Koy was the capital city of the Hittites (Hattusha). ¹



Hattusha, the Capital City of the Hittites



¹ <http://apologeticspress.org/apcontent.aspx?category=13&article=888>

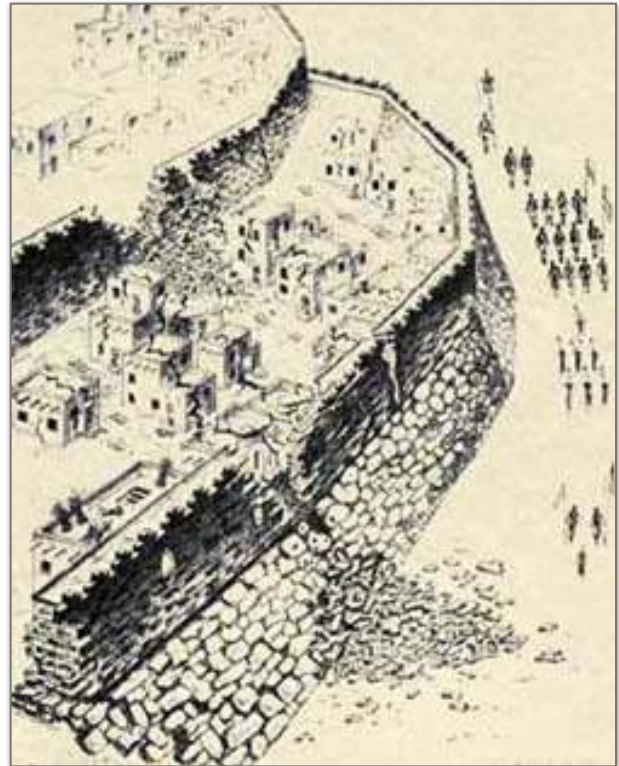
Jericho

Joshua 6:20

20 So the people shouted, and priests blew the trumpets; and when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, the people shouted with a great shout and **the wall fell down flat**, so that **the people went up into the city**, every man straight ahead, and they took the city.

An article in the Friends of Israel publication "Israel My Glory" provides information on recent excavations at Jericho:²

"The mound, or tell, of Jericho was surrounded by a great earthen rampart or embankment with a stone retaining wall at its base. The retaining wall was approximately 12 to 15 feet high. On top of it was a mud-brick wall six feet thick and about 20 to 26 feet high".



in the 1950's, British archaeologist Kathleen Kenyon found evidence of collapsed mud-brick walls deposited at the base of the retaining walls.



In 1997, an Italian team found the same thing at the southern end of the mound.

"At the north end of the tell of Jericho, archaeologists made some astounding discoveries that seem to relate to Rahab. The German excavation of 1907-1909 found that on the north, a short stretch of the lower city wall did not fall flat, as it did everywhere else. A portion of that mud-brick wall was still standing to a height of eight feet".



² Israel My Glory, Volume 57, Number 1, February/March 1999, A Ministry of The Friends of I:

Hezekiah's Tunnel / Pool of Siloam

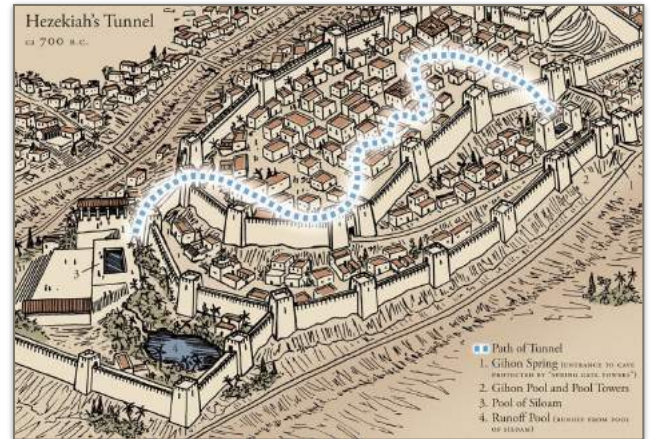
2 Chronicles 32:30

30 It was Hezekiah who stopped the upper outlet of the waters of Gihon and directed them to the west side of the city of David. And Hezekiah prospered in all that he did.

John 9:6-7

6 When He had said this, He spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and applied the clay to his eyes,
7 and said to him, "Go, **wash in the pool of Siloam**" (which is translated, Sent). So he went away and washed, and came back seeing.

In preparation for an imminent attack by the Assyrians, King Hezekiah routed water from the Gihon springs into the city of Jerusalem through a series of tunnels. This project was done at the end of the 8th Century B.C, and you can go there today and tour the tunnels!



The water travels underground through the city and empties out in the Pool of Siloam spoken of in the Gospel of John.



Pool of Siloam



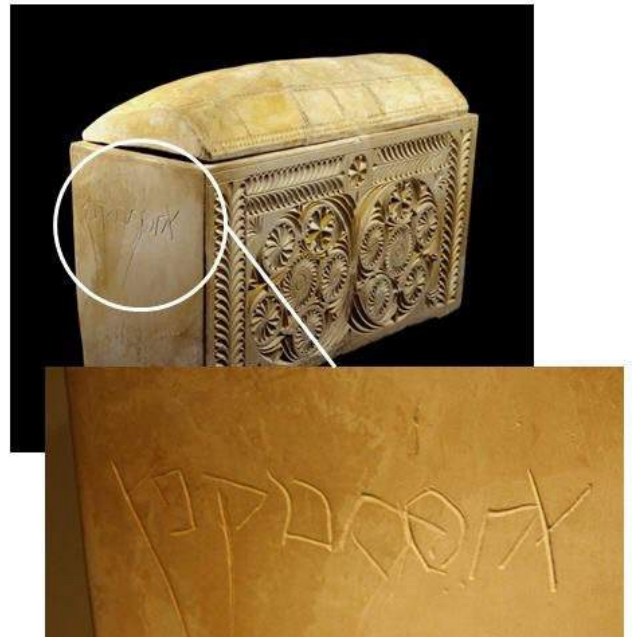
Lower run-off from the Pool of Siloam

Caiaphas Ossuary

An ossuary is burial box that was used to store the remains of a family member after their death. Ornate ossuaries like this one were used by people of high social standing.

Usually the body was buried in a temporary grave and some years later the bones were dug up and placed into this burial box.

This particular ossuary belongs to the family of Caiaphas who was the high priest who presided over Jesus's trial. This box was found when a water park was being built in the Jerusalem Peace Forest in 1990. While digging, the workers hit the ceiling of a room containing an ancient tomb. Many artifacts were found, including this ossuary that has written on it, 'Joseph son of Caiaphas'.



"Joseph son of Caiaphas."

Historian Josephus has documented that Caiaphas was referred to as Joseph Caiaphas, which is indicated in writing on the ossuary. This artifact tells us that a real, historical Caiaphas did exist. He was a real person who is spoken about in the New Testament scriptures.

Matthew 26:3

3 Then the chief priests and the elders of the people were gathered together in the court of the high priest, named **Caiaphas**;

4 and they plotted together to seize Jesus by stealth and kill Him.

John 18:12

12 So the Roman cohort and the commander and the officers of the Jews, arrested Jesus and bound Him,

13 and led Him to Annas first; for he was father-in-law of Caiaphas, who was high priest that year.

14 Now Caiaphas was the one who had advised the Jews that it was expedient for one man to die on behalf of the people.

Dead Sea Scrolls

Treasure trove of written artifacts composed between 200 BC and 200 AD.

Found in 1946 in the Qumran area, north of the Dead Sea.

The documents may have been the result of the Essenes who dedicated their lives to copying important writings. The Essenes were one of four socio-political groups in Israel at the time who were the 'separatists'. They believed that separating themselves from the world by isolation was what made them progress spiritually. Hence, their contribution to the world was to preserve ancient writings by meticulously copying them.

Another popular opinion on the origin of these documents is that the people fleeing religious persecution found themselves hiding in the caves at the Qumran and using this time to preserve the ancient writings.

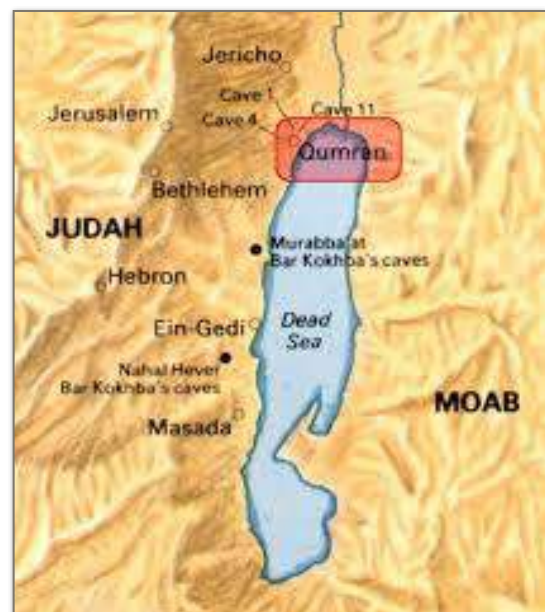
The documents found include a vivid view into Jewish life:

- Community rule handbook
- Legal documents
- Military letters
- Poetry
- Commentaries
- Calendars

What kinds of Bible writings were found?

- Every book of the Hebrew Bible is represented except for Esther.
- First 3 days of creation from Genesis.
- Copies of the 10 Commandments
- Almost every part of all 66 books in Isaiah are present.
- 48 Psalms

“The Dead Sea scrolls are the greatest archaeological find of our time”. -William Albright



In Conclusion

The Bible is not God's Word because of artifacts dug up from the earth.

There has never been an archaeological discovery that contradicts anything stated in the Bible.

And while archaeology is a useful tool in confirming Biblical accounts, it is admittedly limited in its ability to 'prove' the whole Bible...

However... **as with history, science or any other form of study, archaeology bows to God's Word...** not the other way around.

