

Word of God

purpose: To show that the Bible is trustworthy. There are 3 major points.

Claims: The Bible's **claims** about itself place it in a unique category.

1. 2 Timothy 3:15-17-
 - According to v 15, *What is the purpose of Scripture?* To bring about the experience of salvation.
 - Acc to v 16, *How much Scripture is breathed by God (theopneustos: theos- God + neuma- breathe = breathed by God)?* All of it. What a claim!
 - Acc to v 17, *Is Scripture up to the task of bringing believers to Spiritual maturity?* Yes!
2. 2 Peter 1:19-21-
 - *What significant (and perhaps new) word is found in v 19?* Prophecy (we'll return to this).
 - Acc to v 20 *what is the first thing to know about Scripture?* It is not to be privately interpreted?
 - Acc to 21, *Why is this?* Because Scripture originated with God, not man. What a claim!
3. Close part one: There are presently (2009) 142 million books registered at the US Library of Congress. Imagine we divide all of those books into two piles: those which claim to be given by God (God breathed) as authoritatively from Him and those which don't. Which pile would be bigger? The bottom line is that very, very few books even make such a claim. Making the claim does not, of course, make the claim true, but it does place the book, necessarily, in a category all its own. It must be evaluated and understood on its own terms. Are the Bible's claims about itself true? That is the question. Ordinary claims require only ordinary evidence. Extraordinary claims require extraordinary evidence. And it is to this evidence that we now turn: the Bible's unique **content** and **consistency**.

Transition: We're going to transition now into two lines of evidence that I personally find to be persuasive.

Content: The Bible's **content** supports its claim to be God-breathed and authoritative.

1. Isaiah 46:9,10 (45:20,21)
 - Acc to v 9 *what claim does God make about Himself?* He alone is God and no one is like Him.
 - Acc to v 10 *what evidence is given for this claim?* God knows and can declare the future. That's called prophecy.
2. John 14:29 (13:19) before, believe
 - Acc to v 29 *why does Jesus tell certain things in advance of their occurrence?* So we will believe.
 - Note: In order to *declare* the future accurately, one must first *know* the future accurately.
 - This is called *prophecy*. Prophecy is a foretelling of future events. Historians tell us of the past. Journalists tell us of the present. But only God could accurately and perfectly tell us what the future holds. He did this repeatedly in Scripture in predictive prophecy. Scripture is filled with prophecies. We'll study some of the most dramatic in future lessons, for now, let us briefly consider just one: Daniel 2.

- **Transition:** Now let me take you to one of the most amazing prophecies of the Bible. Try to give personal introduction.

3. Daniel 2

- Brief background- young man taken captive to Babylon. ~600 BC.
- Read through whole chapter, switching at intervals, & stopping for recaps.
- 4 Spiritual points to bring out:
 - Daniel didn't know the dream, but He knew the One who knew the dream. So he asked for time. That took great faith.
 - Daniel prayed and then God answered.
 - Look at the humility of Daniel- he gave all the credit to God.
 - If you've knelt before God, you can stand before kings.
- This prophecy contains 7 predictive elements, 6 of which have come to pass:
 - Medo-Persia
 - Greece
 - Rome
 - Divided
 - Overtures to bring unity to Europe
 - Fail- remain divided
 - God would set up his own kingdom

4. Close part two: Since the prophecy accurately foretells 6 of the 7 predictions, covering some 3500 years of human history, it is safe to believe that the seventh will also be fulfilled as predicted. This is only one of many dramatic prophecies that we'll be looking at. Prophecy gives us confidence that the God of Scripture is trustworthy. It enables us to believe, as Jesus said in John 14:29. It gives us confidence that the God of Scripture really is God, according to Isaiah 46:9,10. Prophecy is extraordinary evidence that persuades us of the Bible's extraordinary claim to be given by God.

Consistency: The Bible's **consistency** supports its claim to be God-breathed and authoritative (CITE).

- Cultural. The Bible is trans-culturally popular in a way no other book ever has been. Strongly suggests its supernatural origin.
- Internal. The Bible, consisting of **66** books, was written over a period of **1600** years, by **35** authors, on **3** continents (Africa, Asia, and Europe), yet the message is compellingly internally consistent. The essential message of Scripture is unified and consistent. The Bible contains no essential, theological contradictions. This internal consistency is utterly remarkable.
- Translational.
 - The discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls (1947) utterly confirms the accurate preservation of the OT.
 - There are more than 5000 ancient Greek manuscripts of the NT. The essential agreement between these manuscripts and our modern NT is staggering. The NT has been reliably preserved.
- Experiential. "I have found the Bible to be the voice of God to my soul." Tell in 1-3 minutes what the Bible has come to mean to you personally. Share your own testimony with the Bible.

appeal: The Bible's remarkable claims, content, and consistency recommend it persuasively to the thinking person. Are you willing to read and study this extraordinary book to learn more about God, Jesus, and God's plan for you personally?

defend it: (Either the Bible is truly the Word of God, or someone is playing a big trick.)

- The book of Daniel was written after the events it describes.
 - Ask when do you think it could have been written?
 - If before, then a dishonest person would have to have written the prophecy.
 - If after Dead Sea Scrolls, we have manuscripts found in the Dead Sea Scrolls from 250-100 BC.
 - Matthew 24:15- Jesus Himself referenced Daniel.
- The Bible has been corrupted.
 - Ask when, who, and how?
 - Dead Sea Scrolls 250-100 BC for the OT (same OT that Jesus read!)
- How do we know that the books found in the Bible are the right ones?
 - OT Canon (Genesis-Malachi)
 - - very little debate (Canon/Canonicity- the books that are in the Bible)
 - Jesus and others referred to the OT as the Scriptures
 - The NT is *not* an authoritative collection of books; it is a collection of authoritative books. It was assembled at the Council of Nicea 325 AD.
 - Book: F.F. Bruce *The New Testament Documents: Are they reliable?*
 - Book: Normal Geisler *From God to Us*
- Why are there so many different interpretations of the Bible? How do I know yours is the right one?
 - That is a great question.
 - 100 people in 100 rooms = 100 interpretations? Where is the inconsistency? In the Bible or the person? The person.
 - The Bible is its own best interpreter. We will let not a person, but the Bible itself interpret itself.
 - Important to recognize that I am a Protestant Christian, therefore I hold to Sola Scriptura. Scripture alone. Remarkable consistency among Protestants with the basic doctrines of the Bible.