

THE VERDICT

READ: We are living in a time of extremes—many are running to God, while just as many are running away from Him and distancing themselves from the Church. Some of this was prophesied as part of the great falling away in the last days. Some of it reflects what Scripture describes as a generation with “itching ears,” seeking only messages that affirm their own desires. But some of it is also the result of a Church that believes in God yet struggles to clearly articulate **WHY** we believe—why we surrender to Jesus, why we trust in the resurrection, and why we stake our entire lives on the reality of heaven and hell.

While we have been busy enjoying the blessings of salvation, we have not adequately prepared ourselves to answer the deep questions of a doubting generation. Yet, the message of Christ and the story of the Bible remain the greatest love story ever told. The life of *faith and grace* in Jesus is the greatest life one can live. The truths of Scripture have withstood the test of time and endured more scrutiny than any other book in human history.

But we are not called to simply celebrate this life—we are called to **EXPLAIN IT**. We are commanded to preach the gospel, share the gospel, live by the gospel, and just as importantly, **DEFEND THE GOSPEL**.

- **I Peter 3:15, 16 (NLT)** – *Instead, you must worship Christ as Lord of your life. And if someone asks about your hope as a believer, ALWAYS BE READY TO EXPLAIN IT. 16 But do this in a gentle and respectful way. Keep your conscience clear. Then if people speak against you, they will be ashamed when they see what a good life you live because you belong to Christ.*
- **Jude 1:3 (CEV)** – *My dear friends, I really wanted to write you about God's saving power at work in our lives. But instead, I must write and ask you to DEFEND THE FAITH that God has once for all given to his people.*
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Week #2 – The Case for the Bible: Can We Trust the Bible?

- **John 18:37-38 NCV** – *...This is why I was born and came into the world: to tell people THE TRUTH. And everyone who belongs to THE TRUTH listens to me.”38 Pilate said, “WHAT IS TRUTH?”*
- **Relative truth** is to believe that while something might be true for one person, it’s not necessarily true for another.
- **Absolute truth**, by contrast, is when something is true for everyone regardless of whether they recognize it to be true.
- **QUOTE:** *The Bible asserts itself as ABSOLUTE TRUTH (that which is true for everyone regardless of whether they recognize it to be true).*
- **Romans 3:3-4 NKJV** - *For what if some did not believe? Will their unbelief make the faithfulness of God without effect? 4Certainly not! Indeed, let God be true but every man a liar. As it is written: “That You may be justified in Your words, And may overcome when You are judged.”*
- **John 17:17 NIV** - *Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth.*
- **II Timothy 3:16-17** – *“All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.”*
- **QUOTE:** *The Bible’s trustworthiness is established by its historical accuracy, manuscript evidence, prophecies fulfilled, and its impact on people’s lives.*

Four Undisputable Confirmations

1. Archaeology Confirms the Bible

- The Bible describes real places, real people, and real events.
- Archaeology has confirmed countless biblical accounts once thought to be myths.
- **EXAMPLES:**
 - **King David's existence** was doubted until the **Tel Dan Inscription** (9th century BC) was discovered, referencing the "House of David."
 - **The City of Jericho** was found with evidence of collapsed walls, consistent with Joshua 6.
 - **Account of Samson** - Philistine temples have been discovered and unearthed that are designed just as is described in biblical account.
- **QUOTE (Dr. Nelson Glueck – renowned archaeologist):** *"It may be stated categorically that no archaeological discovery has ever controverted a biblical reference."*

2. Manuscript Evidence Confirms the Bible

- **DEAD SEA SCROLLS:** In November of 1946, a couple of Arab shepherds discovered scrolls housed in jars in a series of hidden caves. The oldest scrolls were scientifically dated to be written around 200BC.
 - *"The Dead Sea Scrolls provide indisputable proof that the Old Testament we read today is essentially the same as the copies Jesus studied 2,000 years ago!"*
- **HOW DOES THE NEW TESTAMENT COMPARE TO OTHER ANCIENT WRITINGS?**
 - *"The Gaelic Wars of Julius Caesar":* 10 manuscripts and the earliest was copied over 1,000 years after the original.
 - *"The Iliad" by Homer:* 643 corroborating manuscripts. The earliest manuscript was copied 500 yrs after the original.
 - There are more than 24,000 corroborating manuscripts of the New Testament and the earliest surviving manuscripts date less than 100 yrs after the original!
- **QUOTE (Dr. F.F. Bruce – New Testament Scholar):** *"No other ancient book has as much documentary evidence supporting its reliability as the Bible."*
- **Isaiah 40:8** – *"The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God stands forever."*

3. Fulfilled Prophecy Confirms the Bible

- Moses, Jeremiah, and Isaiah each prophesied events concerning Israel that have been attested to by historical records as being fulfilled just as they said.
- The Old Testament contains over **300 prophecies** about the Messiah, fulfilled perfectly by Jesus.
- **Mathematical Probability:**
 - The chance of **one person** fulfilling just **8** of these prophecies is **1 in 10¹⁷**
 - That's like covering Texas in silver dollars two feet deep, marking one, and having someone find it on the first try!
- **II Peter 1:21** – *"For prophecy never had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit."*

4. Transformed Lives Confirm the Bible

- Billions of lives have been changed by the power of Scripture.
 - Examples: George Foreman, Russell Brand, Letitia Wright,

- Renowned atheist geneticist & former director of the National Institutes of Health, Francis Collins, was challenged by a Christian patient about his spiritual beliefs. This led him to study the Bible & the evidence of Christianity, and he concluded that following Jesus was the only logical verdict! – <https://youtu.be/ncMbufrVyMQ?feature=shared>
- YOUR LIFE AND MINE!!
- **Hebrews 4:12** – *"For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart."*

QUOTE: *"A Bible that's falling apart usually belongs to somebody who isn't."* – Charles Spurgeon