



Message Two: THE AUTHENTIC TEXT

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The Bible makes a bold claim for itself. It claims to be the inspired (*God-breathed*) Word of God (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21). Is there evidence to support such a claim? Skeptics and genuine seekers alike ask questions – good questions that deserve good answers. Today we will look at four of these questions and seek to respond to them in the spirit of 1 Peter 3:15, *Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect.* (NIV)

DOES THE BIBLE HAVE CHARACTERISTICS THAT TRANSCEND HUMAN ABILITY?

The amazing **unity** and internal **consistency** of the Bible point to something beyond human authorship.

Fact: **35-40** men wrote the Bible over a period of **1,500** years from **3** continents in **3** languages.

Yet, the Bible is a unified book with one running theme and consistent message.

Fulfilled Prophecies are a compelling reason to consider the supernatural origin of the Bible.

The Bible is the only book in the world that has specific prophecies that have been specifically fulfilled.

HOW DO WE KNOW THAT WE HAVE A RELIABLE TEXT OF THE BIBLE THAT HAS NOT BEEN CORRUPTED?

We have more and older manuscripts of the Biblical text than for any other **30** ancient documents *combined*.

The New Testament is considered to be **99.9%** textually pure based on the overwhelming manuscript evidence.

COULDN'T SOME OF THE 'SUPERNATURAL STORIES' BE JUST THAT – STORIES, MYTHS, AND LEGENDS?

The authors of the Bible take the incredible and unnecessary risk of naming specific **people**, **dates**, and **places**.

The Bible has none of the characteristics of legendary literature. It's historical narratives are exactly that -- they are history!

ISN'T THE BIBLE INCOMPLETE? WHAT ABOUT THE 'LOST BOOKS' THAT WERE LEFT OUT OF THE BIBLE?

Typically this question references the "Gnostic Gospels" which were the product of the heretical Gnostic cult of the early centuries of Christianity.

The Gnostic gospels are forgeries, fraudulently written in the names of the Apostles in order to give them a legitimacy in the early church.

They were rejected by the Early Church as heresy and non-authentic.

The foundational rule (canon) by which the people of God recognized God's Word was...

Is the writing **authentic**, **authoritative**, and **accepted**?

WHY I BELIEVE THE BIBLE IS THE AUTHORITATIVE WORD OF GOD

Since the answer I give you is about the hope that I have, here is why I believe the Bible:

I have met Jesus through the message of this book!

1 Peter 1:23, 25, For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God...For, the word of the Lord stands forever. And this is the word that was preached to you.