

Evidence That the Bible is True

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P rophecy
R esurrection
E nvironment
A rchaeology
C hrist
H istory

PREACH, a very simple thing, something that we can use when preaching to ourselves and others. Each one of these elements as we'll call them is a tool that we can use furthering our own study and with the Bible and other resources we have in this world, will help us to see what the truth of the matter really is. People love to argue nowadays, and evidence that the Bible is true has been a contestation for a very long time, so there is going to be no simple answer to anything, and that's why we have a selection of tools for use, not everyone is going to be strong in prophecy, they may prefer history as a mode of study for them, something they can dive into and research. For me I have my strengths and weaknesses, and I can probably divulge more information from the ones I am familiar with, and for those I know I'm weaker with I can seek other people's help.

We'll start with prophecy. It's widely accepted that the Bible contains many prophecies which are varying in degrees of completion in terms of if they have been completed, or fulfilled (some have double fulfilments), or if they have not been fulfilled or only partially. The books of the Bible we commonly associated with being prophetic or containing prophecies are typically from Isaiah to Malachi (Old Testament) and Revelation (New Testament). This doesn't cover all of them, but the general knowledge of anyone just beginning the study of the Bible, those are what we consider to be the prophetic books of the Bible. You probably already know this though if you are reading this! Preaching to those around you means you have to identify with their knowledge, not yours, you also have to know where you can put your strengths. You wouldn't want to start, say, in Revelation if you are talking to a friend and work, or a buddy at school, or a long-time friend; Revelation isn't the easiest place to start, so we'll start somewhere where we can all be more comfortable, and a better way to find the evidence we are looking for.

Two groups of prophecies we're going to use as an example of where to start are Daniel's interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's image (in Dan 2), and the prophecies relating to the return of Israel, two very simple things recorded in scripture and you could say they are or have been fulfilled to some degree, and double fulfilment is a concept that we may have learned through complete study of prophecy. It's not hard to see that when you look at the succession of nations in Daniel's interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's image, that Babylon and Medo-Persia and Greece and Rome, and all the nations that were to follow after in the image, have actually occurred in history. It's not hard to see the fairly recent developments of the return of Israel less than 100 years ago. In terms of the time of Christ, 2000 years ago, it's a long time, but now is the century when these things are coming together again; it's a very common, or current school you could say, and some people alive now still remember those times, but for the younger ones we still have history and other resources that can show us these things.

After prophecy we look at Resurrection, now it isn't so much a physical example of evidence for the Bible, but considering its key part in the scriptures it means higher hope and belief that is developed from them, it cannot be looked at physically, so how can then can it be used as a tool to prove that the Bible is true? Well

in today's world, at least not that I've heard of, there haven't been any resurrections, there is nothing we can say for sure like, "I've seen a resurrection, I know it's true", and all we have is what is recorded in the Bible, and since that what we are contesting, it's up for scrutiny. What does every other resource in the world say about resurrection? Not much probably. There are a few faith healers that claimed the resurrection of small children and things like that, but no proof. The resurrection is an element of scripture that is I think best illustrated by Paul in 1 Cor 15, a few of verses from here to illustrate how important it is, and even though it's not something that nowadays we can physically put a stamp on, this is evidence that the Bible is true.

For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised:

And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins.

Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished.

If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.

[1Co 15:16-19](#)

Modern translations would help clarify the seriousness of what Paul is addressing in this concept that the resurrection is what we have to hope for, without it and without Christ there is no dying and being raised, there is no hope for us and all the promises we have from Abraham, even as far back as Adam, the entire theme throughout the scriptures, the re-gathering of his people to where there would be no death, and this cannot exist without the resurrection. Now about physical evidence, what is our evidence? I would call it faith. V17 outlines this, "if Christ be not raised, your faith is in vain". It's faith that is at jeopardy, considering the evidence of the Bible, it's faith that is tested when you look at the different reasons why or why not something might be true. In terms of the resurrection, primarily it is our faith, faith from the hope we have and in the Bible itself, God's word, that makes it so important to our lives and ways. Now alone that would be pretty weak, alone, faith would be something that the world would gnaw away at and degrade, but it's not alone. Entire scripture is here and for this example all the elements of PREACH are here, working together, just like the passages of scripture do. Resurrection is not alone as an element, not alone as a basis for evidence in that every other element in PREACH supports the other one. You can't say that resurrection is being left out, that it doesn't work with prophecy, when it's prophecy itself that contains the elements and things in scripture, pointing forward to resurrection. History itself has dictated that Christ was there. The Bible itself being a historical book, one again we can't use as evidence alone because it is what we are contesting, but it, with the world and its resources is a proof.

What I'm probably more familiar with is 'the environment', and also one of the more popularly contested elements in this day and age, where religion has been rebuffed by evolution and a natural world existing without supernatural creation, but the environment goes perfectly into PREACH and every person on this planet exists in it, lives in it and breathes in it. It's all around us, we can't escape it and because of that, every single person has some degree of relation to it and some understanding of what it is. A farmer going about his daily chores can witness as much proof that the Bible is true as a scientist in a lab peering into microscopes marvelling about the complexity of our world, even at the smallest scale. It doesn't matter where you are or what you do, it's all the same. The environment is a marvel beyond anything that man can understand. At some point in people's lives you hear about the views they hold, evolution or creation being the main one that is pushed back and forth in the scholarly and religious world, but the information that we gather everyday about the environment can only strengthen our belief that God's hand is in it. Any occupation; scientists, farmers, beekeepers, everything else that can specialize in the environment that gives a more intimate knowledge of it is a further tool to learning more about how God has designed everything and how he works with us. People I know have taken that expertise and transformed it into their proof, and then they share it with us. Any experience we have can be shared, one man's evidence needn't just be for him, it can be for all of us, even if we aren't a specialist in the field, and it's something we can all

learn. The environment being pretty obvious as an element we can preach as it is something we see every day and only strengthens what we can see in the other elements of PREACH.

Moving on, the next element is archaeology. In the perfect opposite of resurrection, it is the primary physical resource in proving that the Bible is true, because unlike the resurrection where there was no physical resource, no resurrection nowadays we can look at for proof, archaeology is evidence that we can look at and touch, and directly links the times referred to in the Bible. A scholar Robert Bradshaw in his writings which references other numerous scholars, places this view on Biblical archaeology, "it is virtually universally agreed that the purpose of Biblical archaeology is not to prove the Bible, however inasmuch as archaeology sheds light on a history it is important to Biblical studies, and archaeology provides the context of reality to the Biblical story and a reasonability for biblical faith." So even with the scholarly view of a world that shies away from religious bias, it indicates that Biblical archaeology is a base, something that you can stand on, firm and physical, something that sheds light on the history of the Bible and a reasonability to Biblical faith. More and more throughout the years spanning physical Biblical times and now, artefacts, scrolls, inscriptions, Biblical locations and sites have been discovered, some directly through reference given in the Bible, and others discovered with no reference or research done into the Bible, and yet coinciding with events and records in the Bible. The current viewpoint scholars have today, is that proving the Bible is no small task for archaeology and again it's not something that it can do on its own, despite being physical and real, something we can see and have immediate faith in, it doesn't work alone.

Archaeology has to work with the other elements of PREACH, specifically with the history that we have. The facts that certain locations, cities and buildings have been uncovered by archaeology that are mentioned in the Bible, sometimes giving the exact locations, for example the city of Jericho, most people have heard this story where, Israel coming out of the Exodus entered into the land and destroyed Jericho after its walls collapsed. Archaeologists discovered the site of a city where the walls had collapsed and the city had been pillaged, generally in the location thought to be, as you may see in the maps at the back of your Bibles. We can look Jerusalem, a city that still stands today, and all through it, in it and around it, there has been evidence of things contained in the Bible. The temple itself now remains at the Wailing Wall, the foundation only, but physical proof that it did exist. Then there's Herod's tunnel, the wall's of the city of David, even looking at the nations around that are mentioned in scripture, the Egyptians, residence of the Hebrews for 400 years in the land of Egypt, part of which was slavery, evidence suggesting the true location of Mt Sinai visited by the children of Israel in the Exodus, the great city of Babylon – the golden head of the statue we referred to earlier - now discovered, crumbled as forewarned, and all that remains is the remnants of its eighth gate, the Ishtar gate, which many of you may have heard of; it's a very large discovery in terms of Biblical archaeology. All this recorded history in the Bible, its physical evidence we can see to day. You can go to museums all around the world and see parts of the Ishtar gate. The main construction of it being in Germany, shows the images of the gods they worshipped, the influences that would have been placed on Hebrews being taken into captivity and even before I get to see the Ishtar gate myself, I knew of the existence of that gate from the Bible.

The 5th word we have in PREACH is Christ, and just like the resurrection, it is a part of scripture and belief that is impossible to exclude, but how does that fit into proving that the Bible is true? Again, like resurrection, he isn't walking around today, nor can we see or touch him, so we can't say Christ existed. When you look at the world around how can you say he didn't? The effects of Christ's life, and more importantly his death, has impacted the world in a way that has left half its population currently believing in him. Throughout the ages, entire wars, debates over doctrine have occurred in his name. No other source, fictional or fabricated could result in such a long term or widespread lie, it is not possible. The world itself is evidence that Christ did exist and with the resurrection being the key for Christ himself, as he was the primary recipient of eternal

life, he is our example of what we can hope for and who we can try to manifest. Anyone denying his existence denies the hope we have as outlined in 1 Cor 15. The gospel of the good news means nothing without his existence. Even the 1st century believers immediately after his death could probably call the more reasonable example for us because they did believe. 1 Peter 1 shows us the strength of their faith, because they knew he existed.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

(1Pe 1:3-5)

The faith and evidence we establish using the elements of PREACH, reaffirm what we already know, something we grew up with, something we learned over time, something that was introduced to us by someone else. Something that this 1st century ecclesia also knew and wholeheartedly believed. We are pushing forward with these beliefs of that faith, we can strengthen each other to the same zeal they had in following our Lord Jesus Christ.

Lastly, but definitely not the least important, history is our final element of PREACH.

Withdrawing from the influence of religious bias, generally, history has been the proof that exists without us stretching verses to make a sense of prophecy or arguing the chronological age of a long lost scroll. It is this world's record, that of its own, just happens to serve a purpose in proving that the Bible is true. The Bible is a history book in its own right, but considering the subject of this document, what better to utilize in its defence than all other history? It's historically accurate, the Egyptians existed and at one time it had a strange group of pilgrims in its land, it is historically accurate that the Babylonians invaded Israel and took captives away. It is historically accurate that the Medo-Persians, succeeded the Babylonians, the Grecians after that and the Romans after that. The history of this world cannot be held bias to scripture and only serves to strengthen it by aligning with it. Like Christ, it is the cornerstone of our faith. History is the foundation of secular knowledge and it's not very hard to see that it works in unison with Christ and with the other elements of PREACH, it's giving us a firm stance to exploring the scriptures, proving the truth of the evidence that we find. History provides strong evidence to the authenticity of God's word.

PREACH, hopefully working together, has touched on the strengths and weaknesses that we all have, again the environment tends to be one of my strengths, though prophecy tends not to be, something I can focus on to improve and it will only help further the evidence that I have for myself, evidence that I can then share with everyone around me. Others, even yourselves, can look into the environment and see God's hand still at work, you can look into the Bible and read the history like it was the life and times living around you, and you can see prophecy and understand the delicate handlings that are required to understand whether it's been fulfilled, or if it has two fulfilments. Archaeology has been something that has been debated because of the inaccuracy of dating, and that the scholarly world does not want to "religify" us, but it's still something that we can use together with what we know. Always, the evidence we have can prove to ourselves that the Bible is true. We're going to use these elements (and there are probably more), in PREACH as tools to prove that the Bible is true and knowing which ones we need to work on will help us to improve our own belief as well.

By Nick Elliott