

Common Misconceptions



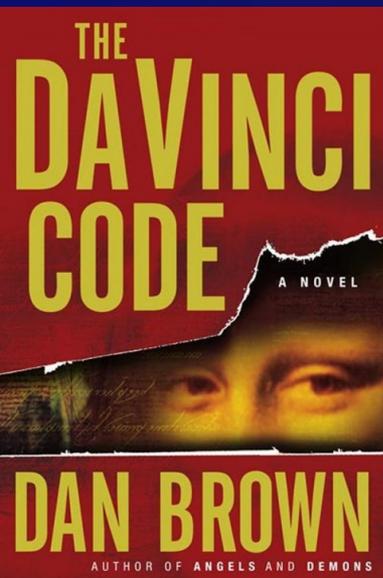
Common Misconceptions

- *Tithing*
- *Cultural Depictions*
- *Beloved Biblical Wisdom*
- *The Holy Spirit*
- *The Reliability of the Bible*



The Bible Just Isn't Reliable

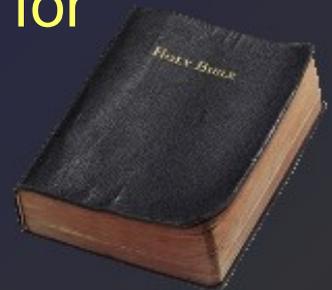
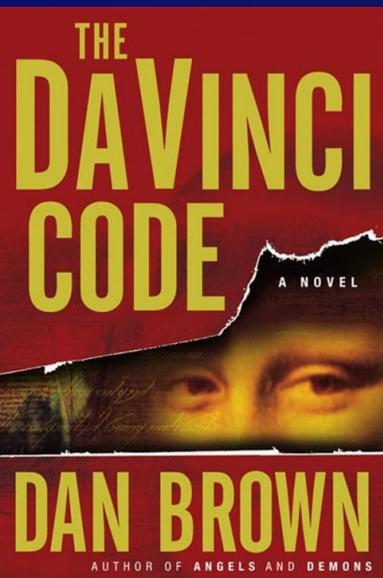
- ➔ In *The DaVinci Code*, Dan Brown writes:
 - “The Bible is the product of man, my dear. Not of God. The Bible did not fall magically from the clouds. Man created it as a historical record of tumultuous times, and it has evolved through countless translations, additions, and revisions. History has never had a definitive version of the book...”
 - (completely ignoring the fact that the Dead Sea Scrolls prove that there was a pretty established canon of the Old Testament books even in *Christ's* time)



The Bible Just Isn't Reliable

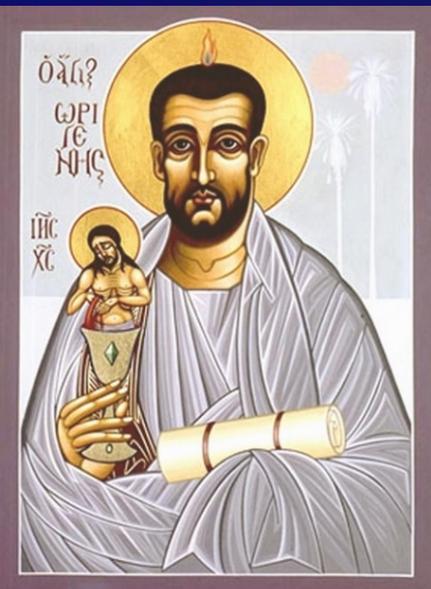
- ➔ In *The DaVinci Code*, Dan Brown writes:
 - And at the Council of Nicaea in 325 AD, “More than eighty gospels were considered for the New Testament, and yet only a relative few were chosen for inclusion—Matthew, Mark, Luke and John among them... The earlier gospels were outlawed, gathered up, and burned...”

- (NOTE: The four Biblical gospels *are* the earliest ones we have—the gnostic gospels that Brown favors were written *centuries* later)
- (NOTE²: No other gospels were considered for canonization at Nicaea)
 - (the Muratorian Canon shows that the church recognized *only* the Biblical four gospels *150 years before* the Council)



The Bible Just Isn't Reliable

- ➔ In *The DaVinci Code*, Dan Brown writes
- ➔ As Origen wrote (150 years *before* Nicaea):
 - “We have approved solely what the church has recognized, which is that only the four Gospels should be accepted...”
 - So why have so many people just accepted what Brown wrote as “Gospel truth” about history?



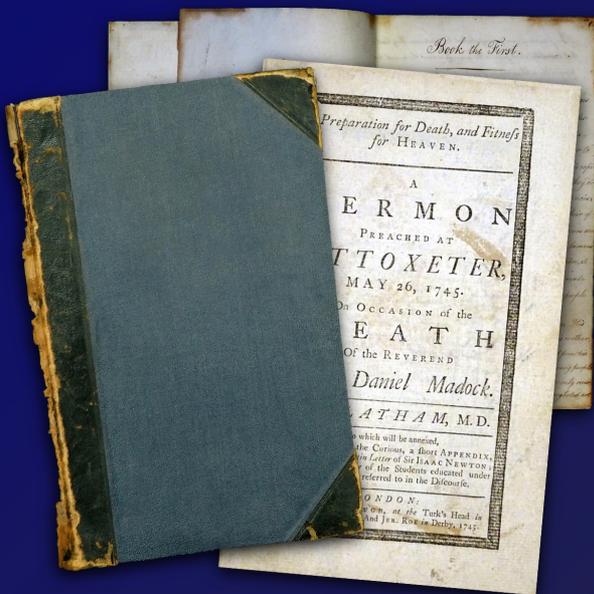
Proving The Bible and Christianity

- ⇒ First things first—you can't.
- ⇒ *Ex:* You can never prove Biblical inerrancy--
 - You can never *absolutely prove* a negative
- ⇒ What you *can* do is make a *good case* for it



Assessing Document Reliability

- ➔ History and literature use three basic tests:
 - The Bibliographic Evidence Test
 - How *many* manuscripts do we have?
 - How *close* in time to (and *accurate* to) the *originals* are they?



Assessing Document Reliability

- ➔ History and literature use three basic tests:
 - The Bibliographic Evidence Test
 - The External Evidence Test
 - Are the documents *historically* accurate?
 - Do any contemporary sources confirm or deny the details of the documents?



Assessing Document Reliability

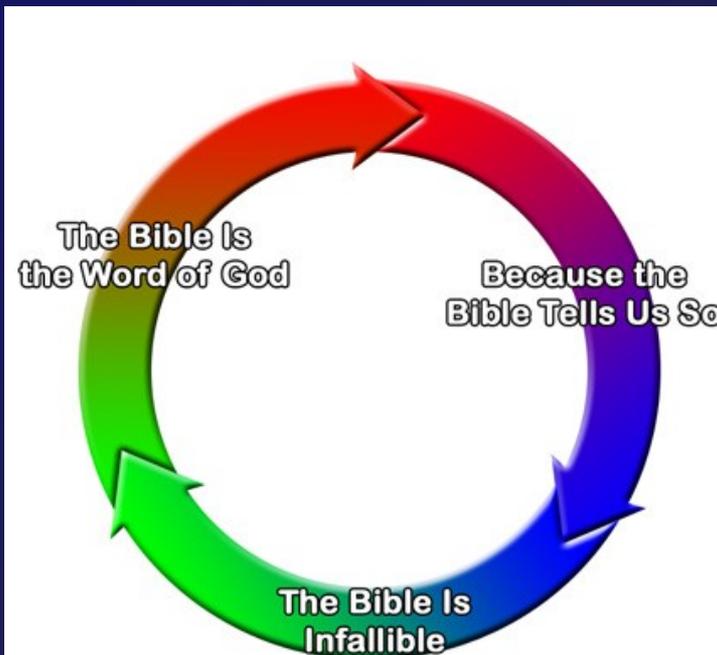
- ➔ History and literature use three basic tests:
 - The Bibliographic Evidence Test
 - The External Evidence Test
 - The Internal Evidence Test

- What do the documents actually say about themselves?
- Was the author trying to write truth or fantasy?



Internal Evidence Test

- ➔ Relying *solely* on internal evidence is not enough—it's *circular reasoning*
 - (“I’m right and I promise that I’m trustworthy, which means that you can trust me, what with the fact that I’m right”)



Internal Evidence Test

- ⇒ Relying *solely* on internal evidence is not enough—it's *circular reasoning*
 - (“I’m right and I promise that I’m trustworthy, which means that you can trust me, what with the fact that I’m right”)
- ⇒ But the *Bible itself* seems to think that it's a trustworthy document



Internal Evidence Test

- ⇒ Read 2 Timothy 3:16
 - Paul considers all Scripture to be inspired (“θεόπνευστος”—literally “God-breathed”)
 - (NOTE: As a former Pharisee, he would almost certainly have meant the whole Old Testament by this)



Internal Evidence Test

- ➔ Read 2 Timothy 3:16
- ➔ Read 1 Timothy 5:18
 - Paul considers Luke 10:7 to be a quote from *Scripture*



Internal Evidence Test

- ➔ Read 2 Timothy 3:16
- ➔ Read 1 Timothy 5:18
- ➔ Read 2 Peter 3:15-16
 - Peter considers *Paul's* writings to be God-breathed Scripture



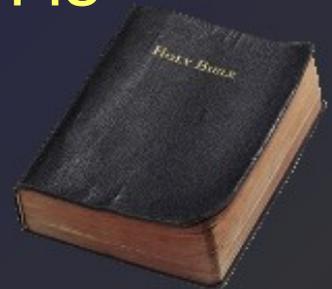
Internal Evidence Test

- ➔ Read 2 Timothy 3:16
- ➔ Read 1 Timothy 5:18
- ➔ Read 2 Peter 3:15-16
- ➔ Read 1 Corinthians 2:12, 14:37;
Galatians 1:11-12; 1 Thessalonians 2:13
 - Paul believes that what he writes comes from God, and *not* from himself



Internal Evidence Test

- ➔ Read 2 Timothy 3:16
- ➔ Read 1 Timothy 5:18
- ➔ Read 2 Peter 3:15-16
- ➔ Read 1 Corinthians 2:12, 14:37;
Galatians 1:11-12; 1 Thessalonians 2:13
- ➔ Read Revelation 1:10-11, 22:18-19, etc.
 - *John* believes that what he writes comes from God, and *not* from himself
 - (NOTE: In Revelation 22:18-19, John is talking about adding or subtracting from the Book of Revelation, not from the Bible *at large*)



Internal Evidence Test

- ➔ Read 2 Timothy 3:16
- ➔ Read 1 Timothy 5:18
- ➔ Read 2 Peter 3:15-16
- ➔ Read 1 Corinthians 2:12, 14:37;
Galatians 1:11-12; 1 Thessalonians 2:13
- ➔ Read Revelation 1:10-11, 22:18-19, etc.
- ➔ So that's a large chunk of the Bible that the *Bible* seems to think is Divinely inspired...
but none of this matters at all if the Bible is *unreliable to begin with...*



External Evidence Test

- ⇒ How historically accurate is the Bible?
 - No Biblical event, person, or place has ever been disproven historically



External Evidence Test

- ➔ How historically accurate is the Bible?
 - No Biblical event, person, or place has ever been disproven historically
 - Note also that Biblical facts such as descriptions of the extent of the Hittite Empire, the location of Iconium, the destruction of Tyre, and even the existence of a first-century Nazareth, etc.—all of which were originally *scoffed* at by historians—were later proven to have been correct



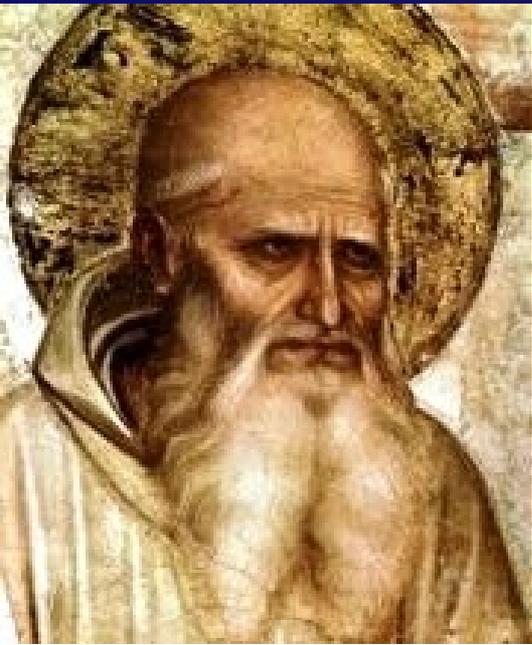
External Evidence Test

- ➔ First-century Roman historian Josephus wrote that there *really* was a Jewish rabbi named Jesus who was crucified under Pontius Pilate
(*Josephus—Jewish Antiquities*)



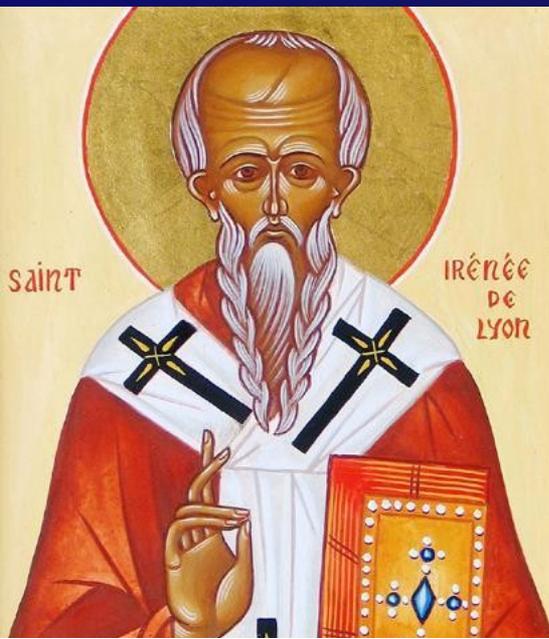
External Evidence Test

- ➔ Papias, a close friend of John's, was quoted as saying that the Gospel of Mark was an accurate summary of what he'd learned from Peter
(Eusebius—Ecclesiastical History)



External Evidence Test

- ➔ Irenaeus (a disciple of a disciple of John) wrote that Mark, Luke, and John were all good histories of what actually happened in the first century
(*Irenaeus—Against Heretics III*)



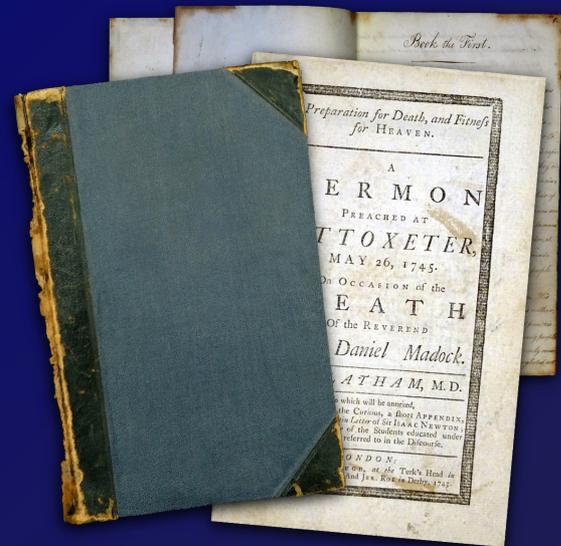
External Evidence Test

- ➔ In short, we have no reason to believe that the Bible is anything other than a reliable historical document—unless we begin with the preconceived notion that it *isn't*
- ➔ But again, that doesn't mean that the Bible in your hands is the one all of these guys were *talking* about



Bibliographic Evidence Test

- ➔ Can we reliably reconstruct the original documents?
 - Even if ancient historical sources lend credence to the Bible, and the Bible perceives itself as Divinely inspired, how do we know that *this* really is the Bible that they wrote?



Bibliographic Evidence Test

The Old Testament

➔ The Dead Sea Scrolls

- In 1947, the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls (dating from 200 B.C. to A.D. 68), included copies of every Old Testament book except for one (Esther).
- Comparisons with modern texts (and the *next-oldest* copies, fully 1000 years younger) show little or no variation or change between them.
- We have every reason to believe that what we read today is the same Old Testament that Jesus read (and that Paul called inspired)



Bibliographic Evidence Test

The New Testament

➔ The Gospels

- Mark is generally considered by scholars to be the first Gospel to have been written, since both Matthew and Luke's Gospels seemed to have been quoting from it
- Luke wrote both the Gospel of Luke and the Book of Acts (basically, Luke Part II)



Bibliographic Evidence Test

The New Testament

➔ The Gospels

- The Book of Acts ends in the mid-50s
- That very well might mean that Luke didn't finish it because those events were still going on
- If the Book of Acts was written in the mid-50s, and it was the *second* book in a series of *two*... then the Gospel of Luke had almost certainly been written sometime *before* the mid-50s... meaning that the Gospel of Mark had been written even before that... (possibly even in the late 30s)



Bibliographic Evidence Test

The New Testament

- ➔ The Gospels were written within decades (perhaps within even a *single* decade) after Jesus' death—*certainly* close enough to be verified or refuted by contemporaries



Bibliographic Evidence Test

➡ Compare the manuscript evidence:

<i>Author</i>	<i>When Written</i>	<i>Earliest Fragment</i>	<i>Time Span</i>	<i># of Copies</i>
Tacitus	100 AD	1,100 AD	1,000 years	20
Caesar	100 – 44 BC	900 AD	1,000 years	10
Pliny	61 – 113 AD	850 AD	750 years	7
Herodotus	480 – 425 BC	900 AD	1,300 years	8
Aristotle	384 – 322 BC	1,100 AD	1,400 years	5
John	100 AD	117-138 AD	17-38 years	1



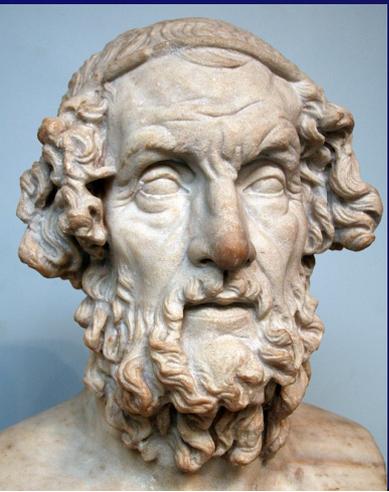
Bibliographic Evidence Test

- ➔ That's only the *earliest* fragment we have of the New Testament
 - All told, we have over 20,000 early manuscripts of the New Testament
 - In fact, we have almost 24,000 extant manuscripts from within roughly *50 years* of when the New Testament was originally written



Bibliographic Evidence Test

- ➔ That's only the *earliest* fragment we have of the New Testament
 - All told, we have over 20,000 early manuscripts of the New Testament
 - The closest runner-up from the ancient world is Homer's *Iliad* with 643 manuscripts—the earliest of which was from 500 years after the original was written



Bibliographic Evidence Test

- ➔ Plus, the Bible was quoted extensively by the early Church Fathers in their books:
 - “You could destroy *all* the manuscripts of the New Testament, and destroy *all* the New Testaments in existence in the world, and you could reproduce *all but eleven verses* of the New Testament from these quotes of the Church Fathers.”

(from the Issachar Institute's *Case for Christianity*)



So Is the Bible Reliable?

- ➔ The Bibliographic Evidence for the Bible *overwhelmingly* supports the fact that what we have is a reliable copy of the originals



So Is the Bible Reliable?

- ➔ The Bibliographic Evidence
- ➔ The External Evidence for the Bible is at *least* as strong as for any ancient literature or historical documents, if not consistently *stronger*



So Is the Bible Reliable?

- ➔ The Bibliographic Evidence
- ➔ The External Evidence
- ➔ The Internal Evidence *within* the Bible itself demonstrates that the authors perceived themselves as speaking not on their own, or making up fanciful stories, but faithfully recording history as it actually happened, under the *direct inspiration* of God



So Is the Bible Reliable?

- ➔ The Bibliographic Evidence
- ➔ The External Evidence
- ➔ The Internal Evidence
- ➔ That doesn't prove *anything*—but it does make a good case that it's not inherently *ignorant* to believe that your Bible might be fairly reliable



So Is the Bible Reliable?

- ➔ The Bibliographic Evidence
- ➔ The External Evidence
- ➔ The Internal Evidence
- ➔ That doesn't prove *anything*—but it does make a good case
- ➔ But remember—the word “Bible” actually comes from the old Latin word, “*Biblia*” drawn from the Koine Greek word, “βιβλία” which literally means “Books”



OLD TESTAMENT 39 BOOKS

HISTORY

LITERATURE

PROPHECY

PROPHECY

BOOKS OF MOSES

WISDOM

MAJOR PROPHETS

MINOR PROPHETS

GENESIS

JOB

ISAIAH

HOSEA

EXODUS

PSALMS

JEREMIAH

JOEL

LEVITICUS

PROVERBS

LAMENTATIONS

AMOS

NUMBERS

ECCLESIASTES

EZEKIEL

OBADIAH

DEUTERONOMY

SONG OF SOLOMON

DANIEL

JONAH

KINGDOM PERIOD

JOSHUA

MICAH

JUDGES

NAHUM

RUTH

HABAKKUK

1 SAMUEL

ZEPHANIAH

2 SAMUEL

HAGGAI

1 KINGS

ZECHARIAH

2 KINGS

MALACHI

1 CHRONICLES

2 CHRONICLES

EXILE

EZRA

NEHEMIAH

ESTHER

NEW TESTAMENT 27 BOOKS

HISTORY

LETTERS OF PAUL

GENERAL

PROPHECY

GOSPELS

TO CHURCHES

SERMON

APOCALYPTIC

MATTHEW

ROMANS

HEBREWS

THE REVELATION

MARK

1 CORINTHIANS

GENERAL LETTERS

LUKE

2 CORINTHIANS

JAMES

JOHN

GALATIANS

1 PETER

EARLY CHURCH

EPHESIANS

2 PETER

ACTS (OF THE APOSTLES)

PHILIPPIANS

1 JOHN

COLOSSIANS

2 JOHN

1 THESSALONIANS

3 JOHN

2 THESSALONIANS

JUDE

TO INDIVIDUALS

1 TIMOTHY

2 TIMOTHY

TITUS

PHILEMON