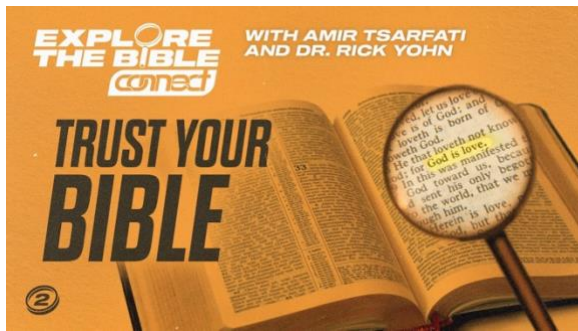




Amir Tsarfati
Dr. Rick Yohn

Explore the Bible – The Reliability of the Bible

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AMIR: Hey, Shalom everyone. I'm Amir Tsarfati and I'm here from CONNECT in Galilee. And this is yet once again our *Explore the Bible* program with Dr. Rick Yohn. And let me invite Dr. Yohn back to the screen with me. Rick, Shalom my friend,

how are you?

RICK: I'm doing fine. Thank you, Amir.



AMIR: Great to see you.

RICK: Certainly looking forward to this opportunity once again.

AMIR: Yes, yes. Well, last time I really enjoyed time was just [Amir: snaps finger] flying last time. And we talked of course about...

RICK: ...Yes, it did!

AMIR: Yeah, we talked about the whole idea of what the Bible is. But I think it's time for us to talk more, go deeper about—now when we know what the Bible is—the reliability of the Bible, authenticity, accuracy and all of that. But we will start only after you pray.

RICK: Okay. Oh God, what an opportunity we have. Thank You for opening these doors to be able to present Your Word. And I pray as the Holy Spirit guides us that the Holy Spirit will develop a hunger, a desire to dig deeper personally into the Scriptures. Because Lord, it is Your Word that is a light unto our path, a lamp unto our feet. It is a Word that is quick and powerful and sharper than a two-edged sword. So we ask that You would give us understanding, grant us insight and show us how to apply Your truth to our everyday living. In the name of Jesus, Amen.

AMIR: Amen, Amen, Amen. Wow. So Rick, if you remember, in our last installment, we took time to help our listeners understand what the Bible is. And I think you did a great job explaining although there are so many authors of the different books, there is one main author and that is, of course, God Himself. But now I think it's time to discuss the reliability of the Bible, because a lot of people are not sure about that. I mean, how reliable is the Bible? It's one thing to say that the Bible is reliable. It's another thing to prove it. [RICK: Chuckles] So help me to prove it, please.

RICK: You know, the great thing is that we don't have to prove anything. Proving and persuading is the work of the Holy Spirit. However, the Bible tells us that we are to be able to give a defense for our faith. And I have found over the years that people who reject the Bible reject it not because of the lack of evidence, but in spite of the evidence. And the Lord has given us plenty of evidence, both internal and external evidence, that if anyone who has an open mind, if they would listen, they would be persuaded. So again, the persuasion is the work of the Holy Spirit. But it is our responsibility to give a reason for why we believe what we believe. And I believe there's a lot of evidence, both internally and externally.

AMIR: I totally agree with you. And I think that this is one of the questions that was sent your way [RICK: Yes.] after the last program. And I just want to remind the viewers that on our website, you can go to beholdisrael.org and then you can go to “Watch and Listen” and there’s a whole page for Explore the Bible, not only with resources, but also a way to click and send a question to Dr. Rick on the topic that we were discussing during the program. I mean, let’s not fill up his inbox with questions that are nice but irrelevant to our program because then he won’t have time to help us doing many other things.

So, when we talk about the reliability of the Bible, there are two primary types of evidence that need to be considered. Can we elaborate on that?

RICK: Well, the internal evidence is just what does the Bible claim for itself? And of course, the Bible does claim to be the inspired Word of God. And when you think of the prophets of the Old Testament, again and again they are saying, “Thus says the Lord...” or “The Lord showed me...” or “The Lord spoke to me...” or “In a dream God gave to me...” And so again and again, the prophets are not saying, “This is what I believe...” or “Here’s a great idea...” No, it is the Lord speaking through the prophets who wrote the Scriptures. And of course, you have the Apostle Paul who also says that the Word of God is inspired, it comes from God. In fact, when Jesus was tempted by the devil, He said three times, “It is written, it is written, it is written...” And He was quoting, of course, from the Old Testament, from the Torah.

AMIR: Yeah, I agree.

RICK: So that’s the internal evidence. The Bible just speaks for itself that it is not the word of man, it is the Word of God.

But then you have external evidence. And when you think of external evidence, I like acronyms. And when I teach, I usually use acronyms. And the acronym that I love for external

evidence is MAPS. M-A-P-S. And I begin with manuscripts. And there are a lot of Old Testament manuscripts and even more New Testament manuscripts that help us to get back to the original text. Now, of course, there are no longer any original texts, but we do have manuscripts that get us really close to those original scripts.

AMIR: So those manuscripts, what are those manuscripts exactly and why do they matter so much? I mean, there's a lot of footnotes in different Bibles that mention those manuscripts. So, and a lot of people overlook that because they don't understand what it's all about. So what is it exactly?

RICK: Just the term manuscript, it comes from two different Latin words: *manu*, meaning hand, and *scriptus*, writing. So a manuscript is any ancient, handwritten document. And so when we talk about biblical manuscripts, we're talking about handwritten biblical manuscripts. And you have the Old Testament manuscripts and New Testament manuscripts. Now, I mentioned we don't have as many Old Testament manuscripts for a number of reasons. One of the major reasons is all the wars and the destructions and how many times Jerusalem was destroyed. And so manuscripts were destroyed. And another reason we don't have a lot of Old Testament manuscripts is that when the scribes, when these manuscripts got old, the scribes would just bury those manuscripts. So a lot of those manuscripts were actually buried. And of course, then they rot.

AMIR: So we need to find them.

RICK: Yes, we need to find them. [Both laughing]

AMIR: And speaking of finding manuscripts that were hidden, of course, of all of those are the Dead Sea Scrolls. And you know, I was a tour guide for 25 years. And one of the most exciting places for me then to bring my groups was Qumran, the site of the finding of the Dead Sea Scrolls. And although it was so hot when we got there in the late spring, early summertime, I don't know

why, but I was given a renewed energy the closer I got to the caves, and the closer I got to speaking



about the most important archaeological discovery of our lifetime. And so the Dead Sea Scrolls, of course, they're paramount in this discussion. And I think many of our listeners and viewers have probably heard of the Dead Sea Scrolls. I don't think they necessarily understand the significance of them. So what are the highlights of these findings decades ago? And then after you're done, I'll share my own personal experience with one of them.



RICK: Yeah, well, there are a number of things that are very important. First of all, the timing of the finding of the Dead Sea Scrolls. It was in 1947. And also God did not use a Christian to find them. And God

didn't use a Jew to find them. He used the Muslim to find the Dead Sea Scrolls. And this Muslim boy found these Dead Sea Scrolls as he was out there with his sheep. And one of them got lost. And he was down at Qumran and saw all the caves and he picked up a stone and threw the stone into the cave. Usually you hear a thud, but here he heard a click. And he crawls into that cave, and he sees these jars, and opens up the jar, and all of a sudden, here's some kind of wrapped scroll parchment. And he looks at it. Of course, it's in Hebrew, and so he's not sure what this is all about.

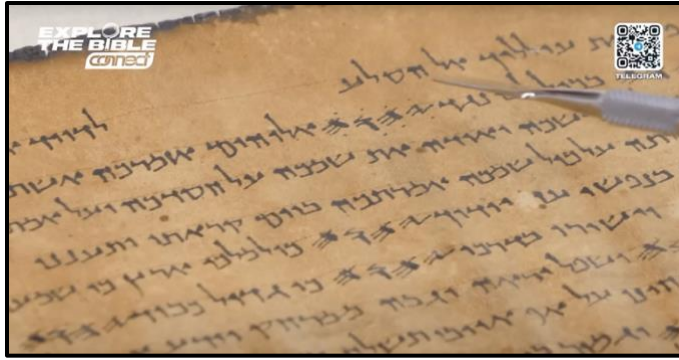
He did not realize what he had really found. And then they found more and more and more and more.

Up until 1947, the earliest full manuscript, Hebrew manuscript, that we had was known as the Leningrad Codex. Now a Codex basically means a book. And that was found and that went back to about 1009, 1010 (A.D.), somewhere around there. That was the most complete Hebrew manuscript. Now there was one before that around 910 or 930 A.D. and that was the Aleppo Codex. But that was not complete. Yeah, Aleppo, Syria.

AMIR: So the Leningrad was complete while the Aleppo was not?

RICK: Right. And that's because of the wars and things and it only had part of the Old Testament. You go back to the Masoretic Text, that's somewhere around 1000 A.D. And so we are way out. When you think of the last book of the Old Testament being written around 450 B.C. and here around 1010 A.D., that's a huge space. How do we know that the Leningrad was the same as the original writing? Well, all of a sudden when the Dead Sea Scrolls were found, some of those Dead Sea Scrolls go back to 250 B.C. So instead of being like 1,500 years apart, now you're like 250 years apart or so. So the Dead Sea Scrolls are just so important and especially the Isaiah Scroll. That was found—And you tell us about it because you told me one time about your discovery.

AMIR: Correct. Well, the Isaiah 4 was found complete in cave number 4. And it was, I think there was 11. And then recently we found a 12th cave. In all of them we found manuscripts. But in cave number 4, which is the most famous one when you see pictures of Qumran, and that amazing scroll that we found from literally from the first word of the book to the last word of the book, it's a national treasure and it was kept in a refrigerated archive in Israel for many years. And then during Israel's 60th anniversary, I think, yeah, the entire scroll was brought out of the archive into the Israel Museum, to The Shrine of the Book, where we have copies of the different scrolls



on display. So here we brought the original and we had a certain different side room built just for that. And I was so excited because, you know, it's one thing to see copies of the scrolls and another thing to

see the authentic one. So I brought my Bible, and I stood in line for 30–40 minutes. We walked in and it was all covered with glass. And I could read the Hebrew and then I could read my Hebrew from my Bible. And I could read the Hebrew again on the scroll. And I got out and I was shocked that it is the same. But then I was shocked that I was shocked. Because why should I be shocked that it's the same when I know that the Word of God is the same, that it is accurate, that it is reliable, that it is authentic. But the level of accuracy was stunning. I don't think there's anything like that in history. And so I was shocked, and you know, Isaiah is just one of many different manuscripts that we found there from different books of the Old Testament. And, you know, it's quite a discovery.

RICK: Yeah, and then you have the New Testament manuscripts. I mean, there are like over 5,800 New Testament Greek manuscripts. And then there's 86,000 quotations from the church fathers. It's been estimated that if the New Testament had disappeared, just the quotes from the church fathers could put all but maybe a few verses of the New Testament together.

AMIR: Wow!

RICK: So we have a lot of information when it comes to New Testament manuscripts.

AMIR: That's a stunning data [point]. Wow!

RICK: It is!

AMIR: Wow, that's amazing! And I assume that...

RICK: ...And we also have manuscripts that go back to the second century. And so you were just, you know, 50, 60 years out from the originals. Now, a lot of people think that the original text, for instance, when the Apostle Paul, say, wrote the book of Romans, that it was just one autograph. Well, most likely when the writers wrote, they wrote more than just one. They had the one major copy and then wrote others. And then others, other people, you know, the churches then needed this, so they copied what was written. But they could copy for—Well, when you think of these manuscripts, they didn't last for 20 years, they lasted up to 150, even up to 200 years.

AMIR: Hmm.

RICK: So when you think of the copies, say, 100 years later, it wasn't a copy of a copy of a copy of a copy. Many of these were copies of the original because the originals lasted that long.

AMIR: Exactly.

RICK: When you think of the Dead Sea Scrolls, look how long the Dead Sea Scrolls have lasted.

AMIR: I know. And you know, Rick, one of the things that stunned me when I realized that that same Isaiah, I was able to see—I couldn't touch it because it was covered; I almost could touch it—but that very Isaiah that I saw could have been two copies away from the original. But the thing is, that very one that I saw was written before Christ came. And so everything about the Messiah that is written in that scroll that I looked at was actually written before He came.

Which brings me now to the whole aspect of fulfilled prophecy as another way to give validity, accuracy and authenticity to the Bible. We're referring to occasions when God has declared something in advance. And then it comes to pass just as He declared. So what are some examples in Scripture for us to consider of a fulfilled prophecy as a means to have a clear reliability of the Scriptures?

RICK: Well, just think in terms of when it comes to the life of Christ. I mean, the Bible tells us where He was going to be born. The Bible tells us where He was going to minister. You look at Isaiah chapter 9, verses 1 and 2, and it spells out the exact area where Jesus was going to minister. And then you go to Matthew 4, [it] tells us that Jesus left Nazareth to go to Capernaum according to the Scriptures, according to what Isaiah the prophet had already written. And so again and again, His birth, His death, His resurrection, all these things were predicted. And there's no other holy book that has prophecy that you can then historically look back and say, "Yes, that's what the prophet said. And here's where it was fulfilled and when it was fulfilled." So I think of that. I'm also thinking, by the way, of Ezekiel. And you think of the Ezekiel prophecies of Ezekiel chapters 34 and 36 and 37. They have been fulfilled in my lifetime. So that just blows your mind.

AMIR: Yeah, I agree with you. It's interesting because we often talk about us living in the 20th, 21st century, drawing much encouragement from the fact the Bible is accurate and fulfilled prophecies are indeed a way to see the accuracy of it. But I'm thinking about the road to Emmaus, where Christ demanded from His own disciples—It's the resurrected Lord telling two of His disciples, "Foolish ones and slow of heart to believe that which the prophets have said. Ought not the Messiah to go through all of this?" In other words, the Messiah, at the very same week, He went through all the things that the Bible predicted He will go through, is already telling His own disciples, "You are foolish if you do not believe the words of the prophets. Because if you would have believed then none of your astonishment right now and disbelief and anger and sadness and fear and confusion would have been there." And so, you know, I just, you know, I think that even today people need to know that the Bible is accurate, even just because everything that He said came to pass, and everything that is being said about even our own days today is being fulfilled. Therefore, 27% of the future events in the Bible will be accurately fulfilled as well.

RICK: Yeah, and this is what I don't understand how people will look at fulfilled prophecy and say, "Yes, that was all fulfilled, literally," but when it comes to unfulfilled prophecy, all of a sudden we have to allegorize that. It just doesn't make sense. Why do you change courses in the midstream?

AMIR: You're very right. By the way, when I say 27%, 27% of the Bible is prophecy. But the thing is, I think people have more faith for the great God of the Old Testament and New Testament than for the great God of today. I think that they think that God has gotten old. He's very limited. He is— "Don't test Him because He may have said one thing, but in reality, we don't think He's capable of doing it. So maybe don't take Him for His word, it's probably just symbolic." Obviously, when you don't believe that God is the same yesterday, today and forever, even in the means of fulfilling His own Word literally, I think it's an insult to God. I think you're insulting Him. And I think you don't really, truly trust, fully trust Him and believe in Him, because it's the same God. I mean, how can He literally fulfill things then, and not even today?

RICK: You know, Amir, when the Bible was written, it wasn't Old Testament and New Testament. That concept of old and new came around 250 A.D. And you just wonder why in the world was it ever divided like that? Because people in their minds think, "Well, the Old Testament, that must be—that was a Jewish book. The New Testament, this is probably written by Gentiles and it's a Christian book."

AMIR: I thought that way. I was one of them. You know, as a secular Jew, when I grew up, I thought the New Testament is written by Gentiles for Gentiles, and the Old Testament written by Jews for Jews. And there was nothing that could be further from the truth. It took me a while to open a New Testament. I thought I will find there a lot of Hail Mary's and all the stuff that I attribute to what then I thought is Christianity, which I wanted to stay away from. And so, yeah,

it's just amazing. I think maybe in one of our next programs, we'll also examine archaeological evidence beyond the manuscripts that we found, but all the other things. So that will be another level of accuracy, reliability, of authenticity.

Yeah. So, Rick, in conclusion, there's an acronym that you use when it comes to explaining the reliability of the Bible. I think you shared it, but maybe we can share the whole thing right now.

RICK: Well, I came up with an acronym called "DUCTS." I'm not talking about quack-quack kind of ducks. I'm talking about DUCTS, you know, heating ducts, air conditioning ducts in your house. And when I think of D-U-C-T-S, I think of the "D" stands for diversity. There is a lot of diversity in the Bible. I mean, you have 40 writers writing these 66 books in three different languages, on three different continents, and in many different kinds of genres. And with all that diversity, you wonder, is there anything that unites all that?

And then the more you get into the Scriptures, you find, oh, yes, the "U" stands for unity. Because you have the unity of Scripture when it comes to one person from Genesis to Revelation, the Lord Jesus Christ. You have one major theme, the theme of redemption. There's one major way of having sins forgiven, and that's through the blood. And so you see this throughout the Scriptures, all of this unity. There's one major nation. Now, you read about all these nations in the Bible, but they're included in their relationship with the nation of Israel. And I just wish people would understand the relationship between God and Israel. You will not understand your Bible if you do not understand that relationship. Because that relationship goes from Genesis right through Revelation. So you have diversity, but at the same time you have unity.

Then you see "C" stands for changed lives. You read in the Scriptures, lives that were changed. You think of Moses was a murderer and he ends up becoming a law giver, the law giver. You look at David who was just a nobody, a shepherd, and he ends up becoming a king. You look

at the Apostle Paul. He was a persecutor of the church, and soon he becomes an apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ. And so you see changed lives in the Scripture, but just think of your own life that has been changed. Once you were blind, but now you see. Once you were dead, but now you are alive. And you think of the millions and millions of people throughout the world whose lives have been changed because they took the Word of God seriously, and recognized their need of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The “T” stands for the teachings of the Bible. Now there’s no other book that teaches that God became man. Think about that. All these other religious books talk about man and things that he has to do to somehow be received by a higher power. But the Bible tells us that God loved us so much that He became man. And again, it’s the innocent dying for the guilty. So you don’t have any other book that teaches that God became man. There’s no other book that teaches how mankind can have a personal relationship with his Creator. But the Bible says, “Yes, God loves you so much that no matter who you are, no matter what you have done, you can have a personal relationship with God through the person, the Lord Jesus Christ.” So it’s the teachings of the Bible that are so different than any other kind of teaching.

And then the “S” stands for survival. Can you think of any other book that has survived as long as the Bible, when you have countries that forbid its use, forbid that it even exists? You have people who are burning the Bibles, people who are rejecting the Bible. Why is it that people can make fun of the Bible, but they cannot make fun of the Quran? They don’t see any reason to make fun of any other holy book. And it’s always the Bible where there is anger, and where people want to destroy it, people want to bury it. There are a number of ways that the Bible tells us that people handle truth. First of all, they exchange God’s truth for man’s truth; they exchange it for a lie. Secondly, they will bury it. They will put it under. They will try to submerge the truth. That’s why

we have today, you don't hear much truth because it's being buried, it's being manipulated. And then thirdly, they just reject the truth of the Word. So that's how the world handles truth.

AMIR: Yeah, DUCTS, I would add "I", "DUCTSI", because Israel also, I believe, the survival of Israel and the fact that we're still around, is one more major black eye to Satan's attempt to undermine the truth of the Bible. Because I think it's one of the advisors of Queen Victoria that when she asked, "Give me a proof to the Bible," he said, "Well, the Jews." I mean, if they're still around...

RICK: ...The existence of the Jews.

AMIR: Exactly. So, add the "I" and maybe that will give you a "DUC-TSI" and even a nicer one. Well, listen, Rick, listen, it was amazing. It was super important and super interesting. Everything that Dr. Rick shared with us is going to be posted in that page on our beholdisrael.org website under "Watch and Listen." You will find "Explore the Bible." And this is not only where you can see all the presentations about what we talked here on this show, but you can also click on the button, "Ask Dr. Rick," and you can actually send him an email with your question. And do me a favor, make sure it's related to the program, and to the topic.

Until then, thank you, Dr. Rick. Until then, I want to thank all of you for being with us. Thank you, and God bless you from Galilee, from Israel, and from Parker, Colorado. Thank you, Rick. Thank you, everyone. God bless you and Shalom.

* Scripture is taken from the New King James Version unless noted otherwise.

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