

Lesson Four:

Anchored in History – The Bible's Reliability

Lesson 4 of the series:

The Word Unshaken: Defending the Bible in a Shifting World

Outline for Lesson 4: Anchored in History – The Bible's Reliability

Series Theme Statement: We must be able to back up everything we teach and preach with the Bible—what it actually says, not what we read into it, infer from tradition, or imagine sounds conservative. If it cannot be supported with chapter and verse, it must not be accepted as doctrine. The Word of God alone is the final authority for the Christian life, and its relevance, reliability, and authority stand regardless of cultural change.

Lesson Four Objective

To equip believers to confidently affirm the *reliability* of the Bible through:

- Historical documentation
- Archaeological discoveries
- Scientific affirmation
- Verified manuscript preservation
- The extraordinary accuracy of fulfilled prophecy

Scripture is not built on myth but on fact. It is anchored in history, proven by time, and preserved by divine providence.

I. Introduction – Can We Really Trust the Bible?

“Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy word is truth.” – John 17:17

- The Bible is an ancient Book—sixty-six books written over 1,500 years, across three continents, by about 40 authors.
- It’s one thing to believe it is *inspired*—another to show it is *reliable*.
- Skeptics claim it is myth, fiction, or outdated religious tradition from pre-scientific men.
- But Jesus didn’t say the Bible “contains” truth—He said, “Thy word *is* truth.”

That’s not merely a claim of accuracy—it’s a claim of *essence*. The Word of God isn’t *like* truth—it *is* truth. It is the measuring rod by which all other truth claims are tested.

The Bible is:

- Not a theory—it is *testimony*.
- Not vague or mystical—it is *grounded and traceable*.
- Not separate from history—it *records* it, *defines* it, *directs* it.

We as believers must be equipped to show that the Scriptures are trustworthy—not only because God said so, but because the evidence confirms it.

“The righteousness of Thy testimonies is everlasting: give me understanding, and I shall live.” – Psalm 119:144

The Four Pillars We Will Examine:

1. Historical Accuracy
2. Manuscript Preservation
3. Fulfilled Prophecy
4. Scientific Statements Validated

“That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.” – 1 Corinthians 2:5

II. The Historical Accuracy of Scripture

The Bible is not written like a myth or legend. It includes specific names, places, dates, empires, cities, and events.

- Over 40 kings, 30 countries, and dozens of cities are named and recorded in detail.
- These details are verifiable in external records.

A. Esther 1:1 – A Historical Reference Point

*“Now it came to pass in the days of Ahasuerus, (this is Ahasuerus which reigned, from India even unto Ethiopia, over an hundred and seven and twenty provinces:)” – **Esther 1:1***

- The Holy Spirit includes details that are always confirmed by history.

*“He hath made His wonderful works to be remembered...” – **Psalms 111:4***

B. Old Testament Events Confirmed by Archaeology

1. The Hittites – Once Dismissed, Now Documented

*“...the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Rephaims,” – **Genesis 15:20***

- In the 19th century, thousands of Hittite texts and cities were discovered.
- They are now one of the most documented ancient civilizations.

Scientific Confirmation:

A 2020 genetics study showed partial genetic continuity between ancient Hittites and modern Anatolians.

2. King David – Once Doubted, Now Confirmed

*“Thy throne shall be established for ever.” – **2 Samuel 7:16***

- The 1993 Tel Dan Inscription references the “House of David.”
 - Liberal scholars were forced to admit David’s historical existence.
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3. Sodom and Gomorrah – Judged by Fire

*“Then the LORD rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the LORD out of heaven.” – **Genesis 19:24***

- Excavations at Tall el-Hammam (near the Dead Sea) reveal:
 - A sudden fiery catastrophe around 1700 B.C.
 - Melted bricks, scorched human remains, shockwave evidence.
- Smithsonian Magazine describes a blast 1,000x more powerful than Hiroshima.

*“The works of the LORD are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein.” – **Psalms 111:2***

C. The New Testament Confirmed by History

- The New Testament takes place in real, political, geographical, and cultural settings.

Luke the Historian:

*“It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order...” – **Luke 1:3***

Sir William Ramsay, former skeptic turned believer, said:

“Luke is a historian of the first rank...”

D. Examples of Archaeological Confirmation

1. Acts 13:7 – The Title “Proconsul” Confirmed

*“Which was with the deputy [proconsul] of the country, Sergius Paulus...” – **Acts 13:7***

- Critics said “proconsul” was wrong—archaeology proved it was right.
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2. John 5:2 – The Pool of Bethesda

*“Now there is at Jerusalem by the sheep market a pool... having five porches.” – **John 5:2***

- Discovered in 1888: the exact pool with five porches, as described.
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3. The Pilate Stone

*“When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing... he took water, and washed his hands...” – **Matthew 27:24***

- Found in 1961 at Caesarea Maritima: Inscription reads “Pontius Pilatus, Prefect of Judaea.”
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4. Gallio’s Judgment Seat – Acts 18:12–17

- Delphi Inscription (1905) confirmed Gallio’s rule in A.D. 51–52.

*“Thy word is true from the beginning: and every one of Thy righteous judgments endureth for ever.” – **Psalms 119:160***

III. Manuscript Evidence – A Trustworthy Transmission

One of the greatest testimonies to the Bible’s reliability is the volume and accuracy of its manuscript tradition.

We will examine both the Old and New Testament manuscript evidence.

A. Old Testament Preservation

For many years, the earliest complete Hebrew Old Testament was the Leningrad Codex, dating to A.D. 1008. Critics said the gap between Moses or David and this manuscript must have led to corruption. Then God provided overwhelming evidence of preservation.

1. The Dead Sea Scrolls

Discovery:

- Found in 1947 near Qumran by a shepherd boy.
- Preserved in jars for nearly 2,000 years.

- Included the Great Isaiah Scroll, dated to 125–150 B.C.—over 1,000 years older than any known manuscript.

Result of Comparison:

- Over 95% identical word-for-word with the Masoretic Text used in the King James Bible.
- Differences were spelling variations, word order, or minor scribal slips—*none affecting doctrine*.

*“The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. Thou shalt keep them, O LORD, Thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever.” – **Psalm 12:6–7***

Significance:

- Proves divine preservation, not textual evolution.
- Proves prophecy was written before the events it foretold.
- Confirms no major theological corruption over time.

*“Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.” – **Matthew 5:18***

2. The Silver Scrolls (Ketef Hinnom)

Discovery Site:

- Ketef Hinnom, southwest of the Old City of Jerusalem.

Date:

- Discovered in 1979, dated to ~700–600 B.C.

Contents:

- Two silver scrolls with Hebrew inscriptions of *Numbers 6:24–26*.

*“The LORD bless thee, and keep thee: The LORD make His face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: The LORD lift up His countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.” – **Numbers 6:24–26***

Significance:

- Oldest known portion of Scripture ever discovered.
 - Matches Masoretic Text used in KJV exactly.
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3. The Cairo Geniza Manuscripts

Location:

- Ben Ezra Synagogue, Old Cairo, Egypt.

Date Range:

- Discovered in 1896; date from the 9th to 19th centuries A.D.

Contents:

- Over 300,000 Hebrew manuscript fragments, including almost every Old Testament book.

Significance:

- Shows consistency in text over 1,000+ years.
- Confirms careful scribal transmission in exile and dispersion.

“Thou shalt keep them, O LORD, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever.” – Psalm 12:7

4. Codex Leningrad & Codex Aleppo

These are the foundations of the Masoretic Text used in the King James Old Testament.

Codex Leningrad:

- **Date:** A.D. 1008
- **Location Today:** St. Petersburg, Russia
- **Significance:** Oldest complete manuscript of the Hebrew Old Testament.
- **Preserves:** Masoretic vowel pointing and pronunciation traditions.

Codex Aleppo:

- **Date:** Circa A.D. 930
- **Location Today:** Jerusalem (partially damaged)
- **Significance:** Even older than Leningrad; confirms consistency of Masoretic tradition.

These codices show that the Old Testament text used in the KJV has not changed in over a thousand years.

B. New Testament Preservation

The New Testament is the most well-documented ancient text in the world.

1. Manuscript Numbers:

- **Greek Manuscripts:** Over 5,800
- **Latin Manuscripts:** Over 10,000
- **Other Ancient Versions:** Over 9,300
- **Total:** Over 25,000 known manuscripts.

By comparison:

- Homer's *Iliad* has 643 manuscripts.
- Caesar's *Gallic Wars* has about 10.

"The word of our God shall stand for ever." – **Isaiah 40:8**

2. John Rylands Fragment

- **Date:** A.D. 125
 - **Content:** A portion of John's Gospel
 - **Significance:** Written within one generation of the original composition.
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3. Codex Sinaiticus & Codex Vaticanus

- **Dates:** A.D. 325–350

- **Significance:** Nearly complete Greek New Testaments
 - **Contain:** Confirm early wide distribution of Scripture with very few differences.
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4. Accuracy of the New Testament Text

- Over 99% of the text is certain.
- Variants do not affect any doctrine.
- No other ancient document has this level of evidence.

“Thy word is true from the beginning: and every one of Thy righteous judgments endureth for ever.” – Psalm 119:160

IV. Fulfilled Prophecy – The Bible Declares the End from the Beginning

One of the clearest evidences of the Bible’s divine reliability is the precise fulfillment of its prophecies—many written hundreds or even thousands of years before their fulfillment.

The Bible does not speak vaguely or symbolically when it comes to prophecy. It gives names, dates, locations, empires, and exact events.

“Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done...” – Isaiah 46:10

A. Messianic Prophecy

- The Old Testament contains over 300 prophecies concerning the Messiah—all fulfilled in the person of Jesus Christ.
- These prophecies include:
 1. **His Birthplace** – Micah 5:2 — *“But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah... out of thee shall He come forth unto Me that is to be ruler in Israel...”*
 2. **His Virgin Birth** – Isaiah 7:14 — *“Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son...”*
 3. **His Crucifixion** – Psalm 22:16 — *“They pierced My hands and My feet.”*

4. **His Betrayal for 30 Pieces of Silver** – Zechariah 11:12 — “So they weighed for My price thirty pieces of silver.”

5. **His Burial** – Isaiah 53:9 — “And He made His grave with the wicked, and with the rich in His death...”

All of these are fulfilled in the Gospels with exact historical and theological precision.

These were not lucky guesses—they were *written history in advance*.

“But those things, which God before had shewed by the mouth of all His prophets, that Christ should suffer, He hath so fulfilled.” – **Acts 3:18**

B. Geopolitical Prophecy

1. Daniel’s Prophecy of Four Kingdoms (Daniel 2 & 7)

- Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome
- Each empire rose and fell as predicted

2. Cyrus Named by Name – 150 Years Before He Was Born

“That saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd... saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built...” – **Isaiah 44:28 – 45:1**

- Fulfilled in **Ezra 1:1** – “Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia...”

3. The Destruction of Jerusalem (Luke 21:20–24)

“And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh...”

- Fulfilled exactly in A.D. 70 by the Romans under Titus.
- Verified by the historian Josephus and multiple historical sources.

4. The Global Dispersion of the Jews

“And the LORD shall scatter thee among all people, from the one end of the earth even unto the other...” – **Deuteronomy 28:64**

- Fulfilled after the destruction of Jerusalem.

- The Jewish people were dispersed worldwide and remained distinct—just as prophesied.

“For ever, O LORD, Thy word is settled in heaven.” – Psalm 119:89

V. Scientific Statements in the Bible Validated

Though the Bible is not a science textbook, when it speaks on scientific matters, it does so with stunning accuracy. Long before modern discoveries, the Bible contained scientifically accurate statements.

A. Quarantine and Disease Control

“All the days wherein the plague shall be in him he shall be defiled; he is unclean: he shall dwell alone; without the camp shall his habitation be.” – Leviticus 13:46

- Long before germs were understood, the Bible prescribed quarantine and sanitation.
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B. Blood and Life

“For the life of the flesh is in the blood...” – Leviticus 17:11

- Bloodletting was a common practice even into the 1700s.
 - Today we know: blood carries oxygen, nutrients, and immune cells—vital to life.
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C. Sanitation and Waste Management

“Thou shalt have a place also without the camp... and thou shalt turn back and cover that which cometh from thee.” – Deuteronomy 23:12–13

- Human waste disposal instructions prevented disease—centuries ahead of their time.
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D. Circumcision on the 8th Day

*“And in the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised.” – **Leviticus 12:3***

- On the 8th day of life, Vitamin K and prothrombin levels naturally peak—ideal for clotting and healing.

E. Ocean Currents – “Paths of the Sea”

*“Whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas.” – **Psalms 8:8***

- Matthew Fontaine Maury, considered the father of oceanography, credited this verse as the inspiration for his discovery of global ocean currents.

VI. Conclusion – Anchored in History, Secured in Truth

*“The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever.” – **Isaiah 40:8***

The Bible is:

- **Historically accurate** – Confirmed by names, dates, and archaeology.
- **Textually preserved** – Verified by thousands of manuscripts across centuries.
- **Prophetically fulfilled** – With divine accuracy, hundreds of times.
- **Scientifically sound** – Far ahead of its time, never disproven.

*“Thy word is true from the beginning: and every one of Thy righteous judgments endureth for ever.” – **Psalms 119:160***

APPLICATION: WHAT TO DO THIS WEEK

*“But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.” – **James 1:22***

The purpose of this study is not simply to fill your head with facts—it is to **anchor your soul** in truth. The Bible you hold in your hands is not a museum piece to admire—it is the **voice of God** to obey, to trust, to proclaim. So here are some specific steps you can take this week to apply what you’ve learned:

Weekly Action Steps:

1. Study One Archaeological Discovery

Choose one of the discoveries mentioned in this lesson—or another one that interests you—and learn more about it. Write out a short summary and reflect on how it confirms the trustworthiness of the Bible.

Options include:

- The Tel Dan Inscription (House of David)
- The Pilate Stone (New Testament confirmation)
- The Pool of Bethesda (John 5)
- The Dead Sea Scrolls (textual preservation)
- The ruins of Jericho or Sodom

Ask yourself: *How does this discovery strengthen my confidence in the Bible?*

2. Write a Personal Testimony of Trust

Take 10–15 minutes and write a brief testimony explaining why **you** personally trust the Bible. Include at least one **historical**, **prophetic**, or **scientific** reason—and one way that trusting the Bible has changed your life.

You may want to begin like this:

“I believe the Bible is the Word of God because...”

This exercise will help you articulate your convictions and prepare you to give an answer to those who ask (1 Peter 3:15).

3. Memorize a Prophecy and Its Fulfillment

Choose one fulfilled prophecy and memorize both the Old Testament prophecy **and** the New Testament fulfillment.

Example:

- **Prophecy: Zechariah 11:12** – “So they weighed for My price thirty pieces of silver.”

- **Fulfillment:** *Matthew 26:15* – “...they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver.”

This not only strengthens your own faith—it equips you to **show others** the supernatural nature of Scripture.

4. Share a Biblical Fact with Someone This Week

Whether in a conversation, a text, or a social media post—share one truth from this lesson that shows the Bible is historically and factually reliable. Let your confidence in Scripture overflow into your witness to others.

Memory Verse:

Isaiah 40:8 *“The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever.”*

Write it. Say it aloud. Post it on your mirror. Put it on your phone's lock screen (I heard this suggested this week and thought that was a great idea). Let this verse sink deep into your soul this week. When everything around you changes—God's Word stands.