

# THE INERRANCY OF THE SCRIPTURES

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## INTRODUCTION

The subject of inerrancy is one of the most fundamental subjects to be considered. This brief treatise will set forth several evidences that the Scriptures (the 66 books known as the Bible) are inerrant. Webster defines the word *inerrant* as: “free from error: infallible.” (page 618) Webster also defines the word *inerrancy* as: “exemption from error: INFALLIBILITY.” (page 618) It will not be possible to defend the arguments made in this brief treatise from every attack that might be made against them. This writer is convinced that this line of reasoning is logically valid and the arguments are unassailable. If these two points are true, this argumentation is sound and the conclusions are true.

Evidences for the existence of God are divided into two broad categories, external evidences (external to the Bible) and internal evidences (internal to the Bible). This treatise will be concerned with internal evidences for the inspiration of the Bible. This writer considers these internal evidences to be the strongest evidences for the existence of God.

The Scriptures claim to be inerrant, Jesus said the Scriptures cannot be broken (John 10:35) and that the word of God is truth (John 17:17). Paul said that God cannot lie (Titus 1:2 and Hebrews 6:18) and that all scripture is inspired of God (II Timothy 3:16-17). If God cannot lie and He inspired the Scriptures, then the Scriptures cannot lie (they must be inerrant). The apostles were guided into all truth (John 16:12-14) as the Holy Spirit gave them the very words to speak in the face of persecution (Matthew 10:16-23). The Holy Spirit bore witness to their testimony by miracles (Hebrews 2:1-4, Mark 16:20, etc.). This links the testimony (witness) of the resurrection with additional confirmation (miracles).

Any proof that the Scriptures are inerrant automatically proves that God exists. It is impossible to have an inerrant book without an inerrant Author of the book. This argument is given in the form of a conditional syllogism: If p then q, p is true, therefore q is true (*modus ponens*-Latin for “affirmative mood”). If the Scriptures are inerrant, then they have an inerrant Author (God). The Scriptures are inerrant, therefore the Scriptures have an inerrant Author (God).

## WAYS TO PROVE THE INERRANCY OF THE SCRIPTURES

This writer will validate one set of arguments made by Christians since the days of the apostles. From the early church until present times Christians have argued that it is unreasonable to assume that a sane person would have lied about the events that they observed (the resurrection, miracles observed, etc.). The soundness of this line of reasoning will be established and it will then be used to demonstrate that the Scriptures are inerrant and that God exists. It is obvious that the written record claims to provide enough evidence to the Christian to give him faith (John 20:30-31). Jesus implies that it is possible to produce faith, from the Scriptures (John 20:29).

## Evidence From Prophecy

The first method this author will use to prove the inerrancy of the Scriptures is to demonstrate the probability of the prophets prophesying correctly several hundred times. The probability of a sequence of events occurring is:  $P_t = P_1 \cdot P_2 \cdot P_3 \dots P_n$  (Alder and Roessler, page 52). Where  $P_1$  is the probability of the first event occurring,  $P_2$  is the probability of the second event occurring,  $P_3$  is the probability of the third event occurring, etc. While it is true that the ancient people did not have the highly developed mathematical system of probability that we have, they could see the principles of probability, from experience. In addition the probability of a single event occurring is:  $P = s/(s + f)$  where  $s$  = the number of ways that an event can successfully occur and  $f$  = the number of ways an event can fail to occur (Alder and Roessler, page 56). For example, if an event has 100 possible ways it can occur and only 1 of them is successful, the other 99 being ways it will fail to occur, the probability is  $P = 1/(1 + 99) = 1/100 = .01$  or 1 chance in 100.

The probability of 50 events all occurring with each event having a probability of 1 in 100 is 1 chance in  $100^{50} = 10^{100}$ . This is 1 chance in 1 followed by 100 zeroes. Emile Borel states concerning events which are Negligible on the Human Scale: “*one one-millionth* as a reasonable value for a negligible probability on the human scale.” (page 27) Borel states concerning events which are Negligible on the Terrestrial Scale: “the negligible probability on the human scale must be regarded as negligible on the terrestrial scale, that is to say, a billionth of one one-millionth, or  $10^{-15}$ , unity divided by a number of 15 figures.” (page 27) Borel says: “We may be led to set at  $10^{-50}$  the value of negligible probabilities on the cosmic scale. When the probability of an event is below this limit, the opposite event may be expected to occur with certainty, whatever the number of occasions presenting themselves in the entire universe ... A phenomenon with a probability of  $10^{-50}$  will therefore never occur, or at least never be observed.” (page 28) This is 1 chance in 1 followed by 50 zeroes. If the probability is 1 chance in 2 (a 50-50 chance, a pure guess with only two options) it will only require 166 such events to have a probability of 1 chance in  $10^{50}$ . If 166 prophecies can be found in the Scriptures to be fulfilled it demonstrates that the Scriptures have foreknowledge. The reader should be aware that many questions have more than two options. For example, the question “on what day of the year was Jesus born?” has 366 options and a pure guess would have 1 chance in 366 to be right.

The first example of fulfilled prophecy is the prophecy of Genesis 17:1-21, the prophecy of a multitude of nations which were to come from Abraham. This has been literally fulfilled by means of his fleshly offspring, both the Jews and the Arabs (descendants of Ishmael).

The second example of fulfilled prophecy is the prophecy of Babylonian captivity when Hezekiah foolishly showed his treasures to the son of the King of Babylon (Isaiah 39:1-8).

The third example of fulfilled prophecy is the prophecy of Moses that the children of Israel would forsake God and be punished for it (Deuteronomy 28:15-57). This was fulfilled for the northern ten tribes (Israel) in their Assyrian captivity and for the southern two tribes (Judah) in their Babylonian captivity.

The fourth example of fulfilled prophecy is the prophecy of Cyrus (Isaiah 45:1-7). Isaiah actually called him by name and gave details of his reign. When this prophecy was shown to King Cyrus he acknowledged Jehovah as God (Ezra 1:1-11). This prophecy and many others are so detailed that the atheist, agnostic, skeptic, and modernist find it necessary to claim these prophecies were written, after the fact.

The fifth example of fulfilled prophecy is the prophecy of Jesus that Jerusalem would be destroyed (Matthew 24, Mark 13, and Luke 21), which was fulfilled in AD 70. Again, these prophecies are so detailed that the skeptic and modernist must claim they were written after AD 70.

To these prophecies can be added a large number of other prophecies, literally hundreds of prophecies, in both the Old Testament and the New Testament that were fulfilled. These prophecies are totally conclusive evidence that the Scriptures are inspired of God and are inerrant.

### Evidence For the Resurrection of Jesus

The evidence of credible witnesses is the second method of proving the inerrancy of the Scriptures. This point is best illustrated by the following argument from probability. (1) If the probability of people knowingly lying for a cause when they would suffer loss of property is 1 in 100 ( $P = .01$ ), (2) and if the probability of people knowingly lying for a cause when they suffer loss of esteem in the community is 1 in 100 ( $P = .01$ ), (3) and if the probability of people suffering pain for a cause when they were knowingly lying is 1 in 100 ( $P = .01$ ), (4) and if the probability of people suffering death for a cause when they were knowingly lying is 1 in 100 ( $P = .01$ ), then the total probability of a person knowingly lying when all four would occur is:  $P_t = P_1 \cdot P_2 \cdot P_3 \cdot P_4 = (.01)(.01)(.01)(.01) = .00000001 = 1$  chance in 100,000,000. If this probability is changed to 1 in 1000 of each event the total probability is 1 chance in 1,000,000,000,000. A number of other factors can be added to this argument. They would have been rewarded by the enemies of Christianity for changing their story. If the probability is 1 in 100 that they would tell a lie when being rewarded to tell the truth, this lowers the overall probability of them being liars. This kind of reasoning can be applied to a number of parts of the Scriptures. It will be applied to the resurrection of our Lord, testimony about miracles, and internal scientific accuracy in this brief article. These probabilities of 1 in 100 are quite conservative, by any person's reasoning. This writer does not think, for one second, that 1 person in 100 would willingly die for a lie (that he knew to be a lie) if he was given a choice.

The same formula of the prior paragraph can be applied to each of the 13 apostles. Assuming the conservative probability of 1 in 100 the total probability of 13 persons knowingly lying in face of the adversities of the prior paragraph is:  $P_t = P_1 \cdot P_2 \cdot P_3 \cdot \dots \cdot P_{13} = (.01)(.01)(.01)(.01)(.01)(.01)(.01)(.01)(.01)(.01)(.01)(.01)(.01) = 1$  part in  $10^{26}$  for each event. Chaining four events together makes a total probability of:  $P_t = P_1 \times P_2 \times P_3 \times P_4 = (1 \times 10^{26})(1 \times 10^{-26})(1 \times 10^{-26})(1 \times 10^{-26}) = 1 \times 10^{-104}$ . This is 1 chance in 1 followed by 104 zeroes!

Certainly the probability of the 13 apostles doing the four things mentioned in the prior paragraphs (1 part in 1 followed by 104 zeroes) is much less than Borel's probability of an event that will "never occur." (page 28) Many other events can be added to the four mentioned in the prior paragraphs, further reducing the overall probability that the apostles lied. In addition over 500 witnesses (I Corinthians 15:6) can all be added to the 13 apostles, reducing the probability even more. There is no need for a reasonable person to need further evidence beyond the 13 apostles with the 4 events mentioned, but addition of the 500 witnesses makes the overall probability 1 chance in  $10^{4104}$  (this is 1 chance in 1 followed by 4,104 zeroes). This probability is so much greater than the probability given by Emile Borel, to safely say a matter will not occur, that it staggers the imagination of any person who knows basic arithmetic!

The witnesses of the Lord's resurrection lost their properties (land, houses, etc.) and gave up good occupations to preach that Jesus was resurrected (Hebrews 10:32-34). Peter, Andrew, James, and John left profitable fishing enterprises to preach (Mark 1:16-20). Matthew left a good job as a tax collector (Mark 2:14). Barnabas sold his properties to give them for the advancement of the cause of Christ (Acts 4:36-37). Paul lost everything to follow Jesus the Christ (Philippians 3:7-8).

The witnesses of the Lord's resurrection lost esteem in the community in order to preach that Jesus was resurrected. They suffered dishonor for the Name of Christ (Acts 5:41). There was shame in dying on a cross (cf. Hebrews 12:2). Christianity was everywhere spoken against (Acts 28:22). They were thought to be fools, to be weak, and to have dishonor (I Corinthians 4:9-13). They were reviled, defamed, and treated as the filth of the earth (I Corinthians 4:9-13).

The witnesses of the Lord's resurrection suffered pain, imprisonment, and persecution because they preached that Jesus was resurrected. The apostles were beaten (Acts 5:40-41, Acts 13:50, 14:1-7, 19, I Corinthians 4:9-13, II Corinthians 11:23-33, etc.). They were persecuted in all sorts of ways (Acts 8:1-3).

The witnesses of the Lord's resurrection suffered death because they preached that Jesus was resurrected. First, they were thrown into prison (Acts 4:3), second, they were threatened (Acts 4:17-21), third, they were thrown into prison and beaten (Acts 5:18, 27-32, and 40-41), fourth, they were thrown into prison and killed (Acts 12:2), and fifth, they knew they were doomed to death (I Corinthians 4:9). Stephen died because he preached that Jesus was resurrected (Acts 6:8-8:3). Secular history records that all the apostles, except John, suffered death for the preaching of the gospel (death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus). Both the New Testament and secular history abound in evidence of persecution of the early church for preaching that Jesus was resurrected. If Jesus was resurrected from the dead, there is a resurrection (I Corinthians 15:13) and He is the Son of God (Romans 1:4).

#### Evidence From Scientific Foreknowledge in the Scriptures

The third method of proving the inerrancy of the Scriptures is to demonstrate that the Scriptures contain scientific truths which could not have been known during the times the

Bible was being written. It is unreasonable to assert that the writers of the Scriptures merely guessed these truths correctly.

The first example of scientific foreknowledge is the act of circumcision on the eighth day (Genesis 17:10-12). The amount of prothrombin and vitamin K are at levels that make any operation safer on the eighth day than any other day in ones' lifetime. How did Moses know this truth? Assuming that he merely guessed this truth, what are the odds that he guessed correctly? For the sake of argument it will be assumed that the odds are 1 in 100.

The second example of scientific foreknowledge is the truth that both men and women possess the seed of life (Genesis 3:15 and 22:18). This was not discovered until the invention of the microscope. Before the discovery that women have an egg, the preformation theory was advocated. This theory says that the sperm of a man contains tiny human beings and the woman provides a fertile environment for them to grow. This is why women were blamed if they could not have a baby. For the sake of argument it will be assumed that the odds are 1 in 100 that Moses was accidentally correct on this point.

The third example of scientific foreknowledge is the truth that it is possible to open the human body for surgery without the person dying. Moses revealed this truth in Genesis 2:21-22. It has been only in recent times that man discovered that the soul of man will not escape and he will not die as a result of being cut open. It will be assumed there is 1 chance in 100 that Moses accidentally guessed right on this subject.

The fourth example of scientific foreknowledge is the truth that certain diseases should be quarantined (Leviticus 13-15). This was not readily accepted until the discovery that some diseases are spread by microorganisms. It will be assumed there is 1 chance in 100 that Moses accidentally guessed right on this subject.

The fifth example of scientific foreknowledge is the truth that dead animals contaminate seed that is being eaten, but do not contaminate sowing seed (Leviticus 11:29-37). The reader should remember that it was a common practice to eat raw (uncooked) grain (Luke 6:1). This was not readily accepted until the discovery that disease is spread by microorganisms. It will be assumed there is 1 chance in 100 that Moses accidentally guessed right on this subject.

The sixth example of scientific foreknowledge is the depiction of the hydrologic cycle by Solomon (Ecclesiastes 1:7). This was not discovered until modern times with the advance of the science of meteorology. It will be assumed there is 1 chance in 100 that Solomon accidentally guessed right on this subject.

The seventh example of scientific foreknowledge is the truth that the wind makes circuits or circles (Ecclesiastes 1:6). This meteorological truth has been discovered in modern times. It will be assumed there is 1 chance in 100 that Solomon accidentally guessed right on this subject.

The eighth example of scientific foreknowledge is the truth that the most seaworthy dimensions for a ship are  $30 \times 5 \times 3$  (Genesis 6:15). This truth has been verified by marine engineers in their laboratories. It will be assumed there is 1 chance in 100 that Moses accidentally guessed right on this subject.

Other examples of scientific foreknowledge in the Scriptures could be cited to demonstrate that the Bible is not an accident, but the revelation of the mind of God.

These eight examples with an assumed probability of 1 chance in 100 for each example,  $P = 1/100 = .01$  provide a total probability of  $P_t = P_1 \cdot P_2 \cdot P_3 \cdot \dots \cdot P_8 = (.01)(.01)(.01)(.01)(.01)(.01)(.01)(.01) = 1 \times 10^{-16}$  (this is a probability 1/10 as great as that which Borel says will not occur on the terrestrial scale). By providing just 25 such examples the total probability is  $1 \times 10^{-50}$  (the value given by Emile Borel to be certain that an event cannot occur, on the cosmic scale). It is obvious that the probability of 25 such coincidences all accidentally occurring is 0 (they cannot occur). If the chance for each event occurring is changed from the conservative 1 in 100 to 1 chance in 10,000 it only requires 13 such events to have a probability of occurrence less than  $1 \times 10^{-50}$ .

### Summary

These three major arguments can each be chained together to give a total probability of  $P_t = P_1 \times P_2 \times P_3$ . The probability becomes even lower with each event added to the overall argument. It is obvious the writer of Psalms 14:1 was right that a person is a fool to deny the existence of God.

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