

## What makes the Bible so distinctive from other religious books?

1. Trivial Pursuits: a) How many years did it take to write the Bible? b) How many authors were there and what were some of their social statures? c) What continents was the Bible written in? d) What languages was the Bible written in?

a) 1500 years. b) There were over 40 authors from a diversity of socioeconomic backgrounds: fishermen (Peter), herdsman (Amos), military general (Joshua), Prime Minister (Daniel), king (David), tax collector (Matthew), physician (Luke), etc. c) The Bible was written in Africa, Asia, and Europe. d) The languages are Aramaic (half of Daniel and two passages in Ezra), Hebrew (most of the Old Testament), and Greek (New Testament). The significance of these facts (along with others not mentioned) is that no other book can make any similar claim. The unique characteristics of the Bible while yet being remarkably doctrinally consistent provide strong circumstantial evidence for a single author.

2. In the absence of modern printing technology, how was the Bible written?

The Jews had a group of special scribes called the Talmudists (AD 100-500) who followed strict regulations on the process of copying the Scripture. Only after several tests would they be convinced that they had the exact duplicate and give the new copy equal authority. The original, often worn and faded from use, would be destroyed so that no errors would be introduced. The Massoretes (AD 500-900) succeeded the Talmudists and were authors of the earliest Old Testament manuscripts in possession before the Dead Sea Scrolls were found.

3. What is the significance of the Dead Sea Scrolls?

Before the Dead Sea Scrolls, the oldest known copy of the Old Testament was dated 900 AD. One of the Dead Sea Scrolls, dated around 125 BC, 1000 years earlier, was a copy of Isaiah 53, which was almost identical to the 900 AD Massoretic text. This is believed to be within 500 years of the original manuscript! This major find testifies to the fidelity and tradition of the scribes and provides a very strong argument for the inerrancy of the Bible.

4. Study the Original Sin (Gen 3:1-6). What do you observe in Gen 3:1? What do you observe in Eve's response (Gen 3:2)? What do you observe in Satan's statement in Gen 3:4-5?

The tempter was a lowly snake, a perceived subordinate object, which man had dominion over. Satan challenges Eve with a cleverly portrayed innocent falsehood, "Indeed, has God said, 'you shall not eat from any tree in the garden?'" Eve responds to Satan's testing with uncertainty by adding to God's command ("...or touch it..."). Satan recognizes Eve's failed grasp of God's Word and confidently states a blatant lie ("You surely will not die"). He continues by casting doubt on God's character by implying that God is holding them back. The temptation is complete with the appeal to personal power and glory ("...you will be like God, knowing good and evil."). Eve succumbs by believing that the fruit was desirable for gaining wisdom.

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5. Study the Original Sin (Gen 3:1-6) in light of Satan's temptation of Jesus in the wilderness (Matt 4:1-11). One tool in Bible study methods is making a comparison chart. Make a chart of what you observe comparing these two passages. What patterns do you notice in the temptation and response to that temptation? What significant lesson is here?

Temptation	Genesis 3	Matthew 4
1. Appeal to physical appetite	temptation: "...You shall not eat of any tree..." (v. 1)  response: "... 'You shall not eat from it or touch it, lest you die!'" (v. 3)	temptation: "...command that these stones become bread." (v. 3)  response: "(It is written) 'man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the Lord.'" (Jesus quotes from Deut 8:3)
2. Appeal to personal safety	temptation: "You surely will not die,..." (v. 4)	temptation: "On their hands they will bear You up, so that You will not strike Your foot..." (v. 6)  response: "(...it is written) 'You shall not put the Lord your God to the test,..." (Jesus quotes from Deut 6:16)
3. Appeal to power or glory	temptation: "...you will be like God knowing good and evil." (v. 5)  response: "...the tree was desirable to make one wise, she took from its fruit and ate;..." (v.6)	temptation: "All these things will I give You, if You fall down and worship me." (v. 8-9)  response: "(For it is written) 'You shall fear only the Lord your God; and you shall worship Him,..." (Jesus quotes from Deut 6:13)

The lesson is clear: Christ gained victory over Satan by His precise knowledge of God's Word.

For more scientific, historical and archeological facts about the Bible, see Josh McDowell's book: [Evidence that Demands a Verdict](#).

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