

The Present

Read: Hebrews 11:1-40

The Bible's past and future history can be applied to my life today
(Hebrews 12:1-2)

The people in Hebrews 11 viewed God's activity in history as a "track record of trust." God acted faithfully in the past, so they trusted He would act faithfully in the future. What has God done in your past that you can claim as an example of His faithfulness? How can you apply that "track record of trust" to your future?

The application of historical biblical principles is linked to God's activity in my life
(Philippians 2:12-13)

"Working out your salvation" does not mean doing things in order to be saved. Instead, it means that we should apply Godly principles in such a way that they have a practical effect in our lives – which demonstrate that we *already* are saved. The key is verse 13, "For it is God who is at work in you." How do you see God at work in your life in the past, and leading you for the future?

A biblically-led lifestyle can provide others with evidence for the Bible's claims

People who don't believe in Jesus Christ are watching you to see if your life demonstrates a genuine faith in Jesus. If you misapply God's word in your life, how can it affect others? Examples? If you apply God's word correctly what can happen?

A.C.T.

A – Action Point

What will I do in light of what I have learned?

C – Commune (prayer)

What will I commit to God and ask Him for to help me put what I have learned into action?

T – Tell Others

What kinds of things can I say or do to others to demonstrate the biblical truth I have learned?

The Historical Reliability of the Bible

The Internal Evidences for God's Word

As a collection of religious texts the Bible speaks to many issues of philosophy and morality. Like many religious texts, its claims may be compared to any other religion or teaching and be dismissed or embraced. However, there are two things unique about the Bible and its claims that other religions and philosophies do not possess.

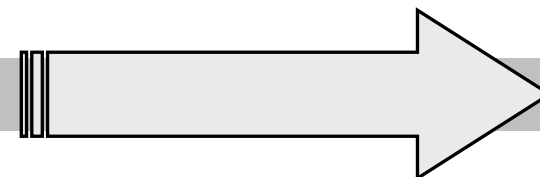
1. The Bible is a book of *verifiable history*, claiming to outline, in real history, in real time, God's interaction with man.
2. The Bible presents *future history* that can be verified upholding the reliability of its claims.

Unlike many other religious texts, which only claim to present the philosophy of a respected teacher, the Bible claims absolute authority as the inspired Word of the One and Only Living God. Such an extraordinary claim requires extraordinary evidence to support it. While this short study will not present all of the evidences, it will provide you with a guide for examining the internal claims and evidences of the Bible, to help you understand the reliability of its text. This guide will also help you examine your own faith and knowledge of God's Word.

Is the Bible historically reliable? Does the Bible provide any internal evidence for its extraordinary claims? Is there a way to provide a test of biblical text to discover its accuracy and reliability?

Let us ask these questions in a more personal way.

Is your faith reliable? Can your life provide evidences for the extraordinary claims of Christianity? Can you test the application of God's Word in your own life to discover its reliability – and your own?



The Past

Read: Isaiah 43:9, 46:9, Job 8:8-9

The Bible records verifiable historical events

(Genesis 5:1, I Kings 11:41, II Kings 1:18, Ezra 4:15, Luke 1:1)

While the Bible teaches about morality and lifestyle, one great purpose is to record God's interaction with man through certain periods in history. To date the Bible's historical record is unmatched in its accuracy and claims.

If the Bible's recorded history were wrong, what would that say about its reliability in other areas?

The Bible's historical events are directly linked to God's activity

The Bible records that God created the nation of Israel as part of His relationship to Abraham. It records that God intervened in history to free Israel from Egypt. It records that God established Israel in the Promised Land and gave them His Law. These are all historical events the Bible claims happened through God's direct intervention in human affairs. The record is presented to demonstrate a direct connection between the recorded events, and the influence of God in the affairs of men.

If the record had not attributed these things to God, would the historical record be unique or special? Why or why not?

The Bible's record of historical events provides evidence for its religious claims.

God's intervention in historical events provides evidence for His existence. If the historical events God intervened in really did happen, what does that tell you about God's character? What does it tell you about the Bible's religious claims?

Discuss or Write your personal reflections:

- 1.) Imagine that something we believe about the past was untrue, and our culture was built upon that belief. Name some of the implications.
- 2.) Should we be more skeptical of an historical record simply because it *also* contains religious claims?

The Future

Read: Deuteronomy 18:18-22, Isaiah 44:6-8, 46:9-10

The Bible records verifiable future events

(Revelation 1:1)

Unlike history which is past, the Bible also provides detail on world events yet to come. This is known as "prophecy."

If the Bible claims God recorded a future event, and the event did not take place, what would that say about His claim to know the future?

The Bible's record of future history is directly linked to God's future activity

Some people believe in religious leaders who can predict the future. But the Bible is different. It records future history, *as if it has already happened*, from the perspective of God actively taking part in our history. God knows the future, and reveals portions of it to us.

Why do you think God wants to tell us about some future historical events? Give examples and reasons.

The Bible's record of future history provides evidence for its religious claims

The purpose of revealing *past history* is to demonstrate God's activity and objectives through the ages. The purpose of *prophecy* is to provide unique and undeniable evidence that God really does exist, and has something unique and important to say to us now and in the future.

If God exists, and reveals the truth about the future, what does that tell us about His other revelations of law, lifestyle, and His love?

Discuss or write your personal reflections:

- 1.) Isaiah 44:6-8 claims that God's revelation of the future means that only God can be the real and only God, and the only one who is true.
- 2.) More than 300 prophecies, written hundreds of years in advance, were fulfilled about the birth, life, and death of Jesus. What does this tell you about Jesus, His place in history, and historical reliability?

