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Why Believe the Bible?

By Jeremy Lyon (truelife.org)

*The Bible is the most widely read book in the history of the world.*

Jeremy, is that really such a big accomplishment when those who refused to read it were ostracized or even killed?

*It has been translated, either in part or in its entirety, into over 2,000 languages.*

Jeremy, spreads like weeds doesn't it?

*Throughout history, people have been willing to suffer and even die for its content.*

Jeremy, you left out "kill."

*Today, even though the Bible still retains great popularity, more and more people are questioning the Bible.*

Jeremy, that's only because the internet has provided an anonymous forum that makes it much harder for Ghost Worshippers to enforce their beliefs through violence.

*Is the Bible really God’s Word or just a man-made book? Hasn’t the Bible been proven wrong?*

Jeremy, that depends on whether or not you believe that the sun can stop in the sky for one day.

*What about other religious books? Why believe the Bible? These are legitimate questions that deserve reasonable answers. Christians are called to have reasonable answers for those who ask about the Christian faith (1 Peter 3:15).*

Jeremy, you can add that one to the long list of verses that Christians ignore.

*In other words, Christians are called to know not only what they believe, but why they believe.*

Jeremy, we already know why you believe. The Bible is very specific about what will happen to you ... if you don't.

*Christians must not leave questions that people have, unanswered as though the historic Christian faith does not have legitimate answers. So why believe the Bible? Is it reasonable to believe that the Bible is indeed God’s Word and completely reliable?*

Jeremy, can I answer that one? If you believe in unicorns and talking snakes then you might be able to make a case that the Bible is reliable.

*First, in answering these questions one must ask, “What does the Bible claim about itself?” Two books in the Old Testament state that the Ten Commandments came directly from God’s finger. In similar manner, the prophets of the Old Testament state in their writings over 5,000 times, “Thus says the LORD.” In other words, these were God’s words, not theirs.*

Jeremy, just because they said that an invisible ghost was telling them what to write down, doesn't mean He was, it only means they claimed He was.

*The New Testament states in 2 Timothy 3:16 that “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God.” Elsewhere, 2 Peter 1:21 also says that “no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.”*

Jeremy, once again, you are accepting their claims. How do you figure any of that qualifies as proof? The Koran says the same thing about their god. Why do you reject that? Well Jeremy, had you been born in Tehran ... you wouldn't.

*So these passages claim that what was written in the Bible were not the words of mere men, but came from God Himself. With claims like this it is no wonder that the Bible has drawn such a strong response from so many people. But, the Bible is not necessarily God’s Word simply because it claims to be.*

Jeremy, you got that one right. It is evidence that decides whether or not something is true ... not mere claims.

*So, is the Bible really God’s Word and is it reliable?*

*The Old Testament was written during a thousand year period from 1450 BC to 400 BC. Over the centuries scribes would meticulously make copies of the Old Testament as they counted the verses, words, and letters of the Law and other parts of Scripture to ensure the faithful transmission of the biblical text.*

Jeremy, *any* biblical scholar will tell you that you are full of shit. There exist no originals, and the copies are rife with copying errors.

*As the older manuscripts began to wear out they would make new copies and dispose of the older copies. In fact, the newer copies were, in some respects, even preferred over the older copies which were more subject to wear and tear. Because of this, the oldest available copies of Old Testament manuscripts, which the modern Bible is based on, are dated to around AD 1000. This leads to an important question. Do the Hebrew manuscripts dated around AD 1000, along with the modern texts we now possess, reliably preserve the original manuscripts?*

Jeremy, that question has already been answered by biblical scholars of whom you seem to have no knowledge. The answer is no. All copies have been extensively edited.

*The greatest archaeological discovery of the twentieth century would shed great light on this question. The Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered in the Qumran caves on the northwest shore of the Dead Sea between 1947 and 1956. These Scrolls (complete texts or fragments) contain every book of the Old Testament except for the book of Esther. The Dead Sea Scrolls are dated between 200 BC and AD 70. Carbon-14 dating confirms the dating of the Dead Sea Scrolls, along with evidence from archaeology, paleography, and internal references within the Scrolls.*

Jeremy, it's nice to see a Christian finally accept carbon dating results. But I'll bet you don't accept the carbon dating results for the Shroud of Turin do you? Those didn't quite come out the way you had hoped, did they?

*Previously, the earliest Old Testament manuscripts available dated to around AD 900. The Dead Sea Scrolls discovery takes the dating of available Old Testament manuscripts back 1,000 years!*

Jeremy, unfortunately for you, they also exposed the extent to which the manuscripts had been altered. Your argument would have been stronger if they had never been found.

*When the scrolls were examined, it was discovered that the scribes were accurate with great precision.*

Jeremy, that's not quite what biblical scholars say. Methinks thou art engaging in wishful thinking Jeremy.

*Many of the biblical texts of the Dead Sea Scrolls are remarkably almost identical to the Hebrew Masoretic Text (which the modern Bible is based) with the exception of a few minor differences (such as a few spelling details).*

Jeremy, which modern Bible? The King James? The New Standard Version? The American Standard Version? The English Standard Version? The New International Version? Or one of the other dozens of versions?

*The Dead Sea Scrolls demonstrate the reliability and faithful transmission of the Old Testament text. In other words, we can be assured that what we have now is what was originally written.*

Jeremy, the only way that statement could be true is if we had the originals ... which we don't. And, that statement could only be true if there were only one version of the Bible; instead there are dozens. So your claim is denied.

*The New Testament was written between AD 40 – 100.*

Wrong again Jeremy, the first book of the New Testament, Mark, wasn't written until about 70 A.D. Here's a link: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gospel\_of\_Mark

It's pretty obvious from the dates you used that you are trying to make it as close to the crucifixion as possible because you people can't explain why the most incredible event in history wasn't even considered important enough to record until 30-40 years after it happened.

Also, the New Testament wasn't completed by 100 A.D. as you claimed, but took much longer; probably because God wanted to make sure He wasn't misquoted.

*There are over 5,000 ancient manuscripts or portions of manuscripts of the New Testament. The earliest portions of these New Testament manuscripts are dated to within mere decades of the original manuscripts.*

Jeremy, since we don't have the original manuscripts ... how would you know?

*For example, one of the most amazing finds is the John Rylands fragment which is 3 ½ by 2 ½ inches, containing words from John 18:31-33, 37-38. This papyrus fragment was discovered in Egypt and is dated to around AD 125 giving convincing evidence of early circulation of the Gospel of John.*

Jeremy, you consider something dated almost a century after the Crucifixion to be "early" circulation?

*There are those who simply will not believe in the historical events (including the resurrection) recorded in the New Testament unless they can be proven scientifically.*

Jeremy, they are called "Rational" people. Rational people always require evidence before believing supernatural stories.

*However, since the N.T. records historical events, one cannot use the scientific method to prove it.*

Wrong Jeremy, the scientific method has been applied to many claims found in the New Testament. For example: walking on water.

Result: negative. Claim dismissed as fiction.

*You cannot observe, measure, or repeat the historical events in question here.*

Jeremy, it is not necessary to observe, measure, or repeat historical events. There are many other methods that scientists use to determine what has happened in the past. For example: using radiocarbon dating, scientists were able to determine that the "Shroud of Turin" was nothing more than a 14th century hoax.

*Rather, one must approach the question of the history recorded in the New Testament as it is done in a court of law. One must find out if there is any reliable eye-witness testimony to verify the claims. This is exactly what the Bible has!*

Jeremy, I notice that you Ghost Worshippers always use an exclamation point every time you make a powerful claim ... that has absolutely no solid evidence backing it up. It is almost as if you think that adding an exclamation point adds credibility to your claim. What it really does, is, it gives away your insecurity.

*Regarded as one of the greatest archaeologists, Sir William Ramsay was trained in mid 19th century German historical skepticism and so did not believe that the N.T. documents were historically reliable.*

Jeremy, Ramsay was a chemist: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sir\_William\_Ramsay

*However, his archaeological investigations drove him to see that his skepticism was unwarranted. He had a profound change of attitude. Speaking the author of the Gospel of Luke and the Book of Acts, Ramsay stated: “Luke is a historian of the first rank…he should be placed along with the very greatest of historians.”*

Jeremy, I would agree - when they create a category for fictional historians.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gospel\_of\_luke

*Luke himself records that what he wrote came directly from eye-witnesses of Christ. Peter made it clear that they were not following myths, but that they recorded actual events which transpired in history.*

Jeremy, you consider Peter a reliable source? Isn't Peter the guy who denied even knowing Christ in order to save his own skin? Yep, that's the guy.

*Peter further attests “we were eye-witnesses of His majesty.” John also affirms “that which we have seen and heard we declare to you.” Paul states that there were hundreds of eye-witnesses of the resurrection still living at the time he wrote his first letter to the Corinthians during the first century. In other words, Paul was stating that you could go and ask any one of these people and they could confirm the claims of the apostles.*

Jeremy, and we know all these stories are true because ... the Bible says so?

*If the biblical writers were making claims about Christ that were not true, then certainly someone who witnessed the life of Jesus would have spoken up against these claims.*

Jeremy, knowing Christianity's long, bloody history, I think I can guess what happened to those who dared.

*However, there are no external historical documents from that time period contrary to the eye-witness testimony of the New Testament.*

Jeremy, what's even more interesting is that there are no external historical documents from that time period that corroborate anything claimed in the Bible. If the miracles included in your "Holy Book" are true, they should be found in literature from here to Timbuktu.

*Christianity is a historic faith. That is, it is rooted in history.*

Jeremy, can you name one religion that isn't?

*Thus, if the events actually transpired in history as the Bible records, then there should be archaeological evidence to support the claims of the Bible. One should be able to literally go dig up the past and see if it confirms Scripture. This is exactly what one finds when exploring the archaeological artifacts.*

Hey Jeremy, remember this:

*"However, since the N.T. records historical events, one cannot use the scientific method to prove it. You cannot observe, measure, or repeat the historical events in question here."*

Jeremy, that was a beautiful contradiction. Sometimes, you people make this too easy.

*Also, if one can “dig up” confirmation of biblical history, then it also follows that one could “dig up” evidence which contradicts the history recorded in the Bible if the biblical record was not true in certain claims. No such archaeological evidence, however, contradicts the biblical record of history.*

Jeremy, archaeological evidence from China and India prove that the Earth was flourishing all during the period of Noah's Flood, and also in the 400 years after the Flood when the Bible claimed that no humans lived outside the Iraqi city of Babel.

So, who to believe? tons of archaeological evidence from many different countries offered by reputable scientists, or one lying Ghost Worshipper who hasn't gotten one right yet?

Gee, I'm going to have to think about that one.

*The fact is that the archaeological evidence repeatedly confirms the historical details given in Scripture. A few examples are in order at this point.*

*The Dead Sea Scrolls – The discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls between 1947 and 1956 has already been introduced and is clearly one of the greatest archaeological finds as they give invaluable confirmation to the reliability of the text of the Old Testament.*

Jeremy, they don't give what you seem to think they give. The only thing they prove for certain is that ancient people in that part of the world could write. It does not prove anything about whether the things they wrote were true or not.

*The Gilgamesh Epic Cuneiform Tablets – In the mid-19th century, twelve cuneiform tablets known as The Gilgamesh Epic were discovered in the ancient Babylonian city of Nineveh. The Gilgamesh Epic gives the Babylonian account of a global flood. There are striking similarities between the biblical flood account found in the Book of Genesis and the flood account in the Gilgamesh Epic.*

Jeremy, that is not surprising since Christianity stole practically all of its ideas from previous religions. The only thing in the Bible that I could find that seemed to be an original idea, was the talking donkey.

*There are also vast differences between the two accounts which demonstrate the superiority of the Genesis account. If there was a global Flood and all people are descendants of Noah and his sons as the Bible teaches, then one would expect to find flood traditions in different cultures all over the world.*

Jeremy, one would also expect to find some evidence, yet none has been found.

*In fact, there are over 200 flood traditions in cultures all over the world. Flood traditions in cultures all over the world, including the amazing Gilgamesh Epic tablets, support the biblical account of a global Flood.*

Jeremy, fairy tales can't "support each other" - only evidence can do that.

*The Code of Hammurabi – Historians were skeptical that Moses wrote the Law around 1450 BC believing that writing had not developed at that time.*

Jeremy, which historians? I have never heard of any historian who made a statement that stupid.

*Then archaeologists discovered the Code of Hammurabi, on a large stele over seven feet tall.*

Jeremy, writing was flourishing in many areas long before Hammurabi. I don't think it's the historians who are confused: I think it's you.

*This code was written centuries before Moses around 1750 BC. Other law codes predate the time of Moses as well showing that the writing of the Law was not too early for the time of Moses.*

Jeremy, it also shows that the story about gods giving laws to humans on stone tablets, like the global flood, is yet another story stolen by Christianity.

And thanks Jeremy, for making all of my points for me. Please continue; you're doing great.

*The Hittite City Hattusha – The Bible makes reference to the Hittite people in the Book of Genesis. Scholars found no evidence of the Hittites outside of the Old Testament and concluded that the Old Testament was in error. Then archaeologists began excavating in the early twentieth century and discovered the large Hittite capital, Hattusha, in modern Turkey. Thousands of clay cuneiform tablets were found confirming the Hittite people. Now the Hittites, whose existence was doubted by historians previously, are well documented by thousands of clay tablets confirming the biblical historical details.*

Jeremy, the issue of reliability of the Old Testament isn't about claims of ancient people who inhabited an area; the issue is supernatural claims. We are still waiting for you to produce archaeological evidence to support just one magic event.

*Sargon’s Palace and Inscription, Belshazzar, Co-Ruler of Babylon, John Ryland's Papyrus, and numerous other archaeological discoveries could be cited which give witness to the reliability of the Old Testament. Furthermore, the New Testament has been verified as a reliable historical document time and again by numerous archaeological finds as the renowned archaeologist William Ramsay attested to. The cited examples above are just a fraction of the overwhelming archaeological evidence confirming the biblical historical details.*

Jeremy, no one cares whether or not the Bible recorded some historical facts correctly. No one is saying that everything in the Bible is made up. What skeptics are questioning are supernatural events and claims about invisible ghosts who created, and control the Earth. Those are the claims we are requesting evidence for.

*Fulfilled prophecy separates the Bible from every other book, as no other religious texts in the world can lay claim to fulfilled prophecy. Hundreds of prophecies are given in the Old Testament and not a single one has failed. For example, in Isaiah, the prophet Isaiah prophesied that God would raise up a ruler named Cyrus to rebuild the city of Jerusalem. A few hundred years later Cyrus, king of Persia, decreed to have the city of Jerusalem rebuilt.*

Jeremy, you are one deceitful little Ghost Worshipper aren't you? Allow me to show the audience the depths to which you are willing to sink in order to promote your religious beliefs.

The book of Isaiah was written over many years. The first part was written a few hundred years before Cyrus. That is the part, of which you are trying to convince your readers, that prophesied the restoration of Jerusalem. But that part of Isaiah is not the part that foretells the coming of Cyrus. It is the next part written at the time of the Babylonian captivity when Cyrus was king. So there was no prophecy; only a recounting of a historical event.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book\_of\_isaiah

Jeremy, lying for Jesus - not something one should want to be remembered for.

*In Daniel 7:6 and 8:21-22, Daniel prophesied the swift rise of the Greek empire under Alexander the Great and the division of his empire into four parts after his death. Over 200 years later, Alexander the Great conquered much of the world. After his death the empire was divided among his generals into four parts, though, as Daniel foretold, none ruled with the strength of Alexander.*

Jeremy, here is Daniel 7:6

*"After this I beheld, and lo another, like a leopard, which had upon the back of it four wings of a fowl; the beast had also four heads; and dominion was given to it."*

Jeremy, we'll let the audience decide for themselves on that one.

As for the verses in chapter 8, they are as vague as what you would hear from anyone trained in "cold-reading." They could be retrofitted to support anything you wanted ... as you just proved.

*The Old Testament also makes numerous prophecies concerning the Messiah’s first coming and all were fulfilled. For example, Isaiah 7:14 predicts that the Messiah would be born of a virgin. Some 700 years later, the Gospel writer Matthew records that this prophecy was fulfilled in the virgin birth of Jesus.*

Jeremy, that prophecy was only fulfilled if you believe the nonsense in the New Testament. After 2,000 years of intense missionary effort and an all-powerful invisible ghost, 2/3 of the world still hasn't bought into it. But keep plugging away Jeremy. At least it keeps you people busy ... and away from stones and guns.

*The prophet Micah foretold in Micah 5:2 that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem. Over 700 years later, Matthew again records the fulfillment of this prophecy in Jesus, who was born in Bethlehem.*

Jeremy, you should read this essay:

http://www.religioustolerance.org/xmaswwjb.htm

It's posted on a Christian web site and it pretty much trashes your claim; and the best part is - they supported their argument with ... archaeological evidence.

*In Isaiah 53 the prophet Isaiah foretold of the Messiah as the Suffering Servant who makes atonement for lost humanity. All four Gospels record the substitutionary death on the cross by Jesus to atone for the sins of the world.*

Unfortunately Jeremy, they all tell a different story. Like the detective always says to the crooks, "Got to get your stories straight boys."

*Another interesting messianic text is Psalm 22. Psalm 22:7-8 states, “All those who see Me ridicule Me; they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying ‘He trusted in the LORD, let Him rescue Him; let Him deliver Him, since He delights in Him.’” Interestingly, this is what the chief priests, scribes, and elders said about Jesus while He was on the cross.*

Jeremy, you left out the best part of the prophecy. Why didn't you tell your audience about the unicorns?

For some reason, the unicorns didn't get the memo, and forgot to show up at the Crucifixion as they were supposed to.

*Lastly, the phrase in verse 16, “they pierced My hands and My feet” was written 1,000 years before Christ by a man who had never witnessed a crucifixion because crucifixion had not yet been invented.*

Jeremy, that's why the verse doesn't mention crucifixion. It only mentions piercing hands and feet. You are the one who is claiming that the only way to pierce hands and feet is by crucifixion. One would expect most kinds of torture to include piercing hands, feet, and other body parts.

*Many predictions in the Bible are adequately separated by time from their fulfillment.*

Jeremy, how hard was it for the Gospel authors to write stories, and make them conform to ancient scriptures? It's easy. That's why it is so surprising that they did such a lousy job.

*These predictions are precise enough in detail as to render improbable any theory of chance or being merely man-made ideas.*

Jeremy, what does precision in detail have to do with authenticity? We have thousands of authors who write in precise detail, right before they publish their books ... in the fiction section.

*There are a sufficient number of these prophecies so as to render highly probable an advanced knowledge that could only come from a source outside of man.*

Jeremy, imagination actually comes from within.

*God is the most likely explanation of such a source of information.*

Jeremy, the most likely explanation would be the one supported by evidence. Since you don't have enough evidence to fill a urine cup, your explanation is the least likely.

*The consistency of the biblical record is astonishing when a few basic observations are made.*

Jeremy, here's an astonishing observation of biblical inconsistency: "Eye-for-an-eye" vs. "Turn the other cheek."

*The Bible was written in three different languages (Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek) on three different continents (Africa, Asia, and Europe).*

Jeremy, why do you think your God never mentioned America? Hawaii? China? India? Russia? Or Japan?

In fact Jeremy, your God didn't even seem to know that anyone or anything existed outside a small area in the Middle East.

I just wanted the audience to understand why you listed those 3 continents. It was to hide the fact of what I just pointed out.

*The Bible was written by over 40 different authors, most of whom never met one another. The Bible was written over a 1500 year period (ca. 1450 BC – AD 100). Yet, the Bible tells one singularly woven together story.*

Jeremy, your Bible couldn't even get through Genesis before multiple, contradictory stories began appearing. The two different creation accounts being a prime example.

*So why believe the Bible?*

Jeremy, I don't.

*The Bible claims to be the Word of God. The reliability of the biblical claims is demonstrated by numerous evidences. The amazing manuscript evidence for the Old and New Testament confirms that the original words of the Bible have been faithfully preserved. The reliable eye-witness testimony of the New Testament confirms the historical accounts recorded in the New Testament. The historical details of the Bible are confirmed repeatedly by archaeology. The vast number of prophecies fulfilled confirms the divine origin of the Bible. Also, the amazing consistency of the Bible’s message over the centuries by numerous authors attests to its divine origin.*

Jeremy, none of those pathetic lies are the reason that people believe in the Bible. People believe in the Bible because it threatens them with eternal torture if they don't believe it. That's why people believe the Bible. If your God were real, He wouldn't have to threaten people. And if your God were not such an evil monster, people would come to Him - voluntarily; not under threat of eternal damnation ... if they don't.

*To believe that the Bible is merely a man-made book would be an even greater miracle itself than the very miracles the Bible proclaims.*

Jeremy, that is one of the stupidest statements you have made in this entire essay. Believing is not a miracle.

*When one examines the nature of the Bible, the conclusion is that no mere men could pull this off.*

Well Jeremy, since animals and plants can't write, who else does that leave?

*It is most reasonable to conclude that there must be a God behind the biblical text who has revealed Himself to us.*

Jeremy, if you had even one piece of evidence for your beliefs, Christianity would instantly become the only religion on Earth.

*To reject the divine origin and reliability of the Bible seems to stretch all credulity.*

Jeremy, that rejection also results in the Eternal Barbecue. So I wouldn't worry so much about credulity.

*Far from being a “blind faith,” belief in the Bible is a reasonable faith based on evidence.*

Jeremy, with a mind as degraded by religion, as yours obviously is, it is clear that there is no hope for you. You will live out your life on your knees, talking to yourself while believing that an invisible ghost is listening; terrified to say or think anything that might piss off your angry, homicidal God.

Jeremy, a worm has a better existence than you do.

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THE SCIENCE SEGMENT

Bacteria 100 feet Under the Ocean Floor Haven't Had Food Since the Time of the Dinosaurs

Some 100 feet below the most nutrient-starved part of the Pacific Ocean floor, incredibly old life exists called "extremophile bacteria." Scientists have determined that the organisms have survived for what could be as long as millions of years solely on whatever nutrients were around when the sediment settled around them. These communities have not received input or new food since the dinosaurs walked the planet. Those that are left down there are the ones that can deal with the lowest amount of food.

The metabolisms of the deep-sea bacteria are incredibly slow. Scientists say it's impossible to determine whether they reproduce—which could likely happen only once every few thousand years at the fastest—or are many millions of years old, having repaired themselves over the eons. These organisms live so slowly that when we look at them at our own time scale, it’s like they're living in suspended animation.

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FAMOUS QUOTES

A commenter who went by the name of "Jesus loves some of you" wrote this one.

"Religious folks love to say that Atheism is a religion

until it means giving Atheists the same rights as the religious."