



Serving the Truth in a Love Sandwich

The Bible is Reliable History

Step One in Showing the Bible is God's Word

1st Peter 3:15 "But sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence."

This series of courses is about answering difficult questions about Christianity. As disciples of Jesus Christ we have a responsibility to be prepared to defend our faith. We are *not* going to study what Moslems, Hindus, Buddhists etc. believe. We are going to study the truth, not lies, except for a few of their questions, which often have lies as their basis. I hope as we go through these lessons you will create your own personal statement of faith, so you will have a clear idea of what you are defending.

However, as we study, remember God's truth is spread more heart to heart than mind to mind. Since we have minds they must also be included in the communication, but never forget to serve the truth in a love sandwich.

In this course we hope to show that the Bible contains a number of books that were written by people who believed what they said to be true. The historical events described in them were written by eye witnesses or by people who knew the eye witnesses personally. The books appeared close enough in time to the events so that if they had been lies, other eye witnesses would have been available to refute them. There is no evidence of any such refutation.

Lesson 1 – The Bible is the Testimony of Witnesses

See also <http://lovebiblestudy.com/TLS/Resources/Testimony.htm>

Lesson 2 – Confirmation from Early Christians

See also <http://lovebiblestudy.com/TLS/Resources/EarlyChurchFathersTestimony.htm>

Lesson 3 – Confirmation from Secular History

See also <http://lovebiblestudy.com/TLS/Resources/history.htm>

Lesson 4 – Archeological Confirmation

See also <http://lovebiblestudy.com/TLS/Resources/Archeology.htm>

Lesson 5 – The Bible is Self-Consistent

See also <http://lovebiblestudy.com/TLS/BibleErrors.htm>

Suggested methodology for each lesson:

1. Fellowship (Save most of this for the end of class.)
2. Take prayer requests (Try to keep it from becoming a competition to see who has the most or the worst.)
3. Pray (The idea here is to leave our troubles with God so we can give His word our attention with a clear mind.)
4. Read the lesson's text aloud from the Bible. (... or a few verses at a time as you answer the questions.)
5. Answer and *briefly* discuss the "fill in the blank" questions. (Let those who prefer to listen, listen. My answers on the next page are just one opinion; you may have a better answer if it is based on Scripture.)
6. On the final "Think & Pray" question everyone should take a few minutes to pray over it and jot down their own thoughts before the discussion. **This will give the Holy Spirit a time to speak.**
7. Discuss your "Think & Pray" answers. (Never force anyone to share theirs. As with the other questions, my answer is just one more opinion; you may have a better answer.)
8. Close in prayer (It is best to call on others to pray, but try to get their permission ahead of time.)
9. Fellowship (Leave this as open ended as possible for the time and place you meet.)

Depending on the number of people, each lesson is expected to take about one hour. Steps 4 thru 7 are about half of that. If you take longer, let each lesson take more than one meeting, or consider breaking into two groups. The final "Think & Pray" question should always be covered, because that is when everyone takes a quiet moment to listen to the Teacher, the Holy Spirit. If you take less time, extra questions are provided for discussion called "For Further Thought"

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Additional Reading

These lessons are designed for small groups or individuals to use without reference to other materials besides the Bible. However, a lot more could be gained if those involved would do some additional reading between class meetings. (See <http://lovebiblestudy.com/CC/Library.htm>)

We plan to provide specific recommendations with each course at <http://lovebiblestudy.com/TLS/Adjunct/> We also hope to be making specific chapter recommendations from various Christian books that have helped us in our understanding of apologetics, but are not entirely about the topic of the course. Such as these books which would make good companions for this entire series of courses.

Mere Christianity by C. S. Lewis

I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist by Norman L. Geisler and Frank Turek

The Case for ... series of books by Lee Strobel

Cold Case Christianity, God's Crime Scene, and Forensic Faith – 3 books by J. Warner Wallace

Also, some books do dovetail nicely with particular courses. These books would work very well with this course:

Is the Bible True by Jefferey Sheller or

God-Breathed: The Undeniable Power and Reliability of Scripture by Josh McDowell

Lesson 1 – The Bible is the Testimony of Witnesses

Read these scriptures and answer the associated question:

(1A) Luke 1:1-2 Where did Luke get the information for his gospel? _____

(1B) John 21:24 What did John call his gospel. _____

(1C) Acts 1:21-23 What did Barsabbas and Matthias witness? _____

(1D) Acts 2:32 What did Peter say they had all witnessed? _____

(1E) Acts 10:39-40 What were they witnesses of? _____

(1F) 1 Cor 15:3-8 Approximately how many witnesses saw the resurrected Christ? _____

(1G) Hebrews 2:3-4 How did God testify? _____

(1H) 2 Peter 1:16 What were they eyewitnesses of? _____

(1I) 1 John 4:14 What did they testify to? _____

(1J) John 5:31-47 How concerned was Jesus with evidence? So, what?

Think & Pray _____

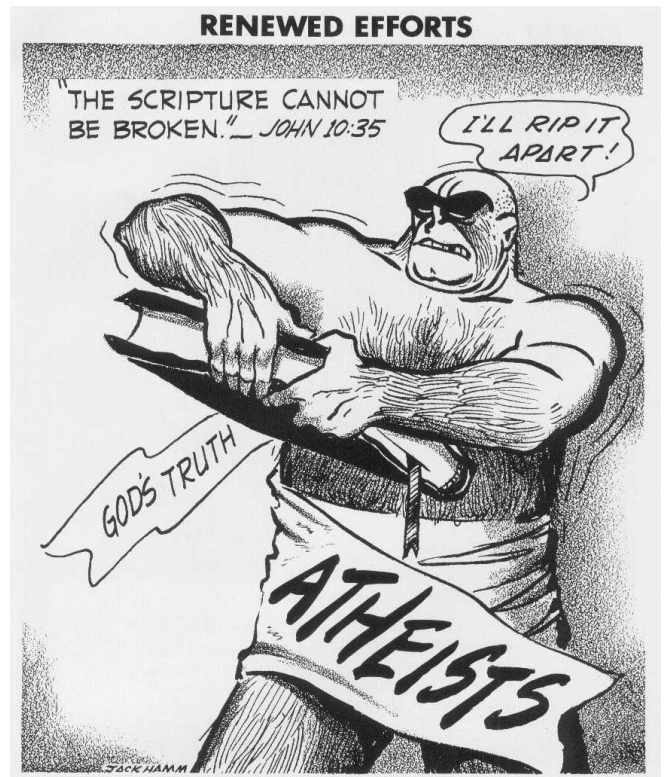
For further thought:

[1k] *Skeptic's Attack:* "In Acts 20:35 Paul told people 'to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.' Since Jesus never said anything like this in the Gospels, isn't Paul guilty of deception?"

[1l] How sure do you have to be about something before you make a decision?

[1m] What is the difference between "true beyond any doubt" and "true beyond reasonable doubt"? How many things do you know that are true beyond any doubt?

[1n] How much evidence does it take to convince you of something?



----- SOME POSSIBLE ANSWERS -----

(Your answers do not have to match exactly.)

Lesson 1 – The Bible is the Testimony of Witnesses

- (1A) Luke 1:1-2 Where did Luke get the information for his gospel? Eyewitnesses
(1B) John 21:24 What did John call his gospel. Testimony that is true
(1C) Acts 1:21-23 What did Barsabbas and Matthias witness? The Lord Jesus's resurrection.
(1D) Acts 2:32 What did Peter say they had all witnessed? Jesus being raised up again.
(1E) Acts 10:39-40 What were they witnesses of? All the things He did.
(1F) 1 Cor 15:3-8 Approximately how many witnesses saw the resurrected Christ? More than 500
(1G) Hebrews 2:3-4 How did God testify? By various signs, wonders and miracles.
(1H) 2 Peter 1:16 What were they eyewitnesses of? His majesty
(1I) 1 John 4:14 What did they testify to? That the Father sent the Son to be Savior of the world
(1J) John 5:31-47 How concerned was Jesus with evidence? Jesus is very concerned with the truth and knows that the way we become convinced of the truth is by evidence. As we have seen with the scriptures we looked at above, the New Testament has a lot of testimony in it about Jesus. (This is just a sample. There is much more. See <http://lovebiblestudy.com/TLS/Resources/Testimony.htm>) I am convinced that the men who wrote the New Testament believed they were telling the truth. Certainly they claimed to be telling the truth.

My further thoughts:

[1k] My actual response: John 21:25 makes it clear that the written record of what Jesus said and did is not complete with the Gospel accounts. Paul had access to first hand witnesses to the ministry of Jesus, not just the Gospels as your attack implies. In fact, Paul's writings pre-date or are contemporary with the Gospels. We know that Jesus did say it because Acts 20:35 reports that He did.

Atheist Retort: Acts 20:35 reports no deeds of Jesus', only Paul's description of them. It is not a Biblical statement. There is a difference between reporting that a fact occurred and reporting that a guy says it occurred. Acts 20:35 does not directly attribute that statement to Jesus. It does not feature Jesus as speaking, but Paul as reporting what he says are Jesus' words. This is different from the gospels, where Jesus is a present character who speaks by himself. In Acts we see only his followers repeating probable hearsay.

My answer: If Luke reports a saying of Jesus in his gospel that is a "biblical statement," but if Luke reports a saying of Jesus in Acts it is "not a biblical statement?" Since Luke was not an eye witness to anything he reports in his gospel, everything in it is a quote or paraphrase of what someone else said. The only difference in Acts 20:35 is that Luke tells us who said it. It is senseless for you to accept Luke's testimony in one context and not another. There is no contradiction at all.

[1l] It depends on several things. If I can recover from a mistake pretty easily, I'm more inclined to take a risk. If the consequences only have an impact on me and not others, I'm more likely to take a risk.

[1m] Almost anything is possible, so true beyond any doubt is very rare. About the only thing that might be known beyond any doubt are things like a few mathematical concepts that you can examine all possibilities inside your mind. You can't wait to be certain about God, because not believing is just as much a decision as believing. How certain are you He doesn't exist?

[1n] The more I want to believe it, the less evidence is required. This is a weakness we must all guard against I think.

Lesson 2 – Confirmation from Early Christians

Use these scripture references to fill in the blanks below:

Matthew 6:9-13

Luke 5:32

John 1:1-5

1 Timothy 6:20

Matthew 8:5-8

Luke 17:2

1 Corinthians 11:1

(2A) Ignatius (35-117 AD) Ignatius quoted from many of the New Testament books. For instance, in his letter to the Ephesians, Ignatius said, “Wherefore it behoves us also to live according to the will of God in Christ, and to imitate Him as Paul did. For, says he, ‘Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.’” which is a quote from . _____.

(2B) Polycarp (69-155 AD) Polycarp quoted from many of the New Testament books. In Polycarp 4:1 we find an allusion to . _____ when Polycarp wrote, “But the love of money is the beginning of all troubles. Knowing therefore that we brought nothing into the world neither can we carry anything out, let us arm ourselves with the armor of righteousness, and let us teach ourselves first to walk in the commandment of the Lord.”

(2C) The Didache (before 100 AD) (also known as *The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*), is a brief anonymous early Christian treatise, dated by most modern scholars to the first century. The opening chapters describe the virtuous Way of Life and the wicked Way of Death. The Lord's Prayer is included in full. . _____.

(2D) Clement of Rome (died 101 AD) Clement quoted from many of the New Testament books. For instance, he quoted Jesus in 1st Clem 46:8 “Remember the words of Jesus our Lord: for He said, ‘Woe unto that man; it were good for him if he had not been born, rather than that at he should offend one of Mine elect. It were better for him that a millstone were hanged about him, and be cast into the sea, than that he should pervert one of Mine elect.’” from _____.

(2E) Justin Martyr (103-165 AD) Quoted from the New Testament books 330 times. For instance, in chapter 8 of his defense of the Resurrection he says, “On its (the flesh’s) account alone did the Saviour come, as He says, ‘I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.’ Since, then, the flesh has been proved to be valuable in the sight of God, and glorious above all His works, it would very justly be saved by Him.” which is a quote from . _____.

(2F) Irenaeus of Lyons (125-202 AD) Irenaeus of Lyons (AD 125-202) Quoted from the New Testament books 1,819 times. For instance, in his *Against Heresies, Book I* while arguing against a heresy that claimed a minor New Testament character as among its founders, Irenaeus said, “They maintain that he is the centurion mentioned in the Gospel, who addressed the Saviour in these words: ‘For I also am one having soldiers and servants under my authority; and whatsoever I command they do.’ Which is a quote from . _____.

(2G) Mathetes (130-200 AD) The Epistle to Diognetus says in chapter 4, verse 11 “This Word, Who was from the beginning, Who appeared as new and yet was proved to be old, and is engendered always young in the hearts of saints.” While this is not a quote from the New Testament, it is a clear allusion to . _____.

(2H) How does the information above help establish the New Testament as historically reliable?

Think & Pray _____

----- SOME POSSIBLE ANSWERS -----

(Your answers do not have to match exactly.)

Lesson 2 – Confirmation from Early Christians

- (2A) **Ignatius** (35-117 AD) 1 Corinthians 11:1.
- (2B) **Polycarp** (69-155 AD) 1 Timothy 6:7-10
- (2C) **The Didache** (before 100 AD) Matthew 6:9-13
- (2D) **Clement of Rome** (died 101 AD) Luke 17:2.
- (2E) **Justin Martyr** (103-165 AD) Luke 5:32.
- (2F) **Irenaeus of Lyons** Matthew 8:5-8.
- (2G) **Mathetes** (130-200 AD) John 1:1-5.

(2H) It shows that they existed within a few decades of the life of Christ. That doesn't make them true, but it makes them close enough in time to have been seen and critiqued by eyewitnesses. That increases greatly the probability that they were accepted as true at the time. It also makes it very unlikely that they were altered significantly over time, which is too often suggested and too readily believed.

Early Church Fathers Quoted the New Testament

Writer	Gospels	Acts	Pauline Epistles	General Epistles	Revelation
Justin Martyr (AD 103-165)	268	10	43	6	3
Ireneaus of Lyons (AD 125-202)	1,038	194	499	23	65
Clement of Alexandria (AD 150-215)	1,017	44	1,127	207	11
Origen (AD 185-254)	9,231	349	7,778	399	165
Tertullian (AD 155-240) 3822	3,822	502	2,609	120	205
Hippolytus of Rome (AD 170-235)	734	42	387	27	188
Eusebius of Caesarea (AD 260-340)	3,258	211	1,592	88	27

Leaving only 11 verses not quoted from the New Testament. Almost the whole New Testament could be created from these quotes and this does not include hundreds of allusions to the New Testament where they talked about its contents without directly quoting it. This also does not include the numerous quotes from Clement of Rome, Ignatius and Polycarp who all three wrote well before 200 AD. Between those three they quoted at least once from every book in the New Testament except 2nd John and Jude within 90 years of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. (See more at <http://lovebiblestudy.com/TLS/Resources/EarlyChurchFathersTestimony.htm>)

For further thought:

[2i] *Skeptic's Attack*: 2 Chron 36:9 says Jehoiachin was 8 years old when he became king, but 2 Kings 24:8 says he was 18. Why do you believe some book that contradicts itself?

My further thoughts:

[2i] I don't reject an entire book because of what amounts to a typographical error. The context makes it clear he was 18 not 8, so it is not misleading in any way. Someone left out a ten digit when they were copying an earlier manuscript. What impresses me is how much integrity the copyists had over the hundreds of years it took us to get our copy. None of them ever tried to fix this because they respected the Bible too much to lie about it. This kind of thing causes me to trust the Bible more, not less.

Lesson 3 – Confirmation from Secular History

Use these scripture references to fill in the blanks below.

Genesis 5:1-32

Exodus 12:1-51

Mark 15:22-41

Genesis 11:1–9

Matthew 27:45

Acts 18:2

(3A) Cornelius Tacitus _____ An early Roman historian, Cornelius Tacitus, wrote that most of his sources were in agreement that there was an Exodus from Egypt led by a man named “Moses.” Tacitus, *Histories*, Book 5, 3–5.

(3B) Cuneiform Accounts _____ There are two known cuneiform accounts that deal with the confusion of language. The earliest, probably from the early third millennium (Kramer 1970:108), is part of longer epic called “Enmerkar and the Lord of Aratta.” In it, “The Spell of Nudimmud” is quoted, which deals with the confusion of language. According to the spell, there once was a “golden age” when everyone spoke one language. The god Enki, leader of the gods, put an end to this era by confusing the speech of mankind.

(3C) Suetonius _____ Forcing Jews to leave Rome during the reign of Claudius (A.D. 41-54) , as recorded by Suetonius. Suetonius was chief secretary to Emperor Hadrian (who reigned from a.d. 117-138).

(3D) Sumerian Kings _____ Claims of long life spans among the ancients have been found in the records of the Egyptians, Babylonians, Greeks, Romans, Indians, and Chinese. A list of Sumerian kings has very long lives before a great flood and much shorter ones after it.

(3E) Tacitus _____ Taictus, the Roman historian, in AD 115 wrote about the persecution of the Christians under Nero and referenced Jesus’ crucifixion:

(3F) Thallus _____ Circa AD 52, Thallus wrote a history of the Eastern Mediterranean world from the Trojan War to his own time. There is a reference to the writings of Thallus that says: 'On the whole world there pressed a most fearful darkness; and the rocks were rent by an earthquake, and many places in Judea and other districts were thrown down. This darkness Thallus, in the third book of his History, calls, as appears to me without reason, an eclipse of the sun.'

(3G) How does the information above help establish the Bible as a accurate history?

Think & Pray _____

For further thought:

[3h] *Skeptic Attack*: "The Bible is a made-up myth. "Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wrath, and sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under,...." (Matt. 2:16). The Tetrarch Herod was not a King. There are almost 40 chapters in Josephus about him. This massacre is not mentioned. Nor is it mentioned elsewhere by any other historian. With full grown sons already why would Herod be afraid of a newborn baby taking away his rule?"

How would you respond to this attack?

----- SOME POSSIBLE ANSWERS -----

(Your answers do not have to match exactly.)

Lesson 3 – Confirmation from Secular History

(3A) Cornelius Tacitus Exodus 12:1-51

(3B) Cuneiform Accounts Genesis 11:1-9

(3C) Suetonius Acts 18:2

(3D) Sumerian Kings Genesis 5:1-32

(3E) Tacitus Mark 15:22-41

(3F) Thallus Matthew 27:45 '

(3G) Perhaps six points of agreement between the Bible and secular ancient history don't seem like they should mean very much. But they are offered only as examples. (3 from the Old Testament and 3 from the New) There are more. (See <http://lovebiblestudy.com/TLS/Resources/HistoricalJesus.htm> and <http://lovebiblestudy.com/TLS/Resources/history.htm>) As we will see in the next lesson there is even more corroboration from archeology. What is really convincing is that there is no historical claim in the Bible that has ever been refuted. Yes, there are many things in the Bible that are not also mentioned in secular history, but that is not evidence of inaccuracy. "Through the wealth of data uncovered by historical and archaeological research, we are able to measure the Bible's historical accuracy. In every case where its claims can thus be tested, the Bible proves to be accurate and reliable." - Dr. Jack Cottrell, *The Authority of the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1979), pp. 48-49.

My further thoughts:

[3h] My actual response: "We have Herod the King in Matt 2:1 and Herod the Tetrarch in Matt 14:1. It is two different people. When Herod the King died (Matt 2:19) his kingdom was split into parts, with a Tetrarch over each one.

"If you think 40 chapters covers all the important events of a man's life you have never attempted to write your autobiography let alone the biography of an important public figure. (I did not mention that most of Josephus' chapters are less than a page long.) Arguing from a negative does not carry weight with me, nor should it with anyone. For many years the 'scholars' ridiculed the Bible because it talked about Hittites. They stopped the ridicule when archeologists dug up the evidence of their existence. So much for a lack of evidence proving anything.

"It was his sons Herod was protecting. It was his dynasty he was protecting not his rule."

How could I have responded in a more loving way?

(I did not know it at the time but there are sources outside the Bible that mention the massacre. The story's first appearance in any source other than Matthew is in the 2nd-century apocryphal Protoevangelium of James of c.150 AD, which excludes the Flight into Egypt and switches the attention of the story to the infant John the Baptist: The first non-Christian reference to the massacre is recorded four centuries later by Macrobius (c. 395-423), who writes in his Saturnalia: "When he [emperor Augustus] heard that among the boys in Syria under two years old whom Herod, king of the Jews, had ordered killed, his own son was also killed, he said: it is better to be Herod's pig, than his son.")"

Lesson 4 – Archeological Confirmation

Use these scripture references to fill in the blanks below:

Genesis 10:10-12	Joshua 2:15, 6:20-22	Matthew 27:2	Acts 17:8
Numbers 22:5	1 Kings 12:28-31	Luke 2:1-3	Romans 16:23

- (4A) Balaam** _____ An inscription found in 1967 and published in 1976 refers to "Balaam Son of Beor." He is also referred to in the Deir Alla text.
- (4B) Erastus of Corinth** _____ There is a piece of pavement still in Corinth with "Erastus in return for his *aedileship* paved it at his own expense." "Aedileship" was a public office with varied responsibilities such as treasurer, chamberlain or director of public works.
- (4C) High Place** _____ Jereboam's "High Place" was discovered at Dan in 1979.
- (4D) Jericho** _____ A British archaeologist named Kathleen Kenyon determined that the city of Jericho's wall had collapsed when the city was destroyed, except for a portion of the city wall on the north side.
- (4E) List of Cities** _____ These cities were uncovered by archaeologists over a century ago and have been positively identified.
- (4F) Politarch** _____ The Greek term "politarch" found in the Bible is translated city authorities, rulers or leaders. Skeptics doubted it was a valid term until over 15 inscriptions were discovered using the term. Five of these were in Thessalonica.
- (4G) Pontius Pilate** _____ A limestone slab found in June 1961 is inscribed with a dedication to Tiberius Caesar from Pilate in Caesarea, the Roman provincial capital of the area during Pilate's term.
- (4H) Quirinius** _____ Someone named Quirinius was proconsul of Syria and Cilicia. His name is on a statue in Syria and on coins from the first century.
- (4I)** So how does all these historical and archeological facts in the Bible help us know that the Bible is the Word of God?

Think & Pray _____

For further thought:

[4j] *Skeptic's Question*: "The Bible contradicts itself. In one place Michal, Saul's daughter, has children and another she does not. Read 2 Samuel 6:23 and 2 Samuel 21:8. (Note: If you read the KJV it says that Michal did have children. Most other versions say it was Merab that has children, not Michal.)"

Think & Pray _____

----- SOME POSSIBLE ANSWERS -----
(Your answers do not have to match exactly.)

Lesson 4 – Archeological Confirmation

(4A) Balaam Numbers 22:5 Apparently Balaam was widely known which would explain why he was sent for.

(4B) Erastus of Corinth Romans 16:23

(4C) High Place 1 Kings 12:28-31

(4D) Jericho Joshua 2:15, 6:20-22 According to the Bible, Rahab's house was miraculously spared while the rest of the city wall fell. This is exactly what archaeologists found.

(4E) List of Cities Genesis 10:10-12 The ancient Canaanite and Egyptian civilizations are known. Thus the setting for the Genesis narrative, the call of Abraham and his journey of faith has a historical basis to it.

(4F) Politarch Acts 17:8 Luke was the only historian who was known to have used the Greek term “politarch” (translated city authorities, rulers etc.), so skeptics doubted it was a valid term until these inscriptions were found.

(4G) Pontius Pilate Matthew 27:2 In June 1961 this discovery rocked the scholarly world. Those scholars who questioned Pilate’s existence (and the gospel accounts generally) were silenced with this amazing discovery!

(4H) Quirinius Luke 2:1-3

(4I) Since the early 1800's the Bible has been under unrelenting attack by skeptical historians and archeologists. After 200 years they have no evidence that anything the Bible says is not true. That does not prove it is God's word. People write books that are true all the time. But it does mean that the claims that the Bible is just fictional, mythical, or legendary are false accusations. The Bible contains a number of books that were written by over 40 different people over a period of about 1,600 years starting about 3,500 years ago. The people who wrote them believed them to be true. The historical events described in them were written by eye witnesses or by people who knew the eye witnesses personally. The books appeared close enough in time to the events so other eye witnesses would have been available to refute them. There is no evidence of any such refutation.

In the next course we will explore how we know these valid historical records are also the Word of God.

"I know of no finding in archaeology that’s properly confirmed which is in opposition to the Scriptures. The Bible is the most accurate history textbook the world has ever seen." - Dr Clifford Wilson, formerly director of the Australian Institute of Archaeology (quote obtained from: *Archaeologist Speaks Out* Originally published in *Creation* 21, no 1 (December 1998): 15

(For more archeological confirmation see <http://lovebiblestudy.com/TLS/Resources/Archeology.htm>)

My further thoughts:

[4j] "If you read the KJV for 2 Samuel 21:8 it says that Michal did have children which does seem to contradict 2 Sam 6:23 on the face of it. Most other versions say it was Merab that has children, not Michal. It actually says she did not have children "until the day of her death." She could have died in child birth. Quintuplets seems unlikely, but it is not impossible. However, it is most likely that the Hebrew for these verses are talking about two different women, as the other English versions have it."

Lesson 5 – The Bible is Self-Consistent

Perhaps the best way to demonstrate the consistency of the Bible is to respond to attack of critics who claim to show that it is inconsistent. Read these skeptic's attacks and write how you would respond.

(5A) Skeptic's Attack: 2 Samuel 8:4 says David captured 700 horsemen or 1,700 depending on the English version. 1 Chronicles 18:4 says he captured 7,000. How can you put your faith in such inconsistency

Think & Pray _____

(5B) Skeptic's Attack: How could Moses have written the first five books in the Bible when his own death and burial are described in Deut. 34:5-6 ("So Moses the servant of the Lord died there in the land of Moab ... and he buried him in a valley. . . .")?

Think & Pray _____

(5C) Skeptic's Attack: Jesus contradicted the Old Testament in John 3:13 saying "And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man..." but in 2 Kings 2:11 it says ". . . and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven." But, when Jesus said this, Jesus, Himself, was still alive and had not yet gone up to Heaven. If Jesus, Himself, is the only one to have gone up to Heaven, doesn't that contradict and eliminate Enoch's going up to Heaven in Genesis 5:22-24 and Elijah's going up to Heaven in a whirlwind in 2 Kings 2:11 and Angels going up and down, to and from Heaven on "Jacob's Ladder" in Genesis 28:12? So, did Jesus Christ utter a falsehood here or was he just ignorant of what the Old Testament actually says?

Think & Pray _____

(5D) Skeptic's Attack: 1 Sam 17 says that David killed Goliath but 2 Samuel 21:19 says, "... Elhanan the son of Jaare-oregim the Bethlehemite killed Goliath the Gittite." Why do you believe some book that contradicts itself?

Think & Pray _____

(5E) Skeptic's Attack: Numbers 25:9 says that 24,000 died but 1 Corinthians 10:8 says that 23,000 died. Why do you believe some book that contradicts itself?

Think & Pray _____

(5F) What conclusion can e draw from all of the above?

Think & Pray _____

----- SOME POSSIBLE ANSWERS -----
(Your answers do not have to match exactly.)

Lesson 5 – The Bible is Self-Consistent

(5A). Possible Response: What doctrine depends on how many horsemen there were? It is obviously some kind of minor textual problem that still exists because of the integrity and virtue of hundreds of scribes over thousands of years. Once the error was there, it was faithfully copied.

(5B) My actual response: If you read the book of Deuteronomy you will find that it does not say Moses wrote it. Most of the book is recording what Moses spoke aloud. Clearly someone else put it on paper but since it is almost entirely the words of Moses it is reasonable to refer to it as one of the books of Moses.

(5C) My Response: Elijah was taken up by a whirlwind but Jesus ascended by His own power. It is not the same thing. Go to a very tall building and make two trips to the top floor. On one trip, use the elevator and on the other use the stairs. Enoch and Elijah were taken up, that is like the elevator. Jesus ascended up, that is like the stairs. They are two different things. The "no man" or "no one" on the front of John 3:13 is from the Greek *oudeis*. It does not apply to angels. It is talking about people. Your "had not yet gone up to Heaven" is ridiculous even for you. Just two chapters before in John 1:1-5 we learn that Jesus was in heaven before He was born.

(5D) Possible Response: A copyist made an error in copying 2 Sam 21:19 from an earlier manuscript. Compare it with 1 Chronicles 20:5 "... Elhanan the son of Jair killed Lahmi the brother of Goliath the Gittite ..." 2 Sam 21:19 originally read the same but the copyist accidently changed Lahmi the brother of" to " oregim the Bethlehemite" which in English seems like a huge mistake, but in Hebrew is only very slightly different and easily confused. (from http://helpmewithbiblestudy.org/5system_moses/dh13_copyistError.aspx)

(5E) Possible Response: I don't reject an entire book because of what amounts to a typographical error. Someone made a slight error when copying an earlier manuscript. What impresses me is how much integrity the copyists had over the hundreds of years it took us to get our copy. None of them ever tried to fix this because they respected the Bible too much to lie about it. This kind of thing causes me to trust the Bible more, not less.

(5F) The Bible is without error in the original autographs. That doesn't mean it is without error in its current form. However, many do not understand that. When skeptics make accusations about minor inconsistencies in the Bible, I have a Standard Response.

My Standard Response: What great Biblical doctrine depends on this? None. For that matter what minor Biblical doctrine depends on this? None. This confirms the testimony of the Bible in two ways. First, if the two books agreed exactly the accusation would be collusion. The accusers would say the books agreed because the authors or copyist conspired to make them agree. Indeed, it would be a valid accusation. What we have here is two witnesses disagreeing on points that do not matter thus confirming the certainty of the ones that do.

The other thing to consider is the fact that they disagree makes it more convincing that they have been transmitted faithfully in other respects. For thousands of years no scribe has had the disrespect for the Scriptures necessary to correct what amounts to a typo in one or the other of these books. That means we can be confident the book we have is very much like the book that was written. A meaningless minor contradiction confirms rather than denies the testimony of the Bible. This is particularly funny when the attacker has just accused all the ancient copyists of changing things on purpose. If scribes were so free at making changes why didn't they correct these minor discrepancies? Could it be they believed they were working with God's word and were trying to be careful to change nothing? Yes, I think so.