

The Reliability of the Bible: A Scientific Validation

by
Scott Jones

The following information is compiled from “*A Scientific Investigation of the Old Testament*”, by R.D. Wilson (there are two editions, and I’m privileged to have a reprint of his first edition), “*Is Higher Criticism Scholarly*”, also by Wilson, and “*Which Bible*”, by David Otis Fuller. Fuller studied under Dr. Wilson at Princeton Theological Seminary.

For foundation, it should be noted that Dick Wilson was fluent in 45 ancient languages and dialects. This includes all the Biblical and cognate languages, i.e., Hebrew, Aramaic, the Sumerian/Babylonian dialects, Phoenician, Assyrian, Ethiopic, the various Egyptian and Persian dialects, and so on -- 45 languages/dialects in all. Also, it is recorded that Wilson had memorized the entire New Testament in Hebrew and could recite it without missing so much as a syllable. With regard to evidence, Wilson himself made the following comment:

“Before a man has the right to speak about the history, the language, and the paleography of the Old Testament, the Christian church has the right to demand that such a man should establish his ability to do so.”

Thus...

“For forty-five years continuously, since I left college, I have devoted myself to the one great study of the Old Testament, in all its languages, in all its archaeology, in all its translations, and as far as possible in everything bearing upon its text and history.”

Accordingly, there are about 40 kings from ten nations (Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, etc.) whose names are mentioned not only in the Hebrew Masoretic text (the Old Testament), but are also found on monuments of their own time. Thus, we have something with which to reference the Bible. We also have a basis for comparing the Bible to other literature. Here’s what we find...

Wilson discovered that of the 40 kings having an archaeological corroboration, every single name is transliterated in the Hebrew Masoretic text exactly as it appears on the archaeological artifact -- syllable for syllable, consonant for consonant, 40 kings, every single name. Additionally, we find that the chronological order of these kings is precise. In other words, every name in the Hebrew Masoretic text, some of which go back to the book of Genesis and the time of Hammurabi, appears in its correct order, with the correct spelling, in the correct time, as attested by the archaeological artifacts and period literature.

Let's compare...

We'll begin with the librarian of Alexandria, considered by most to be the greatest scholar of his era, which is circa 200 BC. His list contains the names of 38 Egyptian kings. Of the entire number, only three or four of them are recognizable. In other words, when compared to their respective archaeological artifacts, only three or four names are even close to the inscription on the artifact. None are exact. This same scholar also made a list of the kings of Assyria. In only one case does the name clearly resemble the name on the artifact, and that name is not spelled correctly. The only way most of the names can be ascertained and then matched up with an artifact is by intrinsic evidence and cross-referencing with other regional literature.

Now let's take a look at Ptolemy, who drew up a register of 18 kings. Not one is spelled correctly. Furthermore, most of them are spelled so badly that we could not make them out at all without intrinsic evidence and cross-referencing.

In short, we find this same pattern in every other piece of literature extant. The scribe of Assurbanipal misspelled his names. The Pseudo-Callisthenes, in their list of the companions of Alexander, have every name written so as to be unrecognizable. Abulfeda, the author of the Arab ante-Islamic history, misspells his names. The same is true of the lists of Manetho, Herodotus, Diodorus Siculus, Africanus, Castor, et. al.

In fact, the only historical literature of antiquity that has demonstrated unerring accuracy with regard to archaeological verification is the Textus Receptus Hebrew and Greek text of the Old and New Testaments.

Wilson summed it up this way:

*"This almost universal inaccuracy and unreliability of the Greek and Arab historians with reference to the kings of Egypt, Assyria, and Babylon is in glaring contrast with the exactness and trustworthiness of the Hebrew Bible... Having given such care to the names of heathen kings, it is to be presumed that they [Hebrew scribes] would give no less attention to what these kings said and did; and so we have, **in this incontestable evidence from the order, times, and spelling of the names of the kings**, an indestructible basis upon which to rest our faith in the reliability of the history recorded in the books of the Old Testament Scriptures."*

And since I can't match him, I'll close with a final quote from Dr. Wilson:

*"That the Hebrew writers should have transliterated these names with such accurateness and conformity to philological principles is a wonderful proof of their thorough care and scholarship and of their access to the original sources. **That the names should have been transmitted to us through so many copyings and so many centuries in so complete a state of preservation is a phenomenon unequaled in the history of literature.**"*

The King James Bible is the only Bible in English that is based strictly on the Hebrew Masoretic text in the Old Testament. Modern bibles, to varying degrees, have

incorporated into their Old Testament readings which come from the Septuagint (based on manuscripts at least 300 years later than Christianity), the Samaritan Pentateuch, the Dead Sea Scrolls, and other extant literature, none of which can match the infallibility of the Hebrew Masoretic text underlying the Authorised Version, as exhibited above.

Finally, it should be noted in closing that God - as the above material discloses - preserved not just the message of the Bible, nor merely the sentences and words of the Bible, but rather, it is eminently clear that the faithful God of Israel who neither slumbers nor sleeps did in fact preserve the very letters themselves. The above demonstration in this matter simply cannot be gainsaid.

"For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled." Matthew 5:28

"Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away." Matthew 24:35