

## Reason 1: The Evidence of Honesty

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The Bible: from generation to generation, one of the most controversial books ever written. Honored by some as the Word of God. Hated by others as an outdated, intolerant collection of self-contradiction.

Is this all-time best seller the good book its advocates believe it to be? What does the evidence say? “Faith on Trial: Ten Reasons to Believe in the Bible,” on this *Day of Discovery*.

This is the land of the Bible. A land inseparably linked to reasons for believing in the reliability of the Old and New Testaments. Here historic communities like Jerusalem, Bethlehem, and the Galilee provided a real-life setting for the unfolding story of Scripture. And here at the lowest spot on earth, in the region of the notorious twin cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, the honesty of Scripture is showcased when it describes the depths to which God’s own people could sink.

**Jimmy De Young** [at the Dead Sea]: Mart De Haan, I cannot believe you followed through with what you said you were going to do.

**Mart De Haan** [taking a mud bath]: I haven’t done this since I was a kid, Jimmy. Remember the *National Geographic*? Remember the pictures when you were a kid? Dead Sea, mud on the face . . .

**Jimmy De Young**: You’re just like one of them.

**Mart De Haan**: I had to do it.

**Jimmy De Young**: Well, you did it. By the way, they say the minerals in that mud you’re putting on your body heal the body.

**Mart De Haan**: Yeah, I’m counting on it.

**Jimmy De Young**: In fact, they say it will make you look ten years

younger.

**Mart De Haan:** It already has!

**Jimmy De Young:** We'll only be able to determine that when we wash that mud off.

**Mart De Haan:** Hey, come on in.

**Jimmy De Young:** I'll leave that to you. I'm going to take a drink of cool crystal-clear water by the shores of the Dead Sea, which, by the way, is seven times saltier than any ocean on the face of the earth. The Dead Sea, the lowest spot on the face of the earth. Forty to fifty miles long, eight to ten miles wide, twelve hundred feet deep at some points.

The Dead Sea, a great revenue producer as far as the State of Israel is concerned. The Dead Sea works, it extracts the chemicals, the chlorides, the minerals. In fact, they have just built a \$400 million magnesium plant at the southern end of the Dead Sea and it's the very first time that they produced metal in Israel since the times of King Solomon.

The Dead Sea. Enough potash in the Dead Sea to fertilize the entire earth for two hundred years. and they say that the biblical cities of Sodom and Gomorrah are buried underneath the waters of the Dead Sea, the lowest spot on the face of the earth.

**Mart De Haan:** No one ever said it would be pretty, but it's healthy. And the Bible has never been blamed, has never been accused, of cleaning up or white-washing human nature. In fact, as we sit here on the lowest spot on earth, I'm reminded of the Bible, which itself describes some of the lowest points in human history. The Bible describes Sodom and Gomorrah. But it not only describes the sin of a pagan people, but the Bible then goes on, through one of its prophets, to say that Jerusalem, the chosen people of God, did, themselves, sink lower than the people of Sodom and Gomorrah. Yes, the Bible, for our own sake, describes human nature as it really is. And that's one reason to trust in the Bible and its credibility. Because it's honest about its own people.

**Dr. Walter Russell:** If I were writing the Bible and if I had a little bit of marketing background, I think I'd want to do a more positive, kind of glossy, sales job as to what people are really like. I wouldn't want to shock them too much with this strange admixture of evil

and of worth. And yet the Bible does that, and it strikes me as stunningly honest, in that it's offensive to some people. At times it's offensive to me, and I have to put it down and think about it. And if I were just trying to create a book in a marketing campaign, just to draw people in willy-nilly and get as big of a movement as I could, that's not the way I would do it. But I think God through the Bible has in His kindness given us this wonderful, delightful blend of what human beings are. And the Bible expresses that and is a mirror for us to look into and to learn from that. And it gives us confidence that God is trustworthy, because He sees the very basements of our lives.

The Bible is painfully honest. It shows Jacob, the father of its "chosen people," to be a deceiver. It describes Moses, the lawgiver, as an insecure, reluctant leader, who, in his first attempt to come to the aid of his own people, killed a man, and then ran for his life to the desert. It portrays David not only as Israel's most loved king, general, and spiritual leader, but as one who took another man's wife and then, to cover his own sin, conspired to have her husband killed.

**Darrell Bock:** Look at the reality of what humanity is portrayed to be in this book. And then look at our own world and our own news, and let's see how similar they are. See how destructive mankind is. See how we tend, even though God tells us we should behave in certain ways, we tend to do something other than that. Because I think the lesson of the Old Testament is primarily a lesson of human failure and human need for God. And our tendency—even though we might in our hearts really want to do right—often do wrong.

The Bible represents human nature as hostile to God. It predicts a future full of trouble. It teaches that the road to heaven is narrow and the way to hell is wide. Scripture was not written for those who want simple answers or an easy, optimistic view of religion and human nature.

**Dr. Walter Russell:** I've just been reading about King Saul in the Bible in the book of 1 Samuel, chapters 14 and 15, and King Saul reminds me much of myself in terms of his frailties. It is staggering the way the Bible unblinkingly pictures characters. Both their strengths and their weaknesses. And as I read through it, I shudder because it's like looking in the mirror in that it shows that Saul and myself and all of us are a strange mixture of wonderful good qualities, and yet some tragic, malevolent evil qualities. And the

Bible over and over again, and I think that's what both draws us into the Bible—its honesty and its unblinking, and unswerving look at us—but it also causes us to want to run the other way. Because it is so staggeringly point-blank honest in its evaluations.