Bible 101 - Back to Basics

I. Introduction - Is the Bible relevant and, if so, how can we be better prepared to understand what it has to say? There is much compelling evidence that the Bible though written centuries ago is pertinent to us today. In this study we will looking at and study the Bible in a number of different ways.

Mathew 24:35, Isaiah 40:8

The only reason the Bible can be relevant today it is true and comes from an all knowing , all powerful, personal and only existing God.

To be considered to have come from an all powerful God, a book must meet certainrequirements:

1. It must have been transmitted accurately from the time it was written so that we can exactly what God said and did.
2. Also, it must be correct when it deals with historical personages and events.
3. Furthermore, any revelation from God must be without any scientific absurdities which would betray human authorship. (There are many of these in other religious writings)

Over the coming weeks we are going to see that not only does the Bible meet the minimum requirements for a book coming from God, but it contains powerful additional evidence of having a divine origin.

II. The uniqueness of the Bible. Webster's definition of unique - "1. One and only, single, sole. Different from all others, having no like or equal." The Bible is unique in the following ways plus many more.

A. Unique in its continuity. Here is a book.....

1. Written over a 1500 year time span
2. Written over 40 generations
3. Written by more than 40 authors, from every walk of life - including kings, peasants, philosophers, fishermen, poets, statesmen, scholars, etc.:

     a. Moses, a political leader, trained in the universities of Egypt

     b. Peter, a fisherman

     c. Amos, a herdsman

     d. Joshua, a military general

     e. Nehemiah, a cupbearer (food taster)

     f. Daniel, a prime minister

     g. Luke, a doctor

     h. Solomon, a king

     I. Mathew, tax collector

     J. Paul, a rabbi (a Pharisee of the Pharisees)

1. Written in different places:

     a. Moses in the wilderness

     b. Jeremiah in a dungeon

     c. Daniel on a hillside and in a palace

     d. Paul inside prison walls

     e. Luke while traveling

     f. John on the Isle of Patmos

1. Written at different times

     a. David in times of war

     b. Solomon in times of peace

1. Written during different moods: some from the heights of joy, others from the depths of despair.
2. Written on three continents: Asia, Africa, Europe
3. Written in three languages:

     a. Hebrew, the language of the Old Testament

     b. Aramaic, the common language of the Near East until Alexander the Great

     c. Greek, the international language at the time of Christ

1. Finally, the subject matter includes hundreds of controversial topics. Yet the authors spoke with harmony and continuity from Genesis to Revelation. There is one unfolding story "God's redemption of man". Read pg 28, literary types.

B. Unique in its Circulation - the Bible has been read by more people and published in more languages than any other book in history. The first major printed was the Latin Vulgate on Gutenbergs printing press. While this doesn't prove the Bible is the Word of God, it does show, factually, that the Bible is unique.

C. Unique in its survival

1. Survival through time - Being written on materials that perishes and having been copied and recopied for hundreds of years before the printing press did not diminish the style, correctness or existence of the Bible. See explanation of scribal process.
2. Survival through persecution- the Bible has withstood vicious attacks throughout history from the Roman emperors to modern day Islamic extremists. Voltaire example, pg 30

D. Unique in its Teaching

1. Prophesy - the only volume ever produced by man or a group of men that contains prophecies relating to individual nations, to Israel, to all the peoples of the earth, to certain cities and to the coming of the Messiah. No other works of antiquity contain any real prophesy of a great historic event to come in the distant future, nor any prophesy of a Savior to arise from the human race. Islam cannot point to any prophesies pertaining to Mohammed, nor can the founders of any cult point to prophesies regarding their arrival.
2. History. Pg 3

E. Unique in its influence on surrounding literature.