

The Bible Does Not Resemble Legend

Open-Book Review

Use ThinkCube to answer the following questions. The purpose isn't to test your memory, but to help you review and reinforce the most important ideas from each premise.

PREMISE 1

Bible Texts Are Too Counterproductive To Be Legend

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1. According to the ThinkCube, what is the “Principle of Embarrassment” used to identify?

- A. Details that are awkward or damaging and therefore less likely to have been invented
- B. Errors that prove an ancient document is unreliable
- C. Stories that were added centuries later
- D. Teachings designed to make religious leaders look impressive

2. Which example best illustrates the Bible's willingness to record embarrassing details?

- A. Peter denying Jesus three times
- B. Solomon building the Temple
- C. David defeating Goliath
- D. Paul traveling to Rome

3. Why does the ThinkCube emphasize the disciples' failures, doubts, and misunderstandings?

- A. Such details are unlikely if the writers were inventing propaganda to glorify themselves
- B. They show the disciples were fictional characters
- C. They prove the Gospels were written anonymously
- D. They show the writers wanted to discourage Christianity

4. How do biblical heroes differ from typical legendary heroes?

- A. Biblical figures are openly shown with serious moral failures and weaknesses
- B. Biblical figures are always portrayed as flawless
- C. Biblical figures never experience fear or doubt
- D. Biblical figures are presented as demigods

Be Prepared to Share

1. Someone says: “Religions usually make their founders and leaders look impressive.” What could you ask about the Bible's repeated record of its own leaders' failures?

2. Put it in your own words: Why can embarrassing and damaging details strengthen the case that the biblical writers were trying to report truth rather than create legend?

PREMISE 2

The Bible Has Unexpected Role Models

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1. What kind of people does the Bible repeatedly place in important roles?

- A. Flawed, unlikely, or socially unexpected people whom God uses and transforms
- B. Only wealthy and politically powerful leaders
- C. Only people portrayed as morally perfect from birth
- D. Only priests and kings

2. Which person is an example of an unlikely biblical figure used prominently by God?

- A. Paul, who had persecuted Christians before becoming a missionary
- B. Caesar Augustus, who became an apostle
- C. Herod, who wrote a Gospel
- D. Pilate, who led the early Church

3. Why does the ThinkCube contrast biblical figures with idealized heroes?

- A. Inventor movements commonly polish their heroes, while Scripture openly records serious flaws
- B. Ancient legends always focused on ordinary fishermen
- C. Biblical authors avoided mentioning failures
- D. Christianity teaches that moral character is unimportant

4. What central biblical theme is illustrated by people such as Rahab, David, Peter, and Paul?

- A. God redeems and uses unlikely and imperfect people for His purposes
- B. God chooses people because they never fail
- C. Leadership depends primarily on social status
- D. Only national heroes can serve God

Be Prepared to Share

1. Someone says: "If Christianity were invented, its founders could simply have created impressive heroes." What could you ask about the Bible's choice of deeply flawed and unlikely central figures?

2. Put it in your own words: Why do the Bible's unexpected role models look different from the polished heroes we might expect in religious propaganda?

PREMISE 3

If Made Up—The Bible Would Not Highlight Women

Open-Book Review

1. Why does the ThinkCube consider the Bible's prominent inclusion of women significant?

- A. Women often had limited public and legal standing in the surrounding ancient cultures
- B. Women controlled all ancient governments
- C. Ancient histories were normally written entirely by women
- D. Women were the only people permitted to give legal testimony

2. Who were the first witnesses to the empty tomb and risen Jesus in the Gospel accounts?

- A. Women, including Mary Magdalene
- B. Roman senators
- C. The high priest and his council
- D. Greek philosophers

3. Which example shows the Bible giving women spiritually significant roles?

- A. Deborah served as a prophet and judge, and women were prominent witnesses to the resurrection
- B. Women are absent from Jesus's ministry
- C. No biblical book centers on a woman
- D. The New Testament never names women who served the Church

4. Why would women as resurrection witnesses be an unusual detail to invent in that culture?

- A. Their testimony generally carried less public and legal weight than men's testimony
- B. Women were prohibited from entering Jerusalem
- C. Women could not speak any language used by the disciples
- D. Roman law required all religious founders to be women

Be Prepared to Share

1. Someone says: "The resurrection story was probably invented to persuade the ancient world." What could you ask about choosing women as the first witnesses in a culture where their testimony often carried less public weight?
2. Put it in your own words: How does the Bible's treatment of women support the argument that the writers recorded what happened rather than constructing the most culturally convenient story?

PREMISE 4

The Bible Includes Elements That Make No Sense If It Was Made Up

Open-Book Review

1. How does the Old Testament treat Israel's national history?

- A. It repeatedly records Israel's rebellion, failures, defeats, and judgment
- B. It hides every national failure
- C. It portrays every king as righteous
- D. It records only military victories

2. Why is this pattern unusual for a national religious text?

- A. Propaganda normally glorifies its own people and suppresses humiliating failures
- B. Ancient nations never recorded wars
- C. Religious texts were forbidden from mentioning kings
- D. National histories normally focused only on foreign nations

3. What do books such as Jeremiah and Lamentations openly describe?

- A. Israel's sin, judgment, devastation, and sorrow
- B. Israel's uninterrupted prosperity
- C. The perfection of Israel's priests and kings
- D. The absence of divine judgment

4. What does the ThinkCube argue this self-indictment suggests?

- A. The biblical writers valued truth over national image and propaganda
- B. The writers were trying to erase Israel from history
- C. The Bible was written to glorify political rulers
- D. The writers avoided uncomfortable events

Be Prepared to Share

1. Someone says: "The Bible was created to promote Israel and its religion." What could you ask about its repeated record of Israel's own rebellion, humiliation, defeat, and judgment?
2. Put it in your own words: Why would a fabricated national religion be expected to make its own people look better than the Bible actually does?

PREMISE 5

Why Would The Disciples Invent A God Whose Holiness Terrified Them?

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1. What surprised the disciples when Jesus walked on the Sea of Galilee?

- A. His divine authority produced a fear and awe even greater than their fear of the storm
- B. They immediately treated the event as ordinary
- C. They were more impressed by the boat than by Jesus
- D. They concluded that nature was more powerful than Jesus

2. What idea associated with Sigmund Freud does the ThinkCube contrast with the biblical picture of God?

- A. Religion can be invented as comforting wish-fulfillment in response to human fear and helplessness
- B. Religion began as a branch of astronomy
- C. All ancient people rejected supernatural beliefs
- D. Fear has no role in human psychology

3. How is the God of the Bible presented differently from a merely comforting human invention?

- A. His holiness confronts sin and inspires awe, reverence, fear, and obedience
- B. He never judges anyone
- C. He adjusts His moral standards to human desires
- D. He exists mainly to affirm human choices

4. What example involving Moses supports this point?

- A. Even Moses was disciplined and forbidden to enter the Promised Land after disobeying God
- B. Moses was never corrected by God
- C. Moses was portrayed as morally perfect
- D. Moses was allowed to change God's standards

Be Prepared to Share

1. Someone says: "People invented God mainly to make themselves feel safe and comfortable." What could you ask about a biblical God whose holiness frightens, judges, and demands obedience even from His greatest leaders?

2. Put it in your own words: Why does the Bible's portrayal of God's radical holiness challenge the idea that He was invented merely as psychological comfort?