

## Can I Trust the Bible?

That You May Believe: A Series on Apologetics, Part 7  
*Psalm 1; Psalm 19:7-14; 2 Timothy 3:16-4:2; 2 Peter 1:16-21*

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### That You May Believe: A Series on Apologetics

- This is our last week in our series on apologetics.
- Next week we will have a Q+R (question and response).
- You can submit your questions to a link that will be text out tomorrow at 10am and again at 12:30pm on Sunday. The questions will be due on Sunday at 5pm, which will give me plenty of time to study up for the questions.
- So I encourage you to ask a question, especially if it's a question that would be relevant to everyone.
- Submit your questions [HERE](#).<sup>1</sup>

### What does the Bible say about the Bible?

- *Psalm 19:7-17*
  - This is a psalm of King David.
  - The law of the Lord is perfect. (vs. 7)
  - The rules of God are righteous. (vs. 9)
  - The word of God is to be more desired (therefore more valuable) than gold, and is sweeter than honey. (vs. 10)
  - Keeping the law of the Lord brings a great reward. (vs. 11)
- Who would you say are the 2 most influential leaders of the early church? Peter and Paul. Both of them in their last letters put an emphasis on scripture being reliable and necessary.
- *2 Timothy 3:16-4:2*
  - This is the last document we're aware of by Paul.
  - All Scripture is God-breathed. (3:16)
  - It's profitable for... (3:16-17)
    - Teaching
    - Correcting
    - Training
  - It's the Word of God. (4:2)

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<sup>1</sup> Google form link:

[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfOXaeEOjH61Co3BHa72vOcUber59kMMcFDDnwnj39S6KrHmA/viewform?usp=sf\\_link](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfOXaeEOjH61Co3BHa72vOcUber59kMMcFDDnwnj39S6KrHmA/viewform?usp=sf_link)

- *2 Peter 1:16-21*
  - This is the last document we're aware of by Peter.
  - Scripture was spoken by God and carried by the Holy Spirit. (vs. 21)
- *Luke 24:27, 44-45*
  - Jesus used scripture to explain His identity to his followers.
- *2 Peter 3:15-16*
  - The previous passages discuss mainly Old Testament scripture. This passage equates the writings of Paul (and Peter) with Old Testament scripture.
  - Peter equates Paul's writings with other scriptures.

### **Arguments for the Trustworthiness of the Bible:**

#### **The Bible is incredibly honest.**

- There are many things included in the Bible that are counterproductive to the mission of starting a movements.
- Examples of counterproductive stories.
  - The first people to hear of the announcement of Jesus' birth were shepherds.
  - The first people to proclaim the resurrection were women.
    - Women's testimonies were not admissible in court.<sup>2</sup>
  - The disciples come across as stupid, cowardly, and jealous.
  - Peter and Paul, the two most important leaders of the early church had numerous flaws.
- Why would the biblical authors and early church leaders include these things unless they really happened?

#### **There's a staggering number of biblical manuscripts.**

- There are over 5,000 New Testament manuscripts.<sup>3</sup>
- Of all writings of antiquity, the manuscripts of the Bible blow away other documents
  - Plato – 7 copies
  - Writings of the history of Caesar – 10 copies
  - Aristotle – 49 copies
  - Homer (*Iliad*) – 643 copies
  - Bible – 6,500 copies – 99.5% accuracy of copies

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<sup>2</sup> Timothy Keller, *The Reason for God: Belief in an Age of Skepticism* (New York: Riverhead Books, 2008), 108.

<sup>3</sup> Neil R. Lightfoot, *How We Got the Bible* (Abilene, TX: ACU Press, 1986), 16.

- Even Bart Ehrman when pushed on the authenticity and reliability of the New Testament said we know what 99% of exactly what the original N.T. manuscripts said.
- There is more of a historical account for the bodily resurrection than there is that Julius Cesar was a Roman Emperor.

### **The Bible does not read like a myth.**

- The modern version of the genre fiction reads nothing like the ancient fiction.<sup>4</sup>
- When you read ancient fictional literature like Beowulf, The Iliad, or The Odyssey, they read nothing like the Bible. Ancient readers could tell the difference between fiction and non-fiction.<sup>5</sup>
- Think about these details that are mentioned in the gospels:<sup>6</sup>
  - Jesus was asleep on a cushion in the stern of a boat
  - Peter was 100 yards away in the sea when he noticed Jesus.
  - The disciples caught 153 fish.
  - Jesus, while listening to men who brought the woman caught in the act of adultery, write in the dirt with His finger.
- None of these details are relevant to the plot or character development at all.<sup>7</sup>
- Why else include these little details if this was not true.
- One of the factor that led C.S. Lewis to come to faith was this. He was a literary scholar and was very familiar with mythological literature. He knew that the Bible was no myth (in the sense of genre).<sup>8</sup>

### **The New Testament was written within only a few decades of Jesus' death. This means that there are many people living at the time of the composition of the New Testament who could confirm or challenge the written accounts.**

- “The canonical gospels were written at the very most forty to sixty years after Jesus' death.”<sup>9</sup>
- “[There is much] historical evidence to demonstrate that at the time the gospels were written there were still numerous well-known living eyewitnesses to Jesus's teaching and life events. They had committed them to memory and they remained active in public life, serving as ongoing sources...of the truth of those accounts.”<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Keller, *The Reason for God*, 110.

<sup>5</sup> Keller, *The Reason for God*, 110.

<sup>6</sup> Keller, *The Reason for God*, 110.

<sup>7</sup> Keller, *The Reason for God*, 111.

<sup>8</sup> Keller, *The Reason for God*, 110.

<sup>9</sup> Keller, *The Reason for God*, 104.

<sup>10</sup> Keller, *The Reason for God*, 104.

- For example, in *Mark 15:21*, Mark writes that the person who carried Jesus' cross was "the father of Alexander and Rufus." In other words, the author is saying that Alexander and Rufus will vouch for the truth that I'm telling you. You can ask them.<sup>11</sup>
- Jesus also appeared to over 500 people (*1 Corinthians 15:6*). Paul invites the church at Corinth to go and ask any of these 500 people.
- Paul said to King Agrippa in *Acts 26:26*. "These things were not done in a corner." In other words, the events of Jesus' crucifixion and empty tomb were well-known and could not be refuted.<sup>12</sup>
- Irenaeus of Lyons said in 160 CE declared that there were four, and only four gospels.<sup>13</sup>
- The gospels were recognized as authoritative very early on.

### **Scripture understood science way ahead of its time.**

- Germ theory (Patrick Mead spoke of this in his talk)
  - Cleanliness laws in Leviticus

### **If there's a God, it is plausible that He would providentially give us a way to understand Him.**

#### **The Bible is consistent.**

- "The Bible contains 66 documents. Approximately 40 authors wrote in three different languages over a period of about 1,500 years. Some of the authors were young, some were old; some were professionals, others were peasants; some were soldiers, others were civil servants, fishermen, farmers, and kings. They wrote in wildly different genres: history, population statistics, poetry, travel diaries, law, prophecy, family trees, biography, geographical surveys, architectural blueprints, song lyrics. They wrote in different periods of history, in different geographical locations, to different groups of people...What is the likelihood that it would make any sense at all? Yet the Bible has a single theme running all the way through it...It tells the unified, coherent story of humanity's creation by God, humanity's rebellion against God, and God's redemption of his people."<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Keller, *The Reason for God*, 105.

<sup>12</sup> Keller, *The Reason for God*, 106.

<sup>13</sup> Keller, *The Reason for God*, 106.

<sup>14</sup> Barry Cooper, *Can I Really Trust the Bible: And Other Questions About Scripture, Truth, and How God Speaks* (The Good Book Company, 2015), 38.

- It's like flickering through radio stations, and each station plays a song in order that tells one beautiful story.<sup>15</sup>

### **Jesus had a high view of the Bible.**

- It is plausible, and I say probable, that Jesus died on the cross and was resurrected.
- I stand with whoever can predict their own death and resurrection and can pull it off. If Jesus has a high view of scripture, we do too.
- Examples of Jesus using scripture:
  - When Jesus was tempted by Satan in the wilderness for 40 days, he quoted scripture. (*Matthew 4:1-11*)
  - If Jesus believed that Adam was a historical person, so do I.
  - When asked about marriage, he quoted scripture.
  - When he explained to his disciples of his identity, he taught them through scripture. (*Luke 24:27, 44-45*)
  - When Jesus taught to His hometown of Nazareth, he quoted scripture. (*Luke 4:16-30*)
  - When Jesus communicated with John the Baptist about His identity and vocation, he quoted scripture. (*Matthew 11:4-6*)
- If Jesus had a high view of scripture, so should we.

### **If the Bible is true, we must take it seriously.**

- Do you realize what you have access to?
- Read the Bible. Know it.
- I will close by reading a few passages again:
  - “More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and drippings of the honeycomb.” (*Psalm 19:10*)
  - “All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.” (*1 Timothy 3:16*)

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<sup>15</sup> Cooper, *Can I Really Trust the Bible?*,38.