

Theme: The Bible is God's infallible revelation to humanity, and therefore it can be trusted as a firm foundation for belief and life.

I. Intro - Gallup Poll in 2017

- A. 26% of Americans most closely identified with the statement that "the Bible is an ancient book of fables, legends, history and moral precepts recorded by man"
- B. Highest percentage ever - but this belief has been around for years.
- C. Thomas Jefferson - cut out parts of NT to make a version he preferred
- D. Many are pretty fuzzy about Scripture - what it is and what it teaches
- E. What is the Bible? Can we trust what it teaches? Why or why not?

II. The Christian Claim About the Bible

- A. The Bible is God's Word, true in all it affirms
 - 1. We do not think the Bible is simply a "good book"
 - 2. We think the Bible is God's revelation to humanity
 - 3. We think the Bible is true in all it affirms and denies
 - 4. Other books may contain truth, but the Bible IS truth
 - 5. All other writings are at best a mixture of truth and error, but the Bible is God's true, infallible and authoritative Word.
- B. The claim of Christianity is that the Bible is God's infallible revelation to humanity, and therefore it can be trusted as a firm foundation for belief and life.

III. Questioning the Bible

- A. Isn't the Bible just another human book? Can't we just take it as a good book, but not God's Word?
Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. ²¹ For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. 2 Peter 1:20–21
 - 1. Many claim the Bible is just another human book
 - 2. Above all - Scripture is not just a human book
 - 3. The authors spoke from God as the Spirit guided
 - 4. This is the universal claim the Bible makes for itself - God is speaking through humans to other humans
All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, 2 Timothy 3:16
 - 5. A book whose central claim is to be God's own Word cannot be just a 'good book'. It is either God's Word or it is a damnable lie
 - 6. For more info on inspiration see "How Did I Get My Bible" on our website
- B. The Bible was written a long time after the events and is full of historical errors
We did not follow cleverly invented stories when we told you about the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but **we were eyewitnesses** of his majesty. ¹⁸ **We ourselves heard this voice that came from heaven when we were with him on the sacred mountain.** 2 Peter 1:16, 18

1. Much of the Scripture was written by eyewitnesses near the time of the events - not by others writing hundreds of years later
2. Other parts were well researched or based on eyewitness testimony

Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us, ² just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eyewitnesses and servants of the word. ³ Therefore, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, it seemed good also to me to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, ⁴ so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught. Luke 1:1–4

 - a. Luke wrote based on the testimony of eyewitnesses
 - b. He wrote after careful research
 - c. This gives us confidence in what we believe - it is not some made up fairy tale, but real history

- C. The Bible has undergone many changes; we don't even know what it originally taught
- And we have the word of the prophets made more certain, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. 2 Peter 1:19
1. Peter claims that they know the words of the prophets of the Old Testament
 2. But many say that the words of the human writers of Scripture have been lost; the text is corrupted
 3. The Bible is by far the most well-attested book in all of the ancient world. We have far more copies, closer to the date of the original writing, than any other book in the ancient world.

- a. We have over 6000 manuscripts, codices, or portions of the NT writings – Homer's Iliad only has 650 manuscripts or portions! And this does not include all of the NT manuscripts in other languages or in quotes from early Church Fathers!
 - b. The typical time lapse between the writing and the oldest known manuscript for most works of Greek literature is around 800 years, yet we have manuscripts of most of the NT within approximately 100 years of the original writing.
 - c. We are finding more and earlier texts every year!
4. We have more confidence in the transmission of the Biblical text than any other document from the ancient world.
 5. For more info on transmission of the Biblical text, see "How Did I Get My Bible" on our website

IV. Three Arguments For the Truth of the Bible

- A. The evidence of history and archaeology
- We did not follow cleverly invented stories when we told you about the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. 2 Peter 1:16
1. Eyewitness testimony should have the backing of history and archaeology - and it does!
 2. The Bible has been shown time and again to be historically accurate
 3. Many times current scholarship doubted the Bible - and more research showed the truth of Scripture
 4. Every year more evidence confirming the truth of Scripture is uncovered

5. This does not mean that there are no questions or problems - but history and archaeology confirm the essential truthfulness of Scripture
6. For more information, see the resources listed on the devotional and discussion guide

B. The evidence of fulfilled prophecy

And **we have the word of the prophets made more certain**, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. 2 Peter 1:19

1. There are hundreds of prophecies in Scripture that were fulfilled in history
2. This includes prophecies related to the rise and fall of empires, the exile of Israel, the destruction of Jerusalem, and especially to the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus
3. These prophecies are not like the oracles at Delphi or modern tricksters - they are specific and detailed
4. Jesus and the apostles made constant reference to this in their preaching and teaching

C. The evidence of Jesus' teaching

I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished. Matthew 5:18

1. Jesus clearly believed and taught that the Scripture is God's inspired, inerrant, infallible Word
2. Jesus taught that the Scripture must be received, believed, and obeyed

3. There is no stronger proof for the Bible than the fact that Jesus - the God-Man who conquered death - accepted it as the very infallible and authoritative Word of God.

V. Applying the Word

A. Do I understand the claims about the Bible - and the evidence for those claims?

1. The claim is not that the Bible is a good book, or one that is full of inspirational thoughts
2. The claim is that the Bible is God's Word Written for us, and that it is therefore inerrant, infallible, and authoritative for us
3. These claims are not empty, irrational, nor blind - but are rather solid, thoughtful responses to the evidence God has given us
4. Once again, we do not have "blind faith" while others have "facts" - that is utterly false
5. Remember to check out the resources for even more discussion of all this

B. Am I walking in faithful obedience to God's Word?

1. Once again, this is not simply interesting intellectual information - it calls for a response
2. We are not called to sit in judgment of God's Word - it sits in judgment of us
3. We are called to embrace Scripture by faith, letting it shape and mold our thoughts, desires, and actions so that they conform to the will of God

4. Those who build their lives on the firm foundation of God's Word will find blessing and joy, for it will guide them into truth and reality, empowering them to fulfill God's purposes for their lives.
5. We all need to take time daily to feed and meditate upon God's Word, gather with others in small groups to study it together, and then come each Sunday to be fed, encouraged and challenged.

the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. 2 Peter 1:16–21

C. Response song

The Question of the Bible

2 Peter 1:16-21

April 8, 2018

Prayer

Acts 20:32

Teaching keywords: Apologetics; Word of God; special revelation; revelation

Now I commit you to God and to the word of his grace, which can build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified. Acts 20:32

We did not follow cleverly invented stories when we told you about the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. ¹⁷ For he received honor and glory from God the Father when the voice came to him from the Majestic Glory, saying, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased." ¹⁸ We ourselves heard this voice that came from heaven when we were with him on the sacred mountain.

¹⁹ And we have the word of the prophets made more certain, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. ²⁰ above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. ²¹ For prophecy never had its origin in