

The RELIABILITY of the Bible - Part 2

Can we trust the Bible?

The Seminar Series: The Bible

- **The VALUE of the Bible...***What value should we place on the Bible?*
- **The RELIABILITY of the Bible - Part 1...***Can we trust the Bible?*
- **The RELIABILITY of the Bible - Part 2...***Can we trust the Bible?*
- **APPROACHING the Bible ...***What attitude should we have as read the Bible?*
- **UNDERSTANDING the Bible ...***How do we understand and interpret the Bible?*
- **EXPERIENCING God in the Bible...***How do we experience God when we read the Bible?*
- **PERSEVERING in the Bible...***How do we experience God through the Bible for a lifetime?*

INTRODUCTION: *Why is the reliability of the Bible a critical question?*

Historical confidence vs. Mathematical certainty

How can we be sure that what is recorded in the Bible is true & accurate?

#1 - The Continuity of the Bible

The Bible consists of 66 books of wide ranging types of literature, written by 40 different authors over a period of 1500 years who lived on 3 different continents and spoke 3 different languages and came from very diverse walks of life (from kings to shepherds to fisherman to prophets)...**YET it is a progressive revelation of the story of redemption.**

Q: *Why might the continuity of the Bible point to its trustworthiness?*

- **Continuity amongst the various types of literature, writers, and time periods of writing to reveal one grand story**

"The Bible is a unity. That is perhaps the most amazing of all the amazing things that are true of it. It consists of sixty-six separate units, written over more than a thousand years against a wide variety of cultural backgrounds, by people who for the most part worked independently of each other and show no awareness that their books would become canonical Scripture. The books themselves are of all kinds: prose jostling poetry, hymns rubbing shoulders with history, sermons with statistics, letters with liturgies, lurid visions with a love song. Why do we bind up this collection between the same two covers, call it The Holy Bible, and treat it as one book? One justification for doing this—one of many—is that the collection as a whole, once we start to explore it, proves to have an organic coherence that is simply stunning. Books written centuries apart seem to have been designed for the express purpose of supplementing and illuminating each other. There is throughout one leading character (God the Creator), one historical perspective (world redemption), one focal figure (Jesus of Nazareth, who is both Son of God and Savior), and one solid body of harmonious teaching about God and godliness." - **JI Packer**

- **Continuity in the multitude of prophecies**

#2 - Archeological & Historical Corroboration of the Bible

- **There is an abundance of information that history could either corroborate or deny.**
 - Almost every book of the Old Testament references historical people, places, and events
 - The Gospels and Acts reference historical people, places, and events
 - Luke references 32 countries, 54 cities, & 9 islands WITHOUT ERROR

"On the whole, however, archaeological work has unquestionably strengthened confidence in the reliability of the scriptural record. More than one archaeologist has found his respect for the Bible increased by the experience of excavation in Palestine." - **Millar Burrows, Yale Archeologist**

Q: *Why might historical accuracy be important as we wrestle with its trustworthiness?*

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#3 - New Testament Eyewitness Authorship

- **The New Testament was written by people who witnessed and testified as to what they had seen. Their testimony could be confirmed or denied.**

Luke 1:1-4

1 Corinthians 15:1-8

"It is not only Christ's supporters who were still alive. Also still alive were many bystanders, officials, and opponents who had actually heard him teach, seen his actions, and watched him die. They would have been especially ready to challenge any accounts that were fabricated. For a highly altered, fictionalized account of an event to take hold in the public imagination it is necessary that the eyewitnesses (and their children and grandchildren) all be long dead. They must be off the scene so they cannot contradict or debunk the embellishments and falsehoods of the story.

The gospels were written far too soon for this to occur." - **Tim Keller**

- **New Testament eyewitness authorship, and biblical authorship in general, are counterproductive if the goal was to fabricate a story or movement.**

#4 - The Bible's Relevance across Cultures

- **The Bible makes the most sense of the world around us...**

Why we are relational // our desire for justice and grace // the origin of morality and suffering // our longing for satisfaction

- **The Bible gives the clearest answers to the biggest questions that every culture faces...**

Who am I? Why am I here? What is wrong with the world? How can what is wrong be made right?

Q: *Why might its relevance across cultures be important as we wrestle with its trustworthiness?*

Within the Bible, we have a beautiful continuity which is further strengthened by external accuracy in regards to history and archeology as well as compelling evidence that what we read matches the original text. Also, we see the New Testament fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies, providing powerful evidence of unity and validity. This, in addition to its relevance across cultures, gives us great confidence that the Bible you hold is inspired by God and thus reliable in every way.

Where do I go from here?

- **ASK QUESTIONS** - God (and the Bible) can handle your questions. Seek out answers where you are troubled.
- **STAND CONFIDENT** - Stand with courage and confidence in a hostile world that seeks to attack truth
- **KNOW** - Know and be assured that God is personal and knowable. He has preserved His communication for you.
- **FALL FORWARD** - Commit to immersing yourself in the Bible more and more during this seminar. God wants to communicate to you!
The Psalm 119 experiment - read & pray through Psalm 119:49-72 this upcoming week