

## How Do We Know the Bible is God's Word? Miscellaneous Scriptures

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**Opening Scripture:** 2 Timothy 3:16-17--<sup>16</sup> All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for rebuking, for correcting, for training in righteousness, <sup>17</sup> so that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

I am often asked, "How long does it take you to prepare your sermons?" My usual answer is "I am always preparing sermons." Now, understand, there are definite times when I don't want to be interrupted and I am in my study. But, there is also that sense that I am always working on the message. This has been especially true in my preparation for the message today: "How Do We Know the Bible is God's Word?" I have been working on this message for my entire life, because at the heart of this message today is "Why do I personally believe that the Bible is God's Word?"

One Sunday years ago, about 30 seconds after the closing "Amen," I met a young man who said to me these exact words: "I am Muslim. How can you say that the Bible is true? I say that the Koran is true. How can you know?"

His question is an important one. His question is the question of many. It is not just the question from a Muslim perspective. It could be from an atheist or agnostic perspective. It could be from an extreme liberal perspective that holds to a philosophy that we cannot know real truth.

It is an important question. In fact, his question is important because we are using the Bible to answer all manner of other questions about faith. So the way that we answer this question of the Bible's authority becomes by default the answer to so many other question.

I am going to attempt to do something this morning that is really rare for us and should be rare. What I feel impressed to do today is to answer this young man's question, but not use the Bible to answer his question. His question demands to be answered without the use of the Bible. If I can answer his question without the use of the Bible, then for every other question we can use the Bible.

### **Why I Personally Believe that the Bible is God's Word**

There are many reasons that I believe that the Bible is the Word of God, but recognizing the constraints of time, let me build my case around 5 key reasons.

#### **Theological Logical Reasons**

Theology is the study of God. As the title of one book puts it, theology is *Thinking about God*. (Book title by Dr. Fisher Humphreys)

People who give their lives to the study of theology often use the word systematic to explain their theology. So, in Seminary, we study "Systematic Theology." As the word suggests, systematic

theologians attempt to put their thinking about God into a system (a logical system of thought) considering the whole of Scripture. A beginning theology might sound like a faith statement.

1. We believe that God is the only one true God.
2. We believe that Jesus Christ is the only way to salvation.
3. We believe that the Holy Spirit Completes the Trinity. God has come to us in the Holy Spirit to be the very power and presence of God.
4. We believe that salvation is by grace and grace alone. (As we said last week.)

All of these things together are part of what we call “theology.” I have come to believe these things because these are the things that Bible teaches. So, what about the person who does not believe the Bible? That’s our point today. So, I also want to say, “I have come to believe these things as a result of the resurrection of Jesus Christ—the ultimate pillar of our faith.” For me, as a Christian, it reasons that every theological thought hinges on the resurrection of Christ. Because I believe in the reality of the resurrection of Jesus, then I trust and believe in the One who was raised from the dead. And, I believe what he said and what His closest disciples said that came from Him.

What does this have to do with the truth of the Bible? The Bible is consistent with the things that I believe about God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit. For me, there is only logic in believing all or nothing. If I believe that Jesus rose from the grave, then I believe in what He has said.

So the question about the Bible being true begins with this question: Why do I believe in the resurrection? The great thing for me is that I don’t believe in the resurrection of Jesus just because it is in the Bible. There is credible proof in the resurrection outside the Bible. I always use what I call the 4 E’s to explain my belief in the resurrection.

- The Empty Tomb—Many have tried to disprove that Christ rose from the grave, but none have been successful. Why? Here’s why...The Eyewitnesses.
- The Eyewitnesses—The early eyewitnesses believed in the resurrection to the point that they were willing to die for that belief. The earliest of eyewitnesses believed in the empty tomb. People die all the time for what is a lie, but the difference here is that if the resurrection was not really true and those who said that it was true knew that it was not true, then they would be dying for a lie that they knew to be a lie. Big difference!
- The Emergence of the Church—How could the church take off as it did without the reality of the resurrection?
- My own personal Experience—As the hymn writer said, “He walks with me and talks with me. You ask me how I know He lives, He lives within my heart.” Or as the modern song writer said, “I know my Redeemer Lives—I spoke to Him this morning.”

### **Prophetic Reasons**

Another reason that I believe that the Bible is God’s Word, that is “true,” is that the Bible validates itself with the accuracy of prophetic predictions. Among the multitude of examples I could give, let me focus on just a few.

1. God very clearly entered into a covenant with Abraham about the promise of land in a little strip of land now called Israel. Over the scores of years that have passed, there have been

numerous threats to the security of that land and at times discipline from God involving that land, but the descendants of Abraham continue to occupy that land.

2. The prophets of the Old Testament prophesied (predicted) that invaders from the North would overtake the land of Israel and send many of the inhabitants of Israel into exile.
3. Another feature that dominates the prophets of the Old Testament is the correct prophesy of the Messiah—details of Jesus' birth, life, and death are all prophesied with accuracy centuries before Jesus' coming.
4. Finally, the Prophet Daniel prophesies the existence of four major kingdoms of the world that would follow from his lifetime to the time of Jesus.

## Historical Reasons

For me, this is one of the greatest reasons. We stand on the shoulders of those believers who lived much closer to the time of Christ's time on the earth. Here's the big thing: The early church believed that these 66 books were inspired by God. They preserved them, protected them, and were willing to give their life for these books all because they believed that here are the very words of God. This is very important to me. It was not one man who said, "I have the word of God." It was not one man that said here are the books that are authoritative. The church in unified agreement said "Here are the books." They didn't choose which books were. They just began to recognize which ones were and which ones were not. How did they recognize you ask? When it comes to the New Testament, here are four criteria that looking back appeared to be used.

1. Apostolic Origin—Apostle or close relationship with Apostle
2. Universal Acceptance—The Church recognized together that these were books or letters from Apostles who spoke for God
3. Use by the Early Church in worship
4. Orthodoxy of Message

Another historical factor is the preservation of these ancient texts before the invention of the printing press. The care with which the believing community treated these ancient texts is without rival. One of the leading evangelical scholars in this area of study (textual criticism) is a man by the name of Bruce Metzger. He died in 2007, but he was one of the church's greatest scholars on the subject of the ancient texts. Lee Strobel asked him, "All these decades of scholarship, of study, of writing textbooks, of delving into the minutiae of the New Testament text—what has all this done to your personal faith?"

Metzger answered, "It has increased my faith. It has built it. I've asked questions all my life. I've dug into the text, I've studied this thoroughly, and today I know with confidence that my trust in Jesus has been well placed—very well placed."<sup>1</sup>

## Personal Reasons

I could say the very same thing that Dr. Metzger said. God speaks to me through His Word. It is my most important tool for maintaining and growing my relationship with God. I am comforted by His Word. And, by the way, His word tells me in Psalm 119:52 that I ought to find comfort. I find conviction in His Word. I find direction in His Word. His word is described in Hebrews 4:12 as a living word. I have found that to be true in my life.

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<sup>1</sup> Lee Strobel, *The Case for Christ*, Zondervan Publishing House, 1998, p. 71.

## Scriptural Reasons

I know I said that we would answer the question without the use of Scripture, but there is a sense because the Scripture is the Living Word of God, that we interject some Scripture at this point.

Follow this pattern:

Isaiah 55:11--so My word that comes from My mouth  
will not return to Me empty,  
but it will accomplish what I please  
and will prosper in what I send it to do.”

Isaiah 40:8--The grass withers, the flowers fade,  
but the word of our God remains forever.”

2 Timothy 3:16-17--<sup>16</sup> All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for rebuking, for correcting, for training in righteousness, <sup>17</sup> so that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

2 Peter 1:20-21--<sup>20</sup> First of all, you should know this: No prophecy of Scripture comes from one's own interpretation, <sup>21</sup> because no prophecy ever came by the will of man; instead, men spoke from God as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.

2 Peter 3:15-16--<sup>15</sup> Also, regard the patience of our Lord as an opportunity for salvation, just as our dear brother Paul has written to you according to the wisdom given to him. <sup>16</sup> He speaks about these things in all his letters in which there are some matters that are hard to understand. The untaught and unstable twist them to their own destruction, as they also do with the rest of the Scriptures.

Again, the point is that the Apostles and those who were closely associated with the Apostles believed something supernatural was taking place. They recognized this and testified about it.

So, there it is. There are probably better words than mine, but not better words than the Scripture, and I wanted to end with trusting the Scriptures to do their work as God promised through Isaiah.

We are left with this question, “If we do believe the Bible is God's Word, what place does the Bible then take in my life?”

## **If the Bible is God's Word**

Once we come to understand that the Bible is the Word of God, there are some immediate demands that are placed upon our lives. If the Bible is the Word of God...

1. The Bible demands our attention.
2. The Bible demands our acceptance. -The commands of the Bible are not up for debate.
3. The Bible demands our obedience.
4. The Bible assures us in difficult times.