

We Believe
We Believe that the Bible is God's Word
2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21

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Text: (2 Timothy 3:16-17)

¹⁶ All Scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, ¹⁷ that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

2 Peter 1:20-21 (New King James Version)

²⁰ knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation ²¹ for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke *as they were* moved by the Holy Spirit.

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: "We Believe that 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."

In addition to an entire lifetime of preparation, I have been thinking specifically about this message almost constantly since about 30 seconds after we closed the service 3 Sundays ago. I had one of those moments that reminded me in a fresh way of the importance of what we do each time we gather. Three weeks ago, after our second service, 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?"

I have to tell you that God used this young man's question to change the direction of the message this morning. I am going to attempt to do something this morning that I have never done before and with the exception of future similar circumstances, I will not ever do again. What I feel impressed to do today is to answer this young man's question, but not use the Bible to do answer the question. Understand that I could do that by using the texts we just read. However, 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 the Word of God

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 4 key reasons.

Theological Logical Reasons

We are in a series of messages about the fundamental, foundational truths of our faith. So far we have said,

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. In this message we talked about how God has come to us in the Holy Spirit to be the very power and presence of God.

All of these things together are part of what we call “theology.” I have come to believe these things as a result of the resurrection of Jesus Christ—the ultimate pillar of our faith. 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.

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, 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?
- The Eyewitnesses—The early eyewitnesses believed in the resurrection to the point that they were willing to die for that belief.
- 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. Today is a big day for me because it is the day that in my own devotional reading of the Bible through in a year, I am completing the Old Testament. As I have read the Old Testament again over the course of the last nine months, I am reminded again of how the Bible validates itself. 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.” How did they decide you ask? Their chief guide or measuring rod was the agreement of the book with the teaching of the apostles.

One of the leading evangelical scholars in this area of study 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.”¹

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.

If the Bible is the Word of God

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.

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

3. The Bible demands our obedience.
4. The Bible assures us in difficult times.

A few weeks ago, a guest editorial appeared in our local paper accusing Christians as using the Bible as a weapon against others. I agree with the editorial that we ought not use the Bible as a way of beating up people. However, there was some language in the editorial that was particularly disturbing to me. The writer said the Bible “is a guide for personal inspiration and help, but not a rule book.” In another line, the author called the book a “beautiful tome.”

The Bible is so much more than a beautiful tome and a guide for personal inspiration and help. The Bible is the living Word of God. The Bible is “*is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, **17** that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.