

The Bible... Truth or Fiction

“All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.” II Timothy 3:16-17, NIV

This morning we are talking about the Bible, the Word of God. Is it truth or fiction? If it is fiction we are deluded and worthy of pity. If it is truth we must respect it as truth, defend it as truth and, above all, live according to it.

The context in which we live...

II Timothy 3:1-5

You should know this, Timothy, that in the last days there will be very difficult times. 2 For people will love only themselves and their money. They will be boastful and proud, scoffing at God, disobedient to their parents, and ungrateful. They will consider nothing sacred. 3 They will be unloving and unforgiving; they will slander others and have no self-control. They will be cruel and hate what is good. 4 They will betray their friends, be reckless, be puffed up with pride, and love pleasure rather than God. 5 They will act religious, but they will reject the power that could make them godly. Stay away from people like that!

Romans 1:16-32, NLT

For I am not ashamed of this Good News about Christ. It is the power of God at work, saving everyone who believes—the Jew first and also the Gentile. 17 This Good News tells us how God makes us right in His sight. This is accomplished from start to finish by faith. As the Scriptures say, “It is through faith that a righteous person has life.” 18 But God shows His anger from heaven against all sinful, wicked people who suppress the truth by their wickedness. 19 They know the truth about God because He has made it obvious to them. 20 For ever since the world was created, people have seen the earth and sky. Through everything God made, they can clearly see His invisible qualities—His eternal power and divine nature. So they have no excuse for not knowing God. 21 Yes, they knew God, but they wouldn’t worship Him as God or even give Him thanks. And they began to think up foolish ideas of what God was like. As a result, their minds became dark and confused. 22 Claiming to be wise, they instead became utter fools. 23 And instead of worshiping the glorious, ever-living God, they worshiped idols made to look like mere people and birds and animals and reptiles. 24 So God abandoned them to do whatever shameful things their hearts desired. As a result, they did vile and degrading things with each other’s bodies. 25 They traded the truth about God for a lie. So they worshiped and served the things God created instead of the Creator Himself, who is worthy of eternal praise! Amen. 26 That is why God abandoned them to their shameful desires. Even the women turned against the natural way to have sex and instead indulged in sex with each other. 27 And the men, instead of having normal sexual relations with women, burned with lust for each other. Men did shameful things with other men, and as a result of this sin, they suffered within themselves the penalty they deserved. 28 Since they thought it foolish to acknowledge God, He abandoned them to their foolish thinking and let them do things that should never be done. 29 Their lives became full of every kind of wickedness, sin, greed, hate, envy, murder, quarreling, deception, malicious behavior, and gossip. 30 They are backstabbers, haters of God, insolent, proud, and boastful. They invent new ways of sinning, and they disobey their parents. 31 They refuse to understand, break their promises, are heartless, and have no

mercy. 32 They know God's justice requires that those who do these things deserve to die, yet they do them anyway. Worse yet, they encourage others to do them, too.

We are living in a day where there is an all-out attack on God and the Bible.

Why does man attack the Bible?

1. Man wants to rule the affairs of his own life (self-centered and self-pleasing)
2. Man does not want to be accountable (we will not have this man to rule over us)
3. Man must get rid of conscience and the God of our conscience (if you repeat something loud enough and long enough you can begin believing it).
4. Man must get rid of the Bible which tells us of the nature of God

How does man attack the Bible?

He attacks the Bible by...

1. Attacking the stories of the Bible (Adam & Eve).
2. Putting doubt in the key personalities of the Bible (Joseph, Moses, Jesus human, movies, The DaVinci Code, Jesus married, etc.)
3. Challenging certain miraculous events recorded in the Bible.
 - The Creation of the Universe
 - The Flood
 - The Red Sea Crossing
 - The Fish that Swallowed Jonah
4. Attempting to find magnify apparent contradictions in the Bible.
5. Discrediting the process of inspiration (JEDP, Higher Criticism).

In Addition...

6. He willingly abandons science to create a world where God is not necessary (evolution, false science)
7. He rejects sinful behavior described in the Bible and renames them as medical conditions when there is no scientific evidence to support their view (homosexuality vs. homosexual behavior; acting out).
8. He justifies himself and shifts blame to excuse sinful behavior eliminating the need for a justifier (savior).

What do we believe about the Bible?

1. We believe that the Bible is a Holy Book.

The word "Bible" come from the Greek word *biblios* which simply means "book" (John 20:30; Heb. 10:7; Rev. 22:7, 9-10, 18-20). The Bible can be called the "holy book."

- It is a holy book when seen in contrast to all of the books of man.
- It is a holy book because the human writers were "holy men of God" (II Pet. 1:20-21).

...knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for

*prophecy never came by the will of man, but **holy men of God** spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.*

- It is a holy book because it was inspired by the Holy Spirit (II Pet. 1:21).
- It is a holy book because it tells of the way in which sinful man may approach a holy God, and how he might be made holy himself.

2. **We believe that the Bible is the Word of God.**

The Bible not only contains the Word of God, but it **is** the Word of God. It is God's Word to His creation. It is God's letter to man (Rom. 10:17; Heb. 4:12; I Th. 2:13).

*For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe... I
Thessalonians 2:13*

3. **We believe that only the Bible leads to a true knowledge and a genuine experience of God (II Tim. 3:14-15).**

But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them, and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

God has revealed Himself to man in primarily three ways.

1. God has revealed Himself to man in **creation** (Rom. 1:18-23; Ps. 19:1-6).

For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse... Romans 1:20

The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork. Day unto day utters speech, and night unto night reveals knowledge. Psalm 19:1-2

- a. This source of revelation tells us that there is a God.
- b. This source of revelation demands that we respect and fear God.
- c. This source of revelation reveals His power.
- d. This source of revelation cannot reveal God's person, which is, His nature, character and attributes.
- e. If this is the only source of revelation on which we have to draw, it leads to idolatry or the worship of the creation of God rather than the God of creation (Romans 1:25ff.).

2. God has revealed Himself to man through the **conscience** (Rom. 2:11-16).

Even when Gentiles, who do not have God's written law, instinctively follow what the law says, they show that in their hearts they know right from wrong. ¹⁵They

demonstrate that God's law is written within them, for their own consciences either accuse them or tell them they are doing what is right. ¹⁶ The day will surely come when God, by Jesus Christ, will judge everyone's secret life. Romans 2:15-16, NLT

- a. This source of revelation tells us that God is a moral being, that is, a being having laws or principles.
- b. This source of revelation is not always accurate because of man's fallen condition and the fact that his conscience may be faulty as a result (Tit. 1:15; I Tim. 4:2).

To the pure all things are pure, but to those who are defiled and unbelieving nothing is pure; but even their mind and conscience are defiled. They profess to know God, but in works they deny Him, being abominable, disobedient, and disqualified for every good work. Titus 1:15-16

- They may have a defiled conscience (Tit. 1:15).
- They may have a seared conscience (I Tim. 4:2).

- c. This source of revelation fails to reveal God's person or character.
- d. If this is the only source of revelation that we have to draw upon we will attempt to approach God by working righteousness which can never satisfy the demands of a holy God. To offend God in one point makes a man guilty of all. All of our righteousness is as filthy rags. The conscience can only be cleansed by the blood of Christ (Heb. 10:22).

*Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled **from an evil conscience** and our bodies washed with pure water.*

3. God has revealed Himself to man by **divine intervention** (Heb. 1:1-2; Num. 7:89; II Sam. 23:2).

Now when Moses went into the tabernacle of meeting to speak with Him, he heard the voice of One speaking to him from above the mercy seat that was on the ark of the Testimony, from between the two cherubim; thus He spoke to him. Numbers 7:89

If man is to know God, God must take the initiative and reveal Himself to man. God has done this in His Word—the Bible. It is through the Word of God that we can know God's nature and the plan that He has for our lives.

- It is the Scripture that gives us the testimony of the love of God incarnate, our redeemer, the Lord Jesus Christ (John 5:39; Luke 24:27, 44).
- It is by the hearing of the Word of God that faith comes alive in our hearts (Rom. 10:17; Acts 17:2-3).
- It is the Word of God that is the incorruptible seed that is planted into our hearts that leads to the new birth (Luke 8:11; I Pet. 1:23).

4. We believe in the plenary, verbal inspiration of the Bible.

- A. The word “plenary” means “full” or “complete.” Plenary inspiration means that the entire Bible is totally inspired by God.
1. Inspiration does not merely apply to portions of the Bible, but it applies to the entire book.
 2. Inspiration does not merely apply to doctrinal issues, but it applies to every area covered.
- B. The word “verbal” means “relating to words.”
1. Verbal inspiration means that God not only gave the subject matter to be recorded, but the very words that are used are inspired of God (Jer. 1:9; I Th. 2:13; I Chr. 28:11-12,19).
 2. Verbal inspiration does not mean that the writers were in a trance and that their personalities were totally overruled by the Spirit.
 3. Verbal inspiration means that the Scripture is perfectly inerrant (without error) in all of its words and every one of its words (John 10:35b; Mt. 5:17-19; Acts 24:14).

John 10:35 says that “*the Scripture cannot be broken*” or annulled.

Paul said that he believed “*all things which are written in the Law and in the Prophets*” (Acts 24:14).

“For 40 different men to write 66 books in three languages over a period of 1600 years and have them become one harmonious book is humanly impossible. The unity and progression of thought together with the absence of contradiction indicates that the Bible really had only one author.” --Kevin Conner

- C. The word “inspiration” means “God-breathed” (II Tim.3:16-17; II Pet. 1:21; II Sam.23:2).

There are many internal proofs for inspiration.

1. The Bible claims to be inspired (II Tim.3:15-16).
2. The phrase “thus says the Lord” occurs over 2000 times. The phrase “God said” or “the Lord said” in one form or another occurs over 3800 times.
3. The Old Testament portions that are referred to in the New Testament are referred to in such a way as to indicate inspiration (Mt. 1:22; Heb. 3:7).

So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying... Matthew 1:22

Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says: “Today, if you will hear His voice... Hebrews 3:7

4. Christ and the Apostles treated the Scripture as being inspired (Matthew 8:16-17).
5. There is great authority suggested in the phrase “it is written” (Mt. 4:7; Luke 4:10; Gal. 3:10).

There are also many external proofs for the inspiration of the Scriptures.

1. Fulfilled Prophecy. One of the greatest proofs is the fact of fulfilled prophecy.
 - a. Note a few messianic prophecies that were fulfilled, in some cases over 500 years after they were uttered.
 - ÿ Christ to be born in Bethlehem (Mic. 5:2; Mt. 2:1-8).
 - ÿ Christ to be manifest after 483 years (Dan. 9:25; Mark 1:15).
 - ÿ Christ to be sold for thirty pieces of silver (Zech. 11:13; Mt. 26:14-15; 27:3-10).
 - ÿ Christ to die by crucifixion (Ps. 22; Is. 53). (Note: Crucifixion as a form of execution was not even practiced when David wrote this Psalm).
 - ÿ Christ’s garments divided (Ps. 22:18; John 19:23; Mt. 27:35).
 - ÿ Christ’s burial with the rich (Is. 53:9; Mt. 27:57-60).
 - b. Many other amazing prophecies of the Bible proved to be very accurate.

- ÿ The prophecy of Isaiah and Daniel concerning Cyrus and the fall of Babylon given over 100 years before it happened (Is. 44:28-45:1; Jer. 50-51; Dan. 1-5).

Who says of Cyrus, ‘He is My shepherd, and he shall perform all My pleasure, saying to Jerusalem, “You shall be built,” and to the temple, “Your foundation shall be laid.” ’ “Thus says the LORD to His anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have held—to subdue nations before him and loose the armor of kings, to open before him the double doors... Isaiah 44:28-45:1

- ÿ Ezekiel 12:13 is a remarkable prophecy that was fulfilled to the letter (See: II Kings 25:7).

I will also spread My net over him, and he shall be caught in My snare. I will bring him to Babylon, to the land of the Chaldeans; yet he shall not see it, though he shall die there. Ezekiel 12:13

How could Zedekiah be brought to the land but not see it? Because they put his eyes out before they brought him to the land!

But the army of the Chaldeans pursued the king [Zedekiah], and they overtook him in the plains of Jericho. All his army was scattered from him. ⁶So they took the king and brought him up to the king of Babylon at Riblah, and they pronounced judgment on him. ⁷Then they killed the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes, put out the eyes of Zedekiah, bound him with bronze fetters, and took him to Babylon. II Kings 25:7

- ÿ The prophecy of Jesus concerning the destruction of Jerusalem (Luke 21:20-24).

“But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation is near. ²¹Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, let those who are in the midst of her depart, and let not those who are in the country enter her. ²²For these are the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. ²³But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! For there will be great distress in the land and wrath upon this people. ²⁴And they will fall by the edge of the sword, and be led away captive into all nations. And Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

2. Miraculous Spread. The miraculous spread of the Gospel is a proof of the truth of what is claimed.
3. Transforming Power. The fact that no other religion in the world transforms men like Christianity attests to the validity and power of the Word of God.

The Bible is unique also in terms of its effect on individual men and on the history of nations. It is the all-time best seller, appealing both to hearts and minds, beloved by at least some in every race or nation or tribe to which it has gone, rich or poor, scholar or simple, king or commoner, men of literally every background and walk of life. **No other book has ever held such universal appeal nor produced such lasting effects.**

4. Miraculous Preservation. The miraculous preservation of the Bible in spite of numerous attempts throughout history to destroy it attests to its validity.
5. Conviction of Disciples. The fact that the early apostles who would have known the truth or falsehood of the resurrection were willing to die rather than to forsake the truth attests to its validity. No one would be so willing to die for a lie.
6. Scientific Accuracy. The fact that the Bible records accurate scientific facts prior to their universal acceptance by the scientific community attests to the fact that this was composed by a mind that had and, indeed, has all of the hidden knowledge and wisdom.
 - a. The Bible tells us that the earth is round and hangs in space (Job 26:7; Is. 40:22).

He stretches out the north over empty space; He hangs the earth on nothing. Job 26:7

Three thousand years ago the Hindu scriptures recorded the earth was resting on the backs of several huge elephants. The elephants were resting on the back of a very large turtle that was swimming in a sea. Greek mythology claims that the god Atlas was holding the earth on his shoulders. The oldest book in the Bible teaches that it is hanging in space (how did Job know this unless it had been revealed by God, there were no astronauts around to confirm this data).

It is He who sits above the circle of the earth, and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers, Who stretches out the heavens like a curtain, and spreads them out like a tent to dwell in.

Isaiah 40:22

- b. The Bible tells us that the winds have regular circuits and that rain clouds are only evaporated water (Job 36:26-29; Eccl. 1:6-7).

“Behold, God is great, and we do not know Him; nor can the number of His years be discovered. For He draws up drops of water, which distill as rain from the mist, which the clouds drop down and pour abundantly on man. Indeed, can anyone understand the spreading of clouds, the thunder from His canopy? Job 36:26-29

The wind goes toward the south, and turns around to the north; the wind whirls about continually, and comes again on its circuit. All the rivers run into the sea, yet the sea is not full; to the place from which the rivers come, there they return again.

Ecclesiastes 1:6-7

- c. The Bible speaks of an empty place in the North (Job 26:7). Modern telescopes have found this to be true (i.e. the black hole).
- d. The Bible tells us that the stars are innumerable (Gen. 15:5; Jer. 33:22; Heb. 11:12). Galileo was the first scientist to teach this.

And as the stars of the sky cannot be counted and the sand on the seashore cannot be measured, so I will multiply the descendants of My servant David and the Levites who minister before Me. Jeremiah 33:22

- e. The Bible is the only ancient book in the entire world that insisted on quarantining contagious diseases (Lev. 13:45-46).
- f. The Bible indicates that air has weight a truth that was only discovered some 300 years ago (Job 28:25).

To establish a weight for the wind, And apportion the waters by measure.

NOTE: The Bible is not a scientific book, but when it makes a scientific statement, that statement can always be relied upon.

- 7. Historical Accuracy. The fact that the Bible records accurate historical data which has only recently been accepted by modern researchers.
 - a. The discovery of the Hittite civilization (1906).
 - b. The discovery of proof of the four kings of Genesis 14 (1920).
 - c. The discovery of the city of Nineveh (1840)
 - d. Etc.

“No archeological discovery has ever controverted a Biblical reference. Scores of archeological findings have been made which confirm in clear outline or in exact detail historical statements in the Bible. And, by the same token, proper evaluation of Biblical descriptions has often led to amazing discoveries.”

Why is this important?

Because Satan wants you to doubt the Word and its authority?

Because the world uses intimidation to quiet the Church?

Because our faith depends upon it.