

Can we trust the Bible?

Is the NT we have today the same as it was 2,000 years ago?

## **The Battle Intensified**

Before engaging with the anti-God ideas flooding the minds of people we must prepare to become God-Strong warriors.

## **God-strong warriors**

Ephesians 6

10 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. 11 Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. 12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

## **God-strong defenders**

1 Peter 3:15 New International Version (NIV)

15 But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect,

## **Rock in the shoe**

Many are interested in spiritual matters but have sticking points.

## **Winning people not arguments**

2 Corinthians 10:4-5 (CSB)

4 since the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but are powerful through God for the demolition of strongholds. We demolish arguments 5 and every proud thing that is raised up against the knowledge of God, and we take every thought captive to obey Christ.

## **Know the truth you're defending**

The Apostle's Creed

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the power of

the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again. He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting. Amen

### **The Inspired Word of God**

“All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness,”

2 Timothy 3:16

See 2 Peter 1:20-21; Hebrews 1:1; Galatians 1:11-12; Romans 3:2; Matthew 15:6

### **The challenges/objections**

No originals

Too much time has passed

Myths

Miracles not possible

Disciples lied

Books left out

### **Doubt**

If we can't trust the NT we can't trust what we know about Jesus of Nazareth.

**Can we trust the Bible? Yes because of. . . A, E, I, O, U, and sometimes Y.**

### **A = Authorship**

Gospels written by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John

## **Who decided which books were inspired scripture?**

The Council of Laodicea held in AD 364

The standard

1. Authored by an apostle or prophet of God or by someone closely connected with one or more of the apostles or prophets.
2. Clearly evidenced the confirming power and presence of God.
3. Message consistent with other recognized Scripture.
4. Writing widely accepted by the church from an early date.

**Church council declared the books of the apocrypha as forgeries.**

## **E = Extent of copies and Early copies**

### **Extent of copies**

Confidence in the accuracy of the text determined by

How many copies are available,

The time gap between the original writings and the copies,

The and significance of the differences.

219 copies of Plato

2,300 copies Homer

5,800 copies of NT

### **Early copies**

The time gap between the events and the original and the originals and the copies we have is extremely short. I believe there here

## **I = Insignificant differences in text**

The New Testament has 40 lines of textual differences with an accuracy of **99.5%**

The Iliad has 764 lines of textual differences with an accuracy **of 95%**

Written 800 BC with 1565 copies in existence.

The NT and all other ancient manuscripts are reconstructed by comparing copies of the manuscripts that have survived.

Less than 1% actually affect the meaning of the text and only a fraction of those are considered unresolved by textual criticism.

Not one Christian teaching or belief is dependent on or changed by any variant.

Bruce Metzger, leading textual Criticism expert.

If you take the 20,000 lines of the New Testament it's at least safe for to say you have a 99.6% accuracy.

## **Is the Bible then filled with myths? NO**

Sherwin White (Oxford) noted 2 generations not enough to create myths. The NT documents were written within the 1<sup>st</sup> generation of the events recorded.

## **You can't know anything that happened 2000 years ago.**

If the gap between the event and the record of the event is short then the gap between evidence (originals documents) and today irrelevant.

Good evidence (early MSS) doesn't become bad evidence simply because of the lapse of time.

## **O = Outside witnesses**

Outside witnesses: Extra Biblical Evidence determines whether other historical materials confirm or conflict with the internal testimony of the document itself. (Josephus, Church fathers)

## **U - uniqueness of the gospels**

Eyewitness authors wrote in perfect harmony.

Objection: You don't have the original of John. How do we know it hasn't changed dramatically?

### **Chain of command**

The content of John's gospel is described exactly the same way by all the later writers.

Jesus claimed to be God, born of a virgin, rose from the dead. That Jesus is present in the writings of each author in the chain.

Objection: Even if we have early copies, the Bible was written by men and men make mistakes.

Man was the instrument used by God to convey His thoughts in the Bible.

2 Peter 1:21 (NKJV) 21 for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.

### **Uniqueness of the gospels: Eyewitnesses confirmed by scripture**

"We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son." 1 John 1:3

"For we did not follow cleverly devised stories when we told you about the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ in power, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty." 2 Peter 1:16

## **Y = Hundreds of YEARS passed yet prophecies were fulfilled**

The old testament written over a period of 1,000 years contains nearly 300 references to the coming of Messiah.

All of these were fulfilled in Jesus Christ. They establish a solid confirmation of His credentials as the Messiah and the reliability of scripture.

1. Jesus would be born of a virgin Isaiah 7:13-14; Matthew 1:18-23
2. Jesus' place of birth in Bethlehem Micah 5:2-5; Matthew 2:1-6
3. Sold for 30 pieces of silver Zechariah 11:12; Matthew 26:15
4. Silent before accusers Isaiah 53:7; Matthew 27:12
5. Jesus would be crucified Psalm 22:16; Luke 23:33
6. Cast lots for clothing Psalm 22:18; John 19:23-24

## **Conclusion**

Only God could have revealed all of these facts hundreds of years before they came true.

The bible is the accurate and reliable word of God to us.

For the word of God is alive and active.

Sharper than any double-edged sword,  
it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit,  
joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts  
and attitudes of the heart. Hebrews 4:12

## **So what?**

What difference does it make to me that the bible is proven to be the word of God?

What should be your response to the scripture in light of the fact that it is the revealed word of God and contains the truth about God, creation, redemption, and the future of mankind?

Can you defend the accuracy and reliability of scripture.