

The Gospel and Culture Part 3:

The Bible: Did God write it? Is it accurate? Is it clear? Is it enough?

Goals of the Series

- ❖ To submit fully to the teaching from God's Word
- ❖ To discover what God's Word says about modern cultural topics
- ❖ How are we as Christians to engage with each of these topics
- ❖ Become equipped to take the Gospel in the culture
- ❖ Let the Word of God be our ONLY source of authority

Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world. And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever. - 1 John 2:15-17

"I believe that one reason why the Church of God at this present moment has so little influence over the world is because the world has so much influence over the Church Put your finger on any prosperous page in the Church's history, and [you] will find a little marginal note [that says]: 'In this age [people] could readily see where the Church began and where the world ended.' Never were there good times when the Church and the world were joined in marriage with one another." Charles Spurgeon

Goals of this Particular Night

- ❖ Did God write the Bible, or did several people just throw some stories together?
- ❖ Is the Bible accurate? Did these stories happen?
- ❖ Is the Bible clear? Can I understand it or is everyone allowed to have their own interpretation? Or do I need to be an expert scholar?
- ❖ Is the Bible enough? Can the Bible be my final authority, or does it need improvements and changes throughout the years?
- ❖ Is the Bible worth abandoning everything else and following it fully?

Questions/Concerns/Challenges

- ❖ "The Bible is a human invention"
- ❖ "The Bible has led people to do dangerous things"
- ❖ "The Bible is offensive"
- ❖ "The Bible is outdated"
- ❖ "The Bible is full of errors and contradictions"
- ❖ "These stories didn't actually happen. Believing in the Bible is the equivalent of blind faith"

Key Terms:

Inspiration: The mysterious supernatural process by which God worked through human instruments to reveal divine truth in written form.

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

2 Peter 1:20-21 - Above all, you know this: No prophecy of Scripture comes from the prophet's own interpretation, because no prophecy ever came by the will of man; instead, men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

Inerrancy: The Bible is free from any types of errors/mistakes

Infallibility: It is impossible for the Bible to contain errors/mistakes

Authority: The Bible has the right to rule our lives

Canon: An authoritative list of books accepted as Holy Scripture.

Did God Actually Write the Bible?

MYTH – The Council of Nicaea determined/wrote some of the books in the Bible for political reasons

"The Gospel of Philip... was rejected at the Council of Nicaea along with any other gospels that made Jesus appear human and not divine." - The Da Vinci Code

- Council of Nicaea assembled to discuss the issue of Christ being of the Divine nature, NOT to figure out which books belong in the Bible. ***There is no record of ever discussing the canon***
- ❖ Old Testament was recognized by 1st century:
 - Divided into three books (The Teachings, the Prophets, and the Writings)

"We have but twenty-two [books] containing the history of all time, books that are justly believed in; and of these, five are the books of Moses, which comprise the law and earliest traditions from the creation of mankind down to his death. From the death of Moses to the reign of Artaxerxes, King of Persia, the successor of Xerxes, the prophets who succeeded Moses wrote the history of the events that occurred in their own time, in thirteen books. The remaining four documents comprise hymns to God and practical precepts to men." Josephus, First Century Jewish Historian

- Was recognized as needed to be fulfilled, yet extremely particular about what was added

*"And how firmly we have given credit to those books of our own nation is evident by what we do; for during so many ages as have already passed, **no one has been so bold as either to add anything to them or take anything from them, or to make any change in them**, but it becomes natural to all Jews, immediately and from their very birth, to esteem those books to contain divine doctrines, and to persist in them, and, if occasion be, willing to die for them. For it is no new thing for our captives, many of them in numbers, and frequently in time, to be seen to endure racks and deaths of all kinds upon the theaters, that they may not be obliged to say one word against our laws, and the records that contain them." Josephus, First Century Jewish Historian*

❖ New Testament recognized by 4th century

"Again it is not tedious to speak of the books of the New Testament. These are, the four gospels, according to Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Afterwards, the Acts of the Apostles and Epistles (called Catholic), seven, viz. of James, one; of Peter, two; of John, three; after these, one of Jude. In addition, there are fourteen Epistles of Paul, written in this order. The first, to the Romans; then two to the Corinthians; after these, to the Galatians; next, to the Ephesians; then to the Philippians; then to the Colossians; after these, two to the Thessalonians, and that to the Hebrews; and again, two to Timothy; one to Titus; and lastly, that to Philemon. And besides, the Revelation of John." Athanasius (367 A.D.)

❖ Where did the Bible come from?

"The Church no more gave us the New Testament canon than Sir Isaac Newton gave us the force of gravity. God gave us gravity, by His work of creation, and similarly He gave us the New Testament canon, by inspiring the individual books that make it up." J. I. Packer

John 3:27 - John responded, "No one can receive anything unless it has been given to him from heaven."

1 Corinthians 2:9-11 - But as it is written, What no eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no human heart has conceived—God has prepared these things for those who love him. Now God has revealed these things to us by the Spirit, since the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God

❖ How was the Bible written down?

- God speaks in two categories of communication:
 - General Communication:
 - Nature

Psalms 19:1 - The heavens declare the glory of God, and the expanse proclaims the work of his hands.

- Historical events

Daniel 2:21-22 - He changes the times and seasons; He removes kings and establishes kings. He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding. He reveals the deep and hidden things; he knows what is in the darkness, and light dwells with him.

- Humanity
 - ◆ Humans are spiritual beings designed to worship something

Acts 17:22-23 - Paul stood in the middle of the Areopagus and said, "People of Athens! I see that you are extremely religious in every respect. For as I was passing through and observing the objects of your worship, I even found an altar on which was inscribed, 'To an Unknown God.' Therefore, what you worship in ignorance, this I proclaim to you.

- ◆ All humans have some sense of morality

Romans 2:14-16 - So, when Gentiles, who do not by nature have the law, do what the law demands, they are a law to themselves even though they do not have the law. They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts. Their consciences confirm this. Their competing thoughts either accuse or even excuse them on the day when God judges what people have kept secret, according to my gospel through Christ Jesus.

- This general communication leads to overall condemnation

Romans 1:18-19 - For God's wrath is revealed from heaven against all godlessness and unrighteousness of people who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth, since what can be known about God is evident among them, because God has shown it to them

Romans 3:19-20 - Now we know that whatever the law says, it speaks to those who are subject to the law, so that every mouth may be shut and the whole world may become subject to God's judgment. For no one will be justified in his sight by the works of the law, because the knowledge of sin comes through the law.

- Therefore, we need more than general communication. We need hope!
- Special communication

Hebrews 1:1-2 - Long ago God spoke to our ancestors by the prophets at different times and in different ways. In these last days, he has spoken to us by his Son. God has appointed him heir of all things and made the universe through him.

- Speech
 - ◆ Direct (God speaks)

Genesis 2:16-17 – And the Lord God commanded the man, “You are free to eat from any tree of the garden, but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for on the day you eat from it, you will certainly die.

Genesis 12:1-3 – The Lord said to Abram: Go from your land, your relatives, and your father’s house to the land that I will show you. I will make you into a great nation, I will bless you, I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, I will curse anyone who treats you with contempt, and all the peoples on earth will be blessed through you.

◆ Indirect (God speaks through someone)

Jeremiah 1:9-10 – Then the Lord reached out his hand, touched my mouth, and told me: I have now filled your mouth with my words. See, I have appointed you today over nations and kingdoms to uproot and tear down, to destroy and demolish, to build and plant.

➤ Written form

Exodus 31:18 – When he finished speaking with Moses on Mount Sinai, he gave him the two tablets of the testimony, stone tablets inscribed by the finger of God.

◆ Consider the variety God uses to speak indirectly

➤ The types of people God uses to speak through

- A lawgiver, a general, prophets, Kings, a musician, a herdsman, a prince, a priest, a tax collector, a doctor, a scholar, and fisherman

➤ The styles of writings

- Laws, genealogies, psalms of praise, laments, oracles of judgement, Gospel accounts, narratives of theological history, and letters to churches

➤ The processes

- Divine diction, historical research, dreams and visions, hearing God’s voice

● Incarnation of Jesus Christ

John 1:1 – In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God

John 14:9 – Jesus said to him, “Have I been among you all this time and you do not know me, Philip? The one who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’?”

❖ What is God communicating to us? What is the Bible about?

➤ The specific knowledge of God

- How He has provided redemption for us

Exodus 6:2-8 - Then God spoke to Moses, telling him, "I am the Lord. I appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as God Almighty, but I was not known to them by my name 'the Lord.' I also established my covenant with them to give them the land of Canaan, the land they lived in as aliens. Furthermore, I have heard the groaning of the Israelites, whom the Egyptians are forcing to work as slaves, and I have remembered my covenant. "Therefore tell the Israelites: I am the Lord, and I will bring you out from the forced labor of the Egyptians and rescue you from slavery to them. I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and great acts of judgment. I will take you as my people, and I will be your God. You will know that I am the Lord your God, who brought you out from the forced labor of the Egyptians. I will bring you to the land that I swore to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and I will give it to you as a possession. I am the Lord."

- How we can be reconciled to Him

2 Corinthians 5:18-20 - Everything is from God, who has reconciled us to himself through Christ and has given us the ministry of reconciliation. That is, in Christ, God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and he has committed the message of reconciliation to us. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us. We plead on Christ's behalf, "Be reconciled to God."

- How we can enjoy relationship with Him

John 15:5-11 - I am the vine; you are the branches. The one who remains in me and I in him produces much fruit, because you can do nothing without me. If anyone does not remain in me, he is thrown aside like a branch and he withers. They gather them, throw them into the fire, and they are burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you want and it will be done for you. My Father is glorified by this: that you produce much fruit and prove to be my disciples. "As the Father has loved me, I have also loved you. Remain in my love. If you keep my commands you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commands and remain in his love. "I have told you these things so that my joy may be in you and your joy may be complete.

- Which leads to opportunity for salvation

Romans 3:21-24 - But now, apart from the law, the righteousness of God has been revealed, attested by the Law and the Prophets. The righteousness of God is through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe, since there is no distinction. For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God; they are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.

Ultimately: We cannot know God unless God first reveals Himself to us!

❖ But... was the Word of God *inspired* by God? Or did men just write moral stories?

➤ The Biblical prophets proclaim to be inspired

Jeremiah 14:14-15 - But the Lord said to me, "These prophets are prophesying a lie in my name. I did not send them, nor did I command them or speak to them. They are prophesying to you a false vision, worthless divination, the deceit of their own minds. "Therefore, this is what the Lord says concerning the prophets who prophesy in my name, though I did not send them, and who say, 'There will never be sword or famine in this land.' By sword and famine these prophets will meet their end.

▪ "Thus says the Lord" appears in the Bible over 3,000 times

➤ The Biblical prophecies become fulfilled!

Isaiah 7:10-14 - Then the Lord spoke again to Ahaz: "Ask for a sign from the Lord your God—it can be as deep as Sheol or as high as heaven." But Ahaz replied, "I will not ask. I will not test the Lord." Isaiah said, "Listen, house of David! Is it not enough for you to try the patience of men? Will you also try the patience of my God? Therefore, the Lord himself will give you a sign: See, the virgin will conceive, have a son, and name him Immanuel

Matthew 1:21-23 - She will give birth to a son, and you are to name him Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins." Now all this took place to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet: See, the virgin will become pregnant and give birth to a son, and they will name him Immanuel, which is translated "God is with us."

➤ Compare this to other religious texts that claim divine aspiration

- Islam - *Qur'an* - written by one author, Uthman, no predictive prophecies
- Mormonism - *Book of Mormon* - written by one author, Joseph Smith, no predictive prophecies
- The Bible - over 40 different authors, hundreds of prophecies fulfilled

➤ What prophecies are fulfilled?

- Destruction of empires
 - Edom

Obadiah 1:1-2 - This is what the Lord God has said about Edom: We have heard a message from the Lord; an envoy has been sent among the nations: "Rise up, and let's go to war against her." Look, I will make you insignificant among the nations; you will be deeply despised.

- Babylon

Isaiah 13:1-3 - A pronouncement concerning Babylon that Isaiah son of Amoz saw: Lift up a banner on a barren mountain. Call out to them. Signal with your hand, and

they will go through the gates of the nobles. I have commanded my consecrated ones; yes, I have called my warriors, who celebrate my triumph, to execute my wrath.

- Tyre

Ezekiel 26:1-3 - In the eleventh year, on the first day of the month, the word of the Lord came to me: "Son of man, because Tyre said about Jerusalem, 'Aha! The gateway to the peoples is shattered. She has been turned over to me. I will be filled now that she lies in ruins,' therefore this is what the Lord God says: See, I am against you, Tyre! I will raise up many nations against you, just as the sea raises its waves.

- Nineveh

Nahum 1:1, 14 - The pronouncement concerning Nineveh. The book of the vision of Nahum the Elkoshite.... The Lord has issued an order concerning you: There will be no offspring to carry on your name. I will eliminate the carved idol and cast image from the house of your gods; I will prepare your grave, for you are contemptible.

- The exile and return of Israel

Jeremiah 24:4-7 - The word of the Lord came to me: "This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: Like these good figs, so I regard as good the exiles from Judah I sent away from this place to the land of the Chaldeans. I will keep my eyes on them for their good and will return them to this land. I will build them up and not demolish them; I will plant them and not uproot them. I will give them a heart to know me, that I am the Lord. They will be my people, and I will be their God because they will return to me with all their heart.

Isaiah 11:11-12 - On that day the Lord will extend his hand a second time to recover the remnant of his people who survive—from Assyria, Egypt, Pathros, Cush, Elam, Shinar, Hamath, and the coasts and islands of the west. He will lift up a banner for the nations and gather the dispersed of Israel; he will collect the scattered of Judah from the four corners of the earth.

- Over 300 specific prophecies have been fulfilled in the coming of Christ

Luke 4:17-21 - The scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him, and unrolling the scroll, he found the place where it was written: The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor. He then rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. And the eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fixed on him. He began by saying to them, "Today as you listen, this Scripture has been fulfilled."

"We are told the exact time of [the King of Israel's] manifestation to his people, the exact place of his birth, the family of which he should be born, the condition of the

family at the time of his birth (a condition entirely different from that existing at the time the prophecy was written, and contrary to all the probabilities in the case), the manner of his reception by his people (a reception entirely different from that which would naturally be expected), the fact, method, and details regarding his death, with the specific circumstances regarding his burial, his resurrection subsequent to his burial, and his victory subsequent to his resurrection. These predictions were fulfilled with the most minute precision in Jesus of Nazareth." R. A. Torrey

- No other religious book has/can/is able to do this!

How did Jesus see Scripture?

- ❖ Jesus believed the Old Testament events took place
 - Jesus believed there is a God that created everything

Matthew 19:4 - Haven't you read," he replied, "that he who created them in the beginning made them male and female,

- Jesus believed that Noah built an ark, and the earth was flooded

Matthew 24:37-39 - As the days of Noah were, so the coming of the Son of Man will be. For in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day Noah boarded the ark. They didn't know until the flood came and swept them all away. This is the way the coming of the Son of Man will be.

- Jesus believed Moses encountered a burning bush

Mark 12:26 - And as for the dead being raised—haven't you read in the book of Moses, in the passage about the burning bush, how God said to him: I am the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob?

- Jesus believed Jonah was swallowed by a fish for three days

Matthew 12:40 - For as Jonah was in the belly of the huge fish three days and three nights, so the Son of Man will be in the heart of the earth three days and three nights.

- Jesus believed Naaman's leprosy was healed by Elisha

Luke 4:27 - And in the prophet Elisha's time, there were many in Israel who had leprosy, and yet not one of them was cleansed except Naaman the Syrian."

- ❖ To deny that Scripture is inspired is to deny the integrity of Christ

Luke 24:44-45 - He told them, "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you—that everything written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms must be fulfilled." Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures

The Creation of the Canon

❖ Did the church create the canon... or did she receive the canon?

- What was the criteria for a book being added to the canon of Scripture?
 - "Was the book written by a prophet of God?"

Galatians 1:1 - Paul, an apostle—not from men or by man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised him from the dead—

- "If not, was it written by someone with a special relationship to a prophet or apostle who affirmed its authority?"

Luke 1:1-4 - Many have undertaken to compile a narrative about the events that have been fulfilled among us, just as the original eyewitnesses and servants of the word handed them down to us. So it also seemed good to me, since I have carefully investigated everything from the very first, to write to you in an orderly sequence, most honorable Theophilus, so that you may know the certainty of the things about which you have been instructed.

1 Peter 5:13 - She who is in Babylon, chosen together with you, sends you greetings, as does Mark, my son.

- "Was the writer confirmed by miraculous acts of God?"

Exodus 4:8-9 - "If they will not believe you and will not respond to the evidence of the first sign, they may believe the evidence of the second sign. And if they don't believe even these two signs or listen to what you say, take some water from the Nile and pour it on the dry ground. The water you take from the Nile will become blood on the ground."

Acts 2:22 - Fellow Israelites, listen to these words: This Jesus of Nazareth was a man attested to you by God with miracles, wonders, and signs that God did among you through him, just as you yourselves know

- "Did the message tell the truth about God?"

Hebrews 6:17-18 - Because God wanted to show his unchangeable purpose even more clearly to the heirs of the promise, he guaranteed it with an oath, so that through two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled for refuge might have strong encouragement to seize the hope set before us

- "Did it come with the power of God?"

Hebrews 4:12 - For the word of God is living and effective and sharper than any double-edged sword, penetrating as far as the separation of soul and spirit, joints and marrow. It is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

- "Was it accepted by the people of God?"

1 Thessalonians 2:13 - This is why we constantly thank God, because when you received the word of God that you heard from us, you welcomed it not as a human message, but as it truly is, the word of God, which also works effectively in you who believe

- ❖ Did God write the Bible?
 - Yes. Through men filled with the Spirit

2 Peter 1:21 - Because no prophecy ever came by the will of man; instead, men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

- God has made Himself known, and we can know Him

Jeremiah 9:23-24 - "This is what the Lord says: The wise person should not boast in his wisdom; the strong should not boast in his strength; the wealthy should not boast in his wealth. But the one who boasts should boast in this: that he understands and knows me—that I am the Lord, showing faithful love, justice, and righteousness on the earth, for I delight in these things. This is the Lord's declaration.

Is The Bible Accurate?

- ❖ "There are some crazy stories..."
 - Worldwide flood
 - Man swallowed by a fish
 - Talking donkey
 - Murder victim comes back to life
- ❖ "There are some apparent inconsistencies"

2 Samuel 24:9 - Joab gave the king the total of the registration of the troops. There were 800,000 valiant armed men from Israel and five hundred thousand men from Judah.

1 Chronicles 21:5 - Joab gave the total troop registration to David. In all Israel there were 1,100,000 armed men and in Judah itself 470,000 armed men.

- ❖ "There are some vague, inaccurate fulfilled prophecies"

Matthew 2:15 - He stayed there until Herod's death, so that what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet might be fulfilled: Out of Egypt I called my Son.

Is the Bible truthful and without error in all its teachings?

- ❖ Consider:
 - The amount of manuscripts

A COMPARISON OF ANCIENT WORKS WITH THE NEW TESTAMENT (BOTH OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS)*

Numbers in () are the previously reported dates.²⁸

Author	Work	Date Written	Earliest MSS	Time Gap	Old #	New
Homer	<i>Iliad</i>	800 BC	c. 400 BC	400	643	1,800+
Herodotus	<i>History</i>	480-425 BC	1 st C AD	1,350	8	109
Sophocles ²⁹	Plays	496-406 BC	3 rd C BC	100-200	100	193
Plato	Tetralogies	400 BC	895	1,300	7	210
Caesar	<i>Gallic Wars</i>	100-44 BC	9 th C	950	10	251
Livy	<i>History of Rome</i>	59 BC-17 AD	Early 5 th C	400	1 Partial, 19 copies	90 & 60 copies
Tacitus	<i>Annals</i>	100 AD	1 st half: 850, 2 nd : 1050 (1100 AD)	750-950	20	2 + 31 15 C copies
Pliny, the Elder	<i>Natural History</i>	49-79 AD	5 th C frag: 1; Rem. 14-15 th C	400 (750)	7	200
Thucydides	<i>History</i>	460-400 BC	3 rd C BC (AD 900)	200 (1,350)	8	96
Demosthenes	Speeches	300 BC	Some frags from 1 C. BC. (AD 1100)	1,100+ (1,400)	200	340
Greek N.T. Manuscripts		50-100 AD	AD 130 (or less) ³⁰	50	5366	5,838
Greek New Testament Early Translations						18,524
Old Testament						42,000+ **
Biblical Manuscripts, Scrolls and Translations:						
New Testament Greek Manuscripts						5,838
New Testament Early Translations						18,524
Old Testament Scrolls, Codices						42,000
TOTAL BIBLICAL MANUSCRIPT EVIDENCES						66,362

- Written by eyewitnesses

Exodus 31:18 - When he finished speaking with Moses on Mount Sinai, he gave him the two tablets of the testimony, stone tablets inscribed by the finger of God.

2 Peter 1:16 - For we did not follow cleverly contrived myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ; instead, we were eyewitnesses of his majesty.

- Extremely specific in dates/times/places

Luke 2:1-3 - In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that the whole empire should be registered. This first registration took place while Quirinius was governing Syria. So everyone went to be registered, each to his own town.

- Multiple viewpoints without contradictions
 - Matthew, Mark, Luke, John
- People in the stories not made to be the heroes

Numbers 20:10-12 - Moses and Aaron summoned the assembly in front of the rock, and Moses said to them, "Listen, you rebels! Must we bring water out of this rock for you?" Then Moses raised his hand and struck the rock twice with his staff, so that abundant water gushed out, and the community and their livestock drank. But the Lord said to Moses and Aaron, "Because you did not trust me to demonstrate my holiness in the sight of the Israelites, you will not bring this assembly into the land I have given them."

Luke 24:9-11 - Returning from the tomb, they reported all these things to the Eleven and to all the rest. Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the other women with them were telling the apostles these things. But these words seemed like nonsense to them, and they did not believe the women.

- The support from Archeology
 - The Pool of Bethesda
 - The Pilate inscription

Did Jesus actually exist and do the things written about Him?

- Did He exist?

"Therefore, to squelch the rumor; Nero created scapegoats and subjected to the most refined tortures those whom the common people called "Christians," hated for their abominable crimes. Their name comes from Christ, who, during the reign of Tiberius, had been executed by the procurator Pontius Pilate. Suppressed for the moment, the deadly superstition broke out again, not only in Judea, the land which originated this evil, but also in the city of Rome, where all sorts of horrendous and shameful practices from every part of the world converge and are fervently cultivated." – Tacitus, Annals, 2nd century

- Did He believe to be the Messiah?

Luke 4:18-21 - The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the

Lord's favor. He then rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. And the eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fixed on him. He began by saying to them, "Today as you listen, this Scripture has been fulfilled."

- Did He believe to be God?

John 10:30 – "I and the Father are one."

- Wasn't He just a really good, moral teacher?

"I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him: 'I'm ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don't accept His claim to be God.' That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic—on a level with the man who says he is a poached egg—or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God: or else a madman or something worse. You can shut Him up for a fool, you can spit at Him and kill Him as a demon; or you can fall at His feet and call Him Lord and God. But let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about His being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to. – C.S. Lewis

- Jesus fulfilled prophecies
 - There are approximately 332 distinct predictions fulfilled in Jesus
 - probability of Jesus fulfilling just eight of these prophecies
 - 1 in 10¹⁷ or 1 in 100,000,000,000,000,000
- The proof of the resurrection
 - Jesus was dead

At this time there was a wise man called Jesus, and his conduct was good, and he was known to be virtuous. Many people among the Jews and the other nations became his disciples. Pilate condemned him to be crucified and to die. But those who had become his disciples did not abandon his discipleship. They reported that he had appeared to them three days after his crucifixion and that he was alive. Accordingly, he was perhaps the Messiah, concerning whom the prophets have reported wonders. And the tribe of the Christians, so named after him, has not disappeared to this day. – Josephus, First Century Jewish Historian

- The guards' reaction

Matthew 28:4 – The guards were so shaken by fear of him that they became like dead men.

Matthew 28:11-15 – As they were on their way, some of the guards came into the city and reported to the chief priests everything that had happened. After the priests had assembled with the elders and agreed on a plan, they gave the soldiers a large sum of money and told them, "Say this, 'His disciples came during the night

and stole him while we were sleeping.' If this reaches the governor's ears, we will deal with him and keep you out of trouble." They took the money and did as they were

- The women show up to the empty tomb first

Mark 16:1 - When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, so that they could go and anoint him

- Lack of tomb veneration
 - In Palestine at time of Jesus, there were at least 50 tombs of prophets or other holy persons that served as religious worship and veneration
 - No specific early veneration of alleged tomb of Jesus. Not till approximately 4th century.
- Vast number of appearances of resurrected Jesus
 - John 20:1-11, Matthew 28:8-10, Luke 24:13-35, Luke 24:34, 1 Corinthians 15:5, Luke 24:50-52, 1 Cor. 15:7, Acts 9:3-6, etc...
- Resurrection was physical in nature, not hallucinations or a dream

John 20:27 - Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here and look at my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Don't be faithless, but believe."

- No refutation from first century Jews, particularly Acts 2
 - Compare this with the response of the Athenians
 - Jews didn't refute because they had the empty tomb able to witness

Acts 2:37 - When they heard this, they were pierced to the heart and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brothers, what should we do?"

Acts 17:32 - When they heard about the resurrection of the dead, some began to ridicule him, but others said, "We'd like to hear from you again about this."

- The existence of the early church
 - Something HAD to have happened for all these followers to believe Jesus to be Messiah
 - ♦ Why would Jews abandon their culture?
 - ♦ Why would there be a shift from Passover to Communion?
 - Jesus not the only possible Messiah killed by Romans
 - ♦ Simon bar-Giora
 - ♦ Simeon bar-Kochba
 - After these men died, their messianic movements came to an end
- Would the apostles die for something they knew was a lie?
 - Peter - crucified
 - Paul - beheaded
 - James, brother of John - put to death by sword

If you have any questions throughout the night, please text 310-710-3028

- James, brother of Jesus – stoned to death
- Thomas – Speared to death
- Andrew – crucified
- Bartholomew – skinned alive
- Philip – crucified
- Matthew – speared to death
- Thaddeus – crucified
- Simon – crucified
- John – covered in boil oil, twice (only one to survive to old age)

Is The Bible Clear?

"The Bible is a unified story that is clearly understandable to all who devote themselves to study it in dependence on the Holy Spirit" – David Platt

- ❖ Consider the amazingness of its unity:
 - Forty distinct authors
 - Three different languages
 - Across 1,500 years
 - All pointing towards the Gospel of Jesus Christ

Genesis 3:15 – I will put hostility between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring. He will strike your head, and you will strike his heel.

Luke 24:27 – Then beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted for them the things concerning himself in all the Scriptures.

- ❖ The Bible is simple enough that anyone can understand it

Deuteronomy 30:11-14 "This command that I give you today is certainly not too difficult or beyond your reach. It is not in heaven so that you have to ask, 'Who will go up to heaven, get it for us, and proclaim it to us so that we may follow it?' And it is not across the sea so that you have to ask, 'Who will cross the sea, get it for us, and proclaim it to us so that we may follow it?' But the message is very near you, in your mouth and in your heart, so that you may follow it

Psalms 19:7 – The instruction of the Lord is perfect, renewing one's life; the testimony of the Lord is trustworthy, making the inexperienced wise.

- ❖ But complex enough that one can study their entire life and continually discover new things

Romans 11:33 – Oh, the depth of the riches and the wisdom and the knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments and untraceable his ways!

- ❖ Therefore, we devote ourselves to the study of God's Word

2 Timothy 2:15 - and you know that from infancy you have known the sacred Scriptures, which are able to give you wisdom for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus

- ❖ How do I study God's Word?

- Hope Chapel Youth YouTube: "How To Study the Bible" parts 1-4
- Read the Bible in context
- Read the Bible in community

- ❖ Anyone can read the Bible, only those filled with the Spirit can apply it

2 Corinthians 4:4 - In their case, the god of this age has blinded the minds of the unbelievers to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

John 3:5-8 - Jesus answered, "Truly I tell you, unless someone is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. Whatever is born of the flesh is flesh, and whatever is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not be amazed that I told you that you must be born again. The wind blows where it pleases, and you hear its sound, but you don't know where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit."

Psalms 119:18 - Open my eyes so that I may contemplate wondrous things from your instruction.

Ephesians 1:17-19 - I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, would give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him. I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened so that you may know what is the hope of his calling, what is the wealth of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the mighty working of his strength.

- ❖ When we disagree with Scripture, the weakness is not with Scripture, the weakness is with us
 - We may be mistaken in our interpretation

- ❖ Some popular "contradictions" and "errors"
 - 2 Samuel 24:9 vs. 1 Chronicles 21:5

2 Samuel 24:9 - Joab gave the king the total of the registration of the troops. There were 800,000 valiant armed men from Israel and five hundred thousand men from Judah.

1 Chronicles 21:5 - Joab gave the total troop registration to David. In all Israel there were 1,100,000 armed men and in Judah itself 470,000 armed men.

- 2 Samuel doesn't include standing army of 288,000 described in 1 Chronicles 27:1-15 or the 12,000 attached to Jerusalem in 2 Chronicles 1:14. Include those, you have 1,100,000.
- The figure of 470,000 in 1 Chronicles 21 did not include the 30,000 men of the standing army of Judah mentioned in 2 Samuel 6:1. This is evident from the fact that the Chronicler points out that Joab did not complete the counting of the men of Judah (1 Chronicles 21:6).
- Both calculations are correct according to the groups which were included and excluded from each report.

➤ Mark 11 vs. Matthew 21

Mark 11:12-14, 20-25 - The next day when they went out from Bethany, he was hungry. Seeing in the distance a fig tree with leaves, he went to find out if there was anything on it. When he came to it, he found nothing but leaves; for it was not the season for figs. He said to it, "May no one ever eat fruit from you again!" And his disciples heard it.... Early in the morning, as they were passing by, they saw the fig tree withered from the roots up. Then Peter remembered and said to him, "Rabbi, look! The fig tree that you cursed has withered." Jesus replied to them, "Have faith in God. Truly I tell you, if anyone says to this mountain, 'Be lifted up and thrown into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says will happen, it will be done for him. Therefore I tell you, everything you pray and ask for—believe that you have received it and it will be yours. And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, so that your Father in heaven will also forgive you your wrongdoing."

Matthew 21:18-22 - Early in the morning, as he was returning to the city, he was hungry. Seeing a lone fig tree by the road, he went up to it and found nothing on it except leaves. And he said to it, "May no fruit ever come from you again!" At once the fig tree withered. When the disciples saw it, they were amazed and said, "How did the fig tree wither so quickly?" Jesus answered them, "Truly I tell you, if you have faith and do not doubt, you will not only do what was done to the fig tree, but even if you tell this mountain, 'Be lifted up and thrown into the sea,' it will be done. And if you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer."

- Fig tree withers in a day? Or is it immediately?
 - Matthew will generally arrange material topically to illustrate a point rather than chronologically like Mark
- Fig tree represents Israel

Jeremiah 8:13 - "I will gather them and bring them to an end." This is the Lord's declaration. "There will be no grapes on the vine, no figs on the fig tree, and even the leaf will wither. Whatever I have given them will be lost to them."

Joel 1:7 - It has devastated my grapevine and splintered my fig tree. It has stripped off its bark and thrown it away; its branches have turned white.

- Symbolic of God's judgement that would fall on the nation

❖ Matthew 2:15 and the strange usage of Hosea 11:1

Hosea 11:1 - When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son.

Matthew 2:15 - He stayed there until Herod's death, so that what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet might be fulfilled: Out of Egypt I called my Son.

- Hosea uses Exodus to talk of new Exodus led by David
- David is God's Son as he represented as God's son, Israel
- Matthew shows how Jesus is the new and better representative of God's son
- Therefore, Jesus is the true representative king of Israel as well as a new Moses
- By quoting this passage, Matthew shows how Jesus is the ultimate King, who will lead God's people into a new and better deliverance

Is The Bible Enough?

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

"Give me a candle and a Bible, and shut me up in a dark dungeon and I will tell you all that the whole world is doing" - JC Ryle

❖ The Bible is sufficient for salvation

Romans 10:17 - So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the message about Christ

1 Peter 1:22-23 - Since you have purified yourselves by your obedience to the truth, so that you show sincere brotherly love for each other, from a pure heart love one another constantly, because you have been born again—not of perishable seed but of imperishable—through the living and enduring word of God.

❖ The Bible is sufficient for our sanctification

2 Peter 1:3-4 - His divine power has given us everything required for life and godliness through the knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. By these he has given us very great and precious promises, so that through them you may share in the divine nature, escaping the corruption that is in the world because of evil desire.

❖ The purpose of the Bible IS NOT:

- To answer every question we may ask

- To provide direction for every situation we may face
- ❖ The purpose of the Bible IS:
 - To conform us to the image of Christ!

Genesis 1:27 - So God created man in his own image; he created him in the image of God; he created them male and female.

Romans 8:29 - For those he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, so that he would be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters.

2 Corinthians 3:18 - We all, with unveiled faces, are looking as in a mirror at the glory of the Lord and are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory; this is from the Lord who is the Spirit

Philippians 3:21 - He will transform the body of our humble condition into the likeness of his glorious body, by the power that enables him to subject everything to himself.

- ❖ How does the Bible conform us into the image of Christ?
 - By instructing us

Psalms 94:12 - Lord, how happy is anyone you discipline and teach from your law

- By convicting us

Hebrews 4:12 - For the word of God is living and effective and sharper than any double-edged sword, penetrating as far as the separation of soul and spirit, joints and marrow. It is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

- By correcting us

Hebrews 12:11 - No discipline seems enjoyable at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.

- By training us

Titus 2:11-13 - For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, instructing us to deny godlessness and worldly lusts and to live in a sensible, righteous, and godly way in the present age, while we wait for the blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ.

- By equipping us

Ephesians 6:11-18 - Put on the full armor of God so that you can stand against the schemes of the devil. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this darkness, against evil, spiritual forces in the heavens. For this reason take up the full armor of God, so

that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and having prepared everything, to take your stand. Stand, therefore, with truth like a belt around your waist, righteousness like armor on your chest, and your feet sandaled with readiness for the gospel of peace. In every situation take up the shield of faith with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit—which is the word of God. Pray at all times in the Spirit with every prayer and request, and stay alert with all perseverance and intercession for all the saints.

❖ The Bible satisfies our deepest desires!

Psalm 1:1-2 - How happy is the one who does not walk in the advice of the wicked or stand in the pathway with sinners or sit in the company of mockers! Instead, his delight is in the Lord's instruction, and he meditates on it day and night.

Psalm 19:7-11 - The instruction of the Lord is perfect, renewing one's life; the testimony of the Lord is trustworthy, making the inexperienced wise. The precepts of the Lord are right, making the heart glad; the command of the Lord is radiant, making the eyes light up. The fear of the Lord is pure, enduring forever; the ordinances of the Lord are reliable and altogether righteous. They are more desirable than gold—than an abundance of pure gold; and sweeter than honey dripping from a honeycomb. In addition, your servant is warned by them, and in keeping them there is an abundant reward.

Psalm 119:14 - I rejoice in the way revealed by your decrees as much as in all riches.

Psalm 119:47 - I delight in your commands, which I love.

Psalm 119:162 - I rejoice over your promise like one who finds vast treasure.

❖ We must not (and do not need to) add anything to the Bible!

Deuteronomy 4:2 - You must not add anything to what I command you or take anything away from it, so that you may keep the commands of the Lord your God I am giving you.

Deuteronomy 12:32 - Be careful to do everything I command you; do not add anything to it or take anything away from it.

Revelation 22:18-19 - I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book. And if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his share of the tree of life and the holy city, which are written about in this book.

❖ We must not (and do not need to) elevate anything to authority of Scripture!
➤ We don't elevate certain teachers

2 Timothy 4:3-4 - For the time will come when people will not tolerate sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, will multiply teachers for themselves because they have an itch to hear what they want to hear. They will turn away from hearing the truth and will turn aside to myths.

- We don't elevate certain traditions

Colossians 2:8 - Be careful that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deceit based on human tradition, based on the elements of the world, rather than Christ.

We owe to the Scriptures the same reverence as we owe to God, since it has its only source in Him and has nothing of human origin mixed with it." John Calvin

- ❖ Does the Bible need to be updated?
 - No

Hebrews 13:8 - Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever

Malachi 3:6 - Because I, the Lord, have not changed, you descendants of Jacob have not been destroyed.

- ❖ Does the Bible have the ability and final authority on tackling such issues as LGBT+, abortion, social justice, mental health, and etc.?
 - Yes
 - These issues only affect the church when the Word of God is no longer seen as sufficient.
 - When the Word of God is no longer the authority in the church, sin and destruction follow
 - The Bible is not a suggestion book or last resort.
 - It is 100% sufficient!
 - It is the first observation as well as the final word!

Is the Bible Worth It? Do I really base my life on a two-thousand-year-old book?

- ❖ Yes...
- ❖ Why?
 - God is good

Psalms 145:9 - The Lord is good to everyone; his compassion rests on all he has made.

- The Bible is God's Word

2 Timothy 3:16 - All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for rebuking, for correcting, for training in righteousness

- To believe and obey the Bible is to believe and obey God

Deuteronomy 4:5-8 - Look, I have taught you statutes and ordinances as the Lord my God has commanded me, so that you may follow them in the land you are entering to possess. Carefully follow them, for this will show your wisdom and understanding in the eyes of the peoples. When they hear about all these statutes, they will say, 'This great nation is indeed a wise and understanding people.' For what great nation is there that has a god near to it as the Lord our God is to us whenever we call to him? And what great nation has righteous statutes and ordinances like this entire law I set before you today?

- To disbelieve and disobey the Bible is to disbelieve and disobey God

2 Peter 3:1-3 - Dear friends, this is now the second letter I have written to you; in both letters, I want to stir up your sincere understanding by way of reminder, so that you recall the words previously spoken by the holy prophets and the command of our Lord and Savior given through your apostles. Above all, be aware of this: Scoffers will come in the last days scoffing and following their own evil desires,

- The Bible is good
 - Psalm 119

Psalm 119:174-176 - I long for your salvation, Lord, and your instruction is my delight. Let me live, and I will praise you; may your judgments help me. I wander like a lost sheep; seek your servant, for I do not forget your commands.

- ❖ What happens when we fully trust in and obey the Bible?
 - Our lives become completely transformed

2 Corinthians 5:17 - Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, and see, the new has come!

- ❖ How do I do this?
 - Read the Bible prayerfully

1 Corinthians 2:12-14 - Now we have not received the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who comes from God, so that we may understand what has been freely given to us by God. We also speak these things, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, explaining spiritual things to spiritual people. But the person without the Spirit does not receive what comes from God's Spirit, because it is foolishness to him; he is not able to understand it since it is evaluated spiritually.

- Read the Bible humbly
 - Read the Bible to know God... not yourself

Jeremiah 9:23-24 - This is what the Lord says: The wise person should not boast in his wisdom; the strong should not boast in his strength; the wealthy should not boast in his wealth. But the one who boasts should boast in this: that he understands and knows me—that I am the Lord, showing faithful love, justice, and righteousness on the earth, for I delight in these things. This is the Lord's declaration.

- Read the Bible carefully
 - Study the context

2 Timothy 2:15 - Be diligent to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who doesn't need to be ashamed, correctly teaching the word of truth.

- Read the Bible joyfully

Psalms 119:32 - I pursue the way of your commands, for you broaden my understanding.

- Read the Bible confidently
 - The Holy Spirit dwells in you!

John 16:13-15 - When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth. For he will not speak on his own, but he will speak whatever he hears. He will also declare to you what is to come. He will glorify me, because he will take from what is mine and declare it to you. Everything the Father has is mine. This is why I told you that he takes from what is mine and will declare it to you.

- Read the Bible diligently
 - Knowing God doesn't happen overnight

Psalms 1:2 - Instead, his delight is in the Lord's instruction, and he meditates on it day and night.

- Read the Bible completely
 - Don't just pick and choose. Read through the whole thing!

Acts 20:26-27 - Therefore I declare to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all of you, because I did not avoid declaring to you the whole plan of God.

- Read the Bible expectantly
 - God will speak to you through His Word

John 10:27 - My sheep hear my voice, I know them, and they follow me.

- Read the Bible personally
 - Fall in love with the Author of the book

Psalm 119:15-16 – I will meditate on your precepts and think about your ways. I will delight in your statutes; I will not forget your word.

❖ But what about _____? Can the Bible really help me?

- Rejoice in the promises of God
 - Promise of sufficiency

2 Peter 1:3 – His divine power has given us everything required for life and godliness through the knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness

James 1:4 – By these he has given us very great and precious promises, so that through them you may share in the divine nature, escaping the corruption that is in the world because of evil desire

- Promise of blessing

Psalm 19:7-11 – The instruction of the Lord is perfect, renewing one's life; the testimony of the Lord is trustworthy, making the inexperienced wise. The precepts of the Lord are right, making the heart glad; the command of the Lord is radiant, making the eyes light up. The fear of the Lord is pure, enduring forever; the ordinances of the Lord are reliable and altogether righteous. They are more desirable than gold—than an abundance of pure gold; and sweeter than honey dripping from a honeycomb. In addition, your servant is warned by them, and in keeping them there is an abundant reward.

- Promise to guide

Psalm 119:105 – Your word is a lamp for my feet and a light on my path.

- Promise to comfort

Isaiah 40:1-2 – "Comfort, comfort my people," says your God. "Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and announce to her that her time of hard service is over, her iniquity has been pardoned, and she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins."

- Promise of peace

Philippians 4:4-7 – Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your graciousness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Don't worry about anything, but in everything, through prayer and petition with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

- Promise of wisdom

Matthew 7:24-27 - Therefore, everyone who hears these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain fell, the rivers rose, and the winds blew and pounded that house. Yet it didn't collapse, because its foundation was on the rock. But everyone who hears these words of mine and doesn't act on them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. The rain fell, the rivers rose, the winds blew and pounded that house, and it collapsed. It collapsed with a great crash.

- Promise of salvation

2 Timothy 3:14-15 - But as for you, continue in what you have learned and firmly believed. You know those who taught you, and you know that from infancy you have known the sacred Scriptures, which are able to give you wisdom for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus

- Remember the purpose of the Bible
 - To conform us to image of Christ
 - When I read, am I looking for tips on life or to know God more intimately?

John 5:39-40 - You pore over the Scriptures because you think you have eternal life in them, and yet they testify about me. But you are not willing to come to me so that you may have life.

John 10:10 - A thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I have come so that they may have life and have it in abundance.

- Experience the effect of the Bible
 - The Bible brings conviction

Acts 2:37 - When they heard this, they were pierced to the heart and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brothers, what should we do?"

- The Bible explains conversion

Acts 2:38 - Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, each of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

- The Bible creates a deeper desire for more

1 Peter 2:1-3 - Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all slander. Like newborn infants, desire the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow up into your salvation, if you have tasted that the Lord is good.

Objections/Questions

- ❖ Isn't using Scripture to assert the inspiration of Scripture just a circular argument?
 - The argument:
 - We believe Scripture is divine because Scripture claims to be divine.
 - We believe Scripture's claims to be divine because Scripture is divine.
 - The reality
 - Any argument for absolute authority will ultimately appeal to its own authority.
 - Examples ...
 - My reason is my ultimate authority.
 - Why?
 - Because that is reasonable to me.
 - Logical consistency is my ultimate authority.
 - Why?
 - Because that is logical to me.
 - I know there is no ultimate authority.
 - How?
 - Because I don't know of any ultimate authority.
 - Our responsibility ...
 - Listen to the Bible's testimony to itself.

But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work. 2 Timothy 3:14-17

- Look for validation of that testimony.
 - Externally

"The very dimension of the sheer fulfillment of prophecy of the Old Testament Scriptures should be enough to convince anyone that we are dealing with a supernatural piece of literature. ... God has himself planted within the scriptures an internal consistency that bears witness that this is his Word." R. C. Sproul

- Internally

"Now this power which is peculiar to Scripture is clear from the fact that of human writings, however artfully polished, there is none capable of affecting us at all comparably. Read Demosthenes or Cicero; read Plato, Aristotle, and others of that tribe. They will, I admit, allure you, delight you, move you, enrapture you in wonderful measure. But betake yourself from them to this sacred reading. Then, in spite of yourself, so deeply will it affect you, so penetrate your heart, so fix itself in your very marrow, that compared with its deep impression, such vigor as the orators and philosophers have will nearly vanish. Consequently, it is easy to see that the Sacred

Scriptures, which so far surpass all gifts and graces of human endeavor, breathe something divine." John Calvin

- ❖ What about the Apocrypha? Gospel of Thomas? Gospel of Phillip?
 - The Apocrypha - Additional books which the Roman Catholic Church claimed to be part of the Bible at the Council of Trent in 1546.

"The Synod ... receives and venerates ... all the books (including the Apocrypha) both of the Old and of the New Testament seeing that one God is the Author of both ... as having been dictated, either by Christ's own word of mouth or by the Holy Ghost ... if anyone receive not as sacred and canonical the said books entire with all their parts, as they have been used to be read in the Catholic Church ... let him be anathema."
Council of Trent (1546)

- Wasn't written by prophets or apostles.
- Doesn't tell the truth about God.
- Doesn't demonstrate the power of God.
- Wasn't accepted by the people of God.
 - Judith and Tobit contain historical, chronological and geographical errors.
 - Wisdom of Solomon teaches the creation of the world out of pre-existent matter (Wisd. 11:17).
 - Ecclesiasticus teaches that the giving of alms makes atonement for sin (Eccl. 3:30).
 - Baruch says that God hears the prayers of the dead (Bar. 3:4)
 - 1 Maccabees contains historical and geographical errors.
- Gospel of Thomas? Gospel of Philip?
 - Wasn't written by prophets or apostles.
 - Doesn't tell the truth about God.
 - Doesn't demonstrate the power of God.
 - Wasn't accepted by the people of God.
 - Gospel of Thomas - 2nd to 3rd century writing. Compilation of 114 sayings

"Simon Peter said to them, "Mary should leave us, because women aren't worthy of life." Jesus said, "Look, am I to make her a man? So that she may become a living spirit too, she's equal to you men, because every woman who makes herself manly will enter the kingdom of heaven." (Thomas 114)

- Gospel of Philip - Late 2nd to mid 3rd century.

"And the companion of the [...] Mary Magdalene. [...] loved her more than all the disciples, and used to kiss her often on her mouth. The rest of the disciples [...]. They

said to him "Why do you love her more than all of us?" The Savior answered and said to them, "Why do I not love you like her?" - (Philip 63-64)

- ❖ "I feel like I already understand the Bible and want something more. It's boring to me."
 - Have you truly plumbed the depths of Scripture from Genesis 1-Revelation 22?
 - Have you truly grasped the greatest treasure this world has ever known?
 - Have you unraveled every thread of this beautiful tapestry that makes up the greatest story ever told?

Practical Takeaways

- ❖ We respect the Bible
 - The Author is Holy

Revelation 4:8 - Each of the four living creatures had six wings; they were covered with eyes around and inside. Day and night they never stop, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God, the Almighty, who was, who is, and who is to come.

- ❖ We hear from the Bible humbly
 - His will, not our will

Luke 22:41-42 - Father, if you are willing, take this cup away from me—nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done.

"Show me a person who despises Bible reading, or thinks little of Bible preaching, and I hold it to be certain that he is not yet born again." – JC Ryle

- ❖ We believe the Bible completely

2 Timothy 3:16 - All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for rebuking, for correcting, for training in righteousness

- Even the tough passages!

Matthew 10:37-39 - The one who loves a father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; the one who loves a son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And whoever doesn't take up his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Anyone who finds his life will lose it, and anyone who loses his life because of me will find it.

Revelation 20:15 - And anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life was thrown into the lake of fire.

Matthew 6:33 - But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be provided for you

Matthew 28:19 - But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be provided for you

- ❖ We obey the Bible confidently

John 14:23 - Jesus answered, "If anyone loves me, he will keep my word. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him."

- ❖ We proclaim the Bible urgently

Acts 19:8-10 - Paul entered the synagogue and spoke boldly over a period of three months, arguing and persuading them about the kingdom of God. But when some became hardened and would not believe, slandering the Way in front of the crowd, he withdrew from them, taking the disciples, and conducted discussions every day in the lecture hall of Tyrannus. This went on for two years, so that all the residents of Asia, both Jews and Greeks, heard the word of the Lord.

Matthew 28:19-20 - Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

Recommended Reading

For further study on the topics covered in tonight's sessions, see the resources listed below. Please note, however, that Hope Chapel Youth ministry does not endorse everything contained in these resources. As always, we urge you to examine these resources and the topics covered in this study in light of the truths of God's Word.

- ❖ *Evidence that Demands a Verdict* – Josh McDowell and Sean McDowell
- ❖ *Can We Trust the Gospels* – Peter J. Williams
- ❖ *Why Trust the Bible* – Greg Gilbert
- ❖ *Canon Revisited* – Michael J. Kruger
- ❖ *The Inerrant Word* – John MacArthur
- ❖ *The Case for Christ* – Lee Strobel
- ❖ *Defending Inerrancy* – Norman Geiser & William Roach
- ❖ *The Big Book of Bible Difficulties* – Norman Geiser & Thomas Howe
- ❖ *One Foundation: Essays on the Sufficiency of Scripture* – Various
- ❖ *Reformed Systematic Theology Volume 1* – Joel Beeke & Paul Smalley

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