

Can I Trust The Bible?

We can trust both the accuracy and reliability of the Bible as God's Word.



TRANSFORMATION
for Adult LifeGroups

Matthew 5:17-19 (KJV), John 5:39-40 (NLT), Hebrews 4:12 (ESV)

APRIL 11, 2018/APRIL 15, 2018

TODAY'S TEXT

Text: Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. 18 For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. 19 Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. Matthew 5:17-19 (KJV)

You search the Scriptures because you think they give you eternal life. But the Scriptures point to me! 40 Yet you refuse to come to me to receive this life. John 5:39-40 (NLT)

For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. Hebrews 4:12 (ESV)

UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT

The Bible's Power and Influence

Banned in many countries, yet desperately sought by persecuted Christians. The Bible is the bestselling, most widely studied piece of literature, whose influence is unquestionable, whatever you think of the book. Much of our art, law, philosophy, music and literature have drawn upon the Bible.

EXPLORE THE TEXT

- If you wanted to learn about something from a book, what would you look for that would make a book trustworthy on that topic?

> Read Matthew 5:17-19

- What do these verses tell us about Jesus opinion of the accuracy and reliability of the Bible?

The FIRST question of trust we want to address about the Bible is its ACCURACY.

This means is what we have as the Bible today an accurate reflection of what happened thousands of years ago and has it been accurately handed down to us. Broadly speaking, there are **three tests** a historian can utilize to determine the accuracy of an ancient document: the internal test, and the external test, and the bibliographic test.

- 1. The Internal Test** - This test asks whether we can determine whether the document we have before us was written by eyewitnesses.
 - First, we have **multiple witnesses**.
 - Furthermore, these **sources are all very early**.
 - And the accounts bear the **authenticity of eyewitnesses**.
- 2. The External Test** - Second, there's the external evidence for the Bible, in particular archaeology. Time and time again, archaeology has confirmed that the writers of the biblical texts knew what they were talking about. Along with the writings of non-Christian historians from the first century, men like the Jewish historian, Josephus, archaeology endorses the biblical text at many points.
- 3. The Bibliographic Test** - Finally, the bibliographic test looks at the ancient manuscripts of the Bible and asks whether the text of the Bible we have today is the same as the original. The simple answer is "yes". There are thousands upon thousands of ancient manuscripts of the Bible, dating from the early second century down to the middle ages.

- How do these tests influence your opinion on the ACCURACY of the Bible? What stands out to you?

- What questions do you still have about the ACCURACY of the Bible?

The SECOND question of trust we want to address about the Bible is its RELIABILITY.

Many people today want to ignore, rubbish, or reject the Bible. "How can you trust the Bible?" skeptics often ask. "New Atheist" writers like Richard Dawkins regularly attack the Bible, calling those who believe in it, "died in the wool faith-heads". The real question is can I rely on the Bible? Is it relevant to today? Isn't it just a book of dusty old history? Absolutely not!

> Read Hebrews 4:12

- ° What do these verses tell us the purpose of the Bible is?
- ° What does it mean that the Bible is “living and active”?
- ° In both these verses and in Ephesians 6:17 (“the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God”) the Bible is described as a sword. Why do you think this weapon imagery is used for God’s word?

Three Thoughts on how to answer the skeptic

- First, when somebody says “why trust the Bible?” respond with “why not trust the Bible?” One can only really doubt something if one has something more solid to believe in. Unless you merely want to be a skeptic.
 - Second, lots of people have bought into popular assumptions and myths about the Bible. So if somebody suggests the Bible is unreliable, ask them to be specific. How exactly? If they claim it’s full of myths, ask them which one they had in mind? Encourage them to read the Bible for themselves before passing judgement on it.
 - **What are some popular misconceptions about the Bible?**
 - Third, just because something is old or ancient, doesn’t make it false. Indeed, ancient-icity doesn’t tell us anything about whether something is true or false. Something can be ancient and true. Likewise something can be bang up to date and false.
- ° How has the Bible been relevant in your life?

SUMMARIZE AND CHALLENGE

The more you read the Bible -> the more you will know God’s character -> the more you will trust His character -> the surer you will become of its truth and want to open your Bible!

Think about what doubts, questions, or obstacles are keeping you from trusting God at His Word. Then close with a prayer like this:

Close in Prayer: Jesus, we are hungry for Your Word, but we don’t always know where to begin. Draw us into the pages of Scripture and reveal Yourself to us there. Give us hearts that desire to open and trust our Bibles, for your word is truth.

UPCOMING LESSONS

- Next week we answer the question, “Do You Know the Bible?”
- Read John 8:31-31, John 15:5-8, and 2 Timothy 2:14-17
- What does it mean for the word (Bible) to remain or abide in you?

READ THROUGH THE BIBLE

15th - 1 Samuel 17; Psalm 9; Matthew 2 | **16th** - 1 Samuel 18; 1 Chronicles 6; Psalm 11, Matthew 3 | **17th** - 1 Samuel 19; 1 Chronicles 7; Psalm 59, Matthew 4 | **18th** - 1 Samuel 20-21; Psalm 34, Matthew 5 | **19th** - 1 Samuel 22; Psalm 17, 35; Matthew 6 | **20th** - 1 Samuel 23; Psalm 31, 54; Matthew 7 | **21st** - 1 Samuel 24; Psalm 57-58; 1 Chronicles 8; Matthew 8