

## ***(You Can) Trust the Bible***

*By Bob Parks*

### **Introduction**

#### **What do I/you believe about the Bible?**

- That it is God's Word to humanity, mediated through human writers.
- That all 66 books of the Bible are inspired, infallible (some use the term inerrant), reliable, trustworthy, and completely true.
- That all that the scriptures claim about themselves are true.

#### **Many people do not accept the Bible as the inspired Word of God.**

- They believe it was written by men with a particular religious view.
- They do not accept its teachings and feel it is full of errors, contradictions, and inconsistencies.
- They believe it contains many historical & scientific inaccuracies, as well as many myths, legends, and unproven assertions.
- Even if they do accept some of its teachings, they do not see them as universally true or binding.
- In brief, they do not believe the Bible to be the eternal, trustworthy, and authoritative Word of God that you and I believe it to be.

#### **Yes, we CAN defend the Bible before those who question & attack it.**

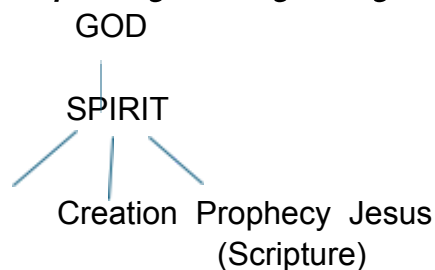
- We can point to its unity and consistency of message. (66 books, written by over 40 authors over a period of 1,500 years – overarching theme.)
- We can point to the volume of archeological & manuscript support that exists. (More manuscript support than any other ancient writing.)
- We can point to its preservation over thousands of years.
- We can point to fulfilled prophecies (internal & historical).
- We can point to the transformative power of its message.

#### **What is the Bible to you?**

- A sacred (holy) book to be honoured?
- A textbook to be studied?
- A rule book to be obeyed?
- A story book to be read?
- A guidebook to be followed?

## Viewing the Bible as the Word of God.

- By “Word” we mean the expression, communication & revelation of God.
- From the very first verses of scripture, we see that God SPEAKS, and His Word is powerful and creative.
- We recognize from scripture that God has spoken/speaks through:
  - o Creation – General Revelation (Rom. 1:18-23; Ps. 19:1-4)
  - o Prophetic Word/Scripture – (Heb. 1:1-3; 2 Pet. 1:20; 2 Tim. 3:16)
  - o Jesus – (Heb. 1:1-3; Jn. 1:1-18 – The Word became flesh)
- In scripture, we see ***God speaking & acting through His Spirit.***



Creation = God created everything through His spoken Word. (Heb. 11:3)

Prophecy/Scripture = God’s Word was mediated through human instruments.

Jesus = God’s Word was incarnated in a human being.

The Bible is God’s Word in human language (enlettered). Jesus is God’s Word in human form (enfleshed.) The human and divine components cannot be separated, but, as in the incarnation, they dwell together in unity.

## Understanding & Interpreting the Bible as the Word of God

The Apostle Paul wrote to his protégé Timothy:

*“Study to show yourself approved unto God, a workman that needs not be ashamed, **rightly handling the Word of truth.**” (2 Tim. 2:15 – Awana verse)*

The Apostle Peter wrote a warning regarding the distorting of scripture:

*“There are some things in (Paul’s letters) that are hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable **twist to their own destruction, as they do the other Scriptures.**” (2 Pet. 3:15-16)*

The scriptures must be handled, understood, interpreted, and taught correctly. It’s possible to misuse, distort, and misapply scripture to suit one’s own ends.

Proper understanding, interpretation, and application of scripture is essential.

## 1. Understand the Old and New Testaments

- Old covenant made with Israel – based on the Law of Moses
  - o The OT was written to Jews/Israel; contains God's Word to Israel, the nation's history, and contains both moral (10 commandments) & ceremonial laws (social, dietary, purity)
- New covenant made with all believers in Jesus – based on free grace
  - o The NT was written to everyone/believers in Jesus; contains the account(s) of Jesus life, the history of the Church, and writings penned by Apostles. It contains the gospel of Jesus Christ and the message & standards of his Kingdom.
- Both Testaments form a unit, with Jesus Christ being the central theme.
  - o Jesus' coming was anticipated & foretold in the OT.
  - o Jesus is found in both the Old & New Testaments (Lk. 24:27)
  - o Jesus fulfills the OT law, feasts, sacrifices, tabernacle/temple (Matt. 5:17)
- Believers in Jesus today are not under obligation to keep the Law of Moses as such, but are under obligation to the LAW of LOVE, a higher standard which FULFILLS the OT Law. (Gal. 5:14; Mt. 22:34-40)
- So, while NT believers are not (as an example) under the dietary restrictions of the OT, we are under the authority of God's moral law, which is unchanging and revealed in both the Old and New Testaments.

## 2. Understanding the nature of scripture.

- Referring back to my previous comments about how the scriptures came to us (Divine revelation through human authors)
- The Bible is a book but, in reality is a library, a collection of books.
  - o 66 books, written by over 40 authors, over 1,500 years of time.
- The Bible contains a variety of literary genres:
  - o History/narrative, prophecy, wisdom, poetry, apocalyptic
  - o Gospel, epistle, parable
- Each part of the Bible needs to be seen and interpreted in a way that is consistent with its literary form and is viewed in its historical setting.
  - o Also considering the author's target audience & purpose.
  - o As an example – the Four Gospels
- Consideration needs to be given to what is cultural in a historical situation and what is supra-cultural.

## 3. Placing yourself under the authority of scripture.

- While the WHOLE BIBLE is the Word of God, you need you understand what parts of the Bible are specifically written TO you and FOR you today.
- When you understand and interpret the Bible correctly as it applies to you, you can submit to the Bible's authority in the proper way.
  - o You commit to living your life according its teachings.
  - o You give attention to it – you read & study it, hear it preached and taught, meditate on it, memorize it.
  - o You seek to be changed/transformed by the Word of God.