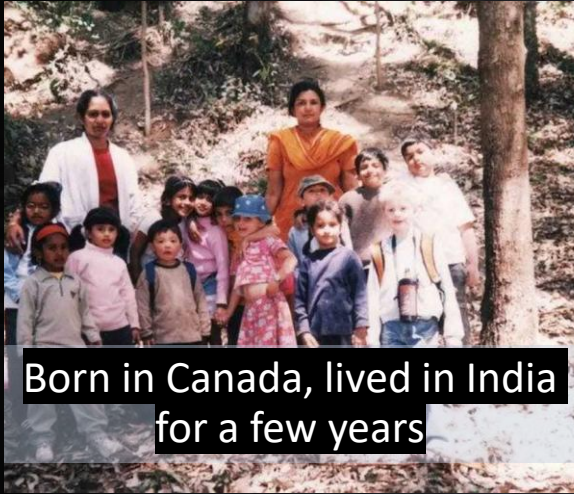


A bit about me



The plan for this week

- Monday- The Bible is trustworthy
- Tuesday- The Gospel is good (Eastern Worldviews)
- Wednesday- The Gospel is powerful (Islam)
- Thursday- The Gospel is true (Secularism)
- Friday- The Gospel is durable (Doubt and faith) + Q&A

Why people don't trust the Bible (and what we can do about it)

Isaac Munnalall

Why don't people trust the Bible?

- **Arguments? Experience? Something else?**
- **The issue is one of assumptions**
- **We need to address this before we can effectively talk about the Bible**

The “Sunday School” Bible

- **Unambiguous moral teachings**
- **Inoffensive material**
- **Simplistic concept of inspiration**
- **Heroic characters**
- **Historically anachronistic**
- **Easy to understand**
- **At odds with academic scholarship**



“Sunday School” Bible Assumptions

It should be clear and unambiguous

It should reflect our current values

It should answer our current questions

It should be inclusive, not exclusive

It should be revealed, not written

The Real Bible

- Messy people
- Messy events
- Messy writing style (difficult to understand)
- Messy compilation/editing process
- Messy canonization process

**This messy “vibe” is the real reason people
don’t trust the Bible**

We should expect a Messy Bible

- **God always reveals truth in messy ways**
 - **Nature**
 - **Moral intuition**
 - **Prophets/teachers**
 - **Personal religious experiences**

What Messiness communicates

**1. God wants sons, not slaves- if people are involved,
messiness is a given**

“So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God.” Galatians 4:7

2. The power of the Bible is its meaning- not it's words

“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 3:16

A Problem Remains

- **Messiness may be good in theory, but it's not very convincing**
- **Our intuition that God would provide a universal, unambiguous, eternal revelation is not crazy.**

A Better Paradigm

Incarnational Revelation vs. Documented Revelation

- 1. Jesus is the eternal Word of God**
- 2. He descended down to earth as a man, teaching God's law and saving us from our sins.**
- 3. Jesus is alive today as the physical manifestation of God's eternal Word.**
- 4. Through experiencing the risen Jesus, all people have access to God's unambiguous, self-authenticating, personal revelation**

Documented Revelation

1. God taught and directed his people in the past, and they wrote down His teachings as holy scripture
2. God has control over every part of the process, so scripture can never be corrupted
3. The Bible is God's divine revelation through the medium of **natural human communication**
4. God can speak to you through the Bible right now

The Revelation Confusion

People's expectations:

1. Unambiguous
2. Universally accessible
3. Eternal
4. Self-authenticating

The Bible:

1. Ambiguous in meaning and content
2. Inaccessible to many
3. Written by men
4. Not self-evidently true

The Correct Comparison

People's expectations:

1. Unambiguous
2. Universally accessible
3. Eternal
4. Self-authenticating

Jesus:

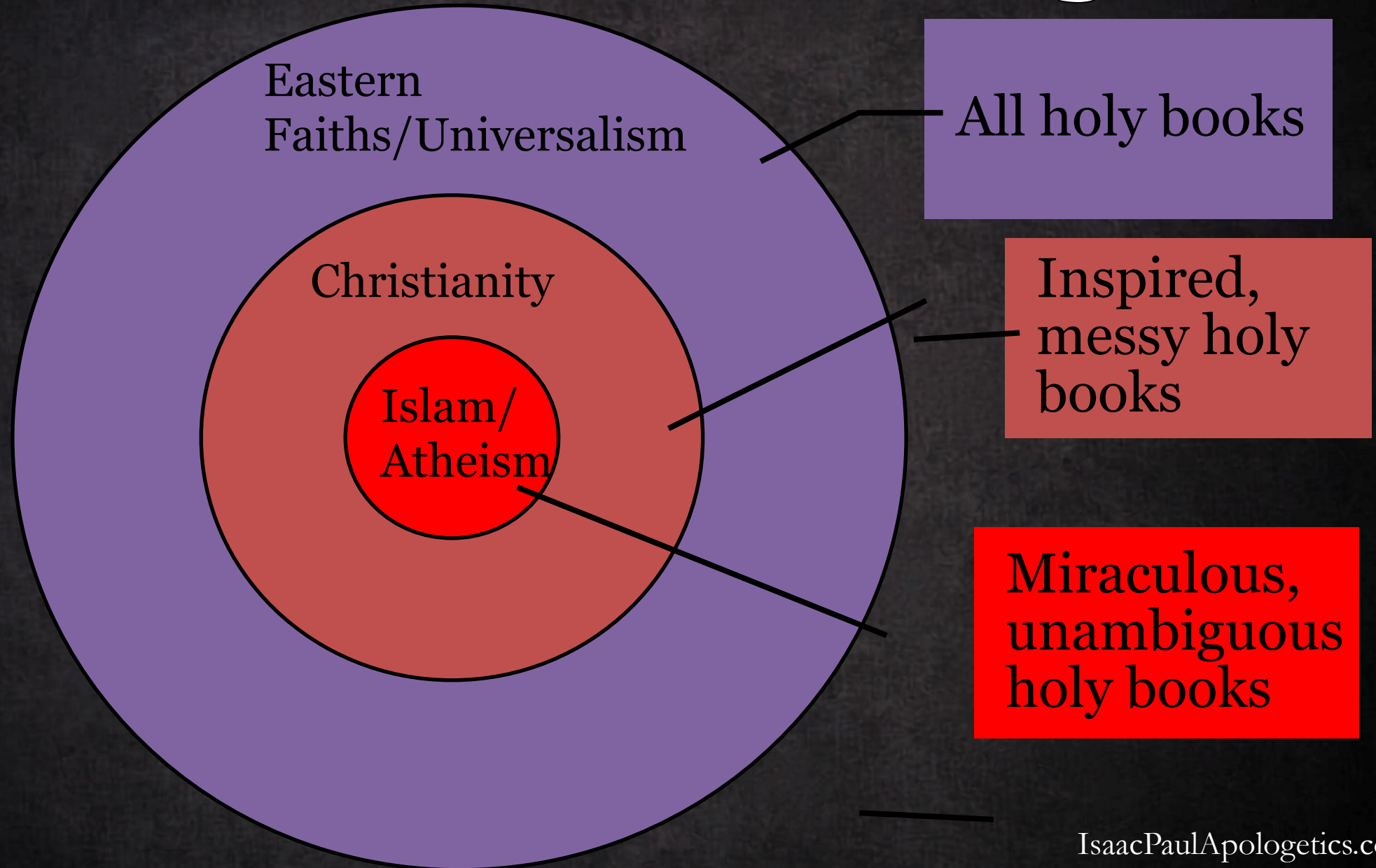
1. Jesus teaches us perfectly
2. He is accessible to all people
3. Eternally existent
4. Self-evidently divine

Why choose these two methods?

God wants a universal message

- If a message is written, it can't be both unambiguous and universal
- If the message comes through a person, **it can be adjusted to every language and culture** and be truly universal and unambiguous

God Reveals Truth Through...



Responding to Universalism/Eastern Faiths

- **The messiness of the bible grounds it in falsifiable reality**
 - The Bible is grounded in real historical events and people
 - History and people are messy and complicated
 - Only philosophical ideas are pure, clean, and easy to fit in a box
 - Physical reality is not subjective
- **So the Bible cannot be merely subjectively true**

Responding to Skeptics/Muslims

- God wants to use natural human communication because he wants sons, not slaves
- Doing so necessarily introduces messiness
- So it's reasonable to trust the Bible even though it's messy
- God has provided unambiguous, universal revelation through the person of Jesus

Good Reasons to Trust the Bible

- 1. Historical reliability**
- 2. Philosophical coherence**
- 3. Fulfilled prophecies**
- 4. Our personal experience**

Can We Trust the Gospels?

Evidence #1: Genre Analysis

The Gospels fit into the genre of Greco-Roman biography, they're not meant to be myths

- Begin with discussion of ancestry
- Huge emphasis on death
- Focus on deeds and sayings rather than wholistic life story
- Flexible chronology
- Moralistic teachings the purpose rather than pure descriptive history
- Including supernatural elements

Evidence #1: Genre Analysis

Work	Author	Traits Exhibited
Parallel Lives	Plutarch	Ancestry, deeds/sayings, flexible chronology, moral lessons, supernatural elements
The Twelve Caesars	Suetonius	Ancestry, emphasis on death, deeds/sayings, moralistic lessons, supernatural signs
Lives of Eminent Philosophers	Diogenes Laertius	Deeds/sayings, moral lessons, flexible chronology
Memorable Deeds and Sayings	Valerius Maximus	Moral lessons, deeds, supernatural elements
Library of History	Diodorus Siculus	Supernatural events, thematic/moral organization

Evidence #2: Multiple Attestation

They events of the
Gospels are multiply
attested

Event	Sources
Crucifixion	Paul, Gospels, Josephus, Tacitus
Resurrection	Paul, Gospels, Acts, creeds
Baptism by John	Mark, John, Acts
Last Supper	Mark, Paul, Luke, John
Teachings on Divorce	Mark, Luke, Paul
Kingdom of God	Mark, Matthew, Luke, John, Paul
Cleansing of Temple	All Gospels
Loving Enemies	Matthew, Luke, Paul

Evidence #3: Onomastic Congruence

- Documents which display the correct distribution of names for the time and place
 - Frequency and distribution
 - Hellenized/Romanized forms
 - Disambiguation of repeated names
- This is extremely hard to forge.
- Do you know what the number one boy name from 1990 in the Southern USA was?

Distribution of names in the Gospels

Name	1st-Century Judea Rank	% of Population	# in Gospels
Simon	1st	8.30%	6
Joseph	2nd	6.80%	6
Lazarus	3rd	6.30%	2
Judas	4th	5.30%	3
John	5th	5.20%	5
Mary	1st	~25-30%	4
Salome	2nd	~4-5%	1
Martha	3rd	~3%	1

The Apocrypha vs. The Gospels

- The Apocryphal Gospels were written in the centuries afterward
 - Gospel of Thomas
 - Gospel of Peter
 - Infancy Gospel of Thomas
 - Gospel of Phillip
- They are not considered historically reliable
- They do not exhibit the onomastic congruence that the NT Gospels have

Name	NT Individuals	NT Disambiguation?	Apocryphal Gospel(s)	Apocryphal Frequency	Disambiguation in Apocrypha?
Jesus	1	Yes, Jesus Barabbas	Peter, Thomas, Philip, Infancy Gospel of Thomas	1	N/A
Simon	6	Yes (Peter, Zealot, Cyrene, leper, Pharisee, father of Judas)	Peter, Thomas	1–2	Mostly not disambiguated
Peter / Simon Peter	1	Yes	Thomas, Philip	1	Minimal
James	5	Yes (son of Zebedee, son of Alphaeus, brother of Jesus, “the Less”)	Thomas, Philip	1–2	Usually not disambiguated
John	3	Yes (son of Zebedee, father of Peter, John the Baptist)	Thomas	1	Not always disambiguated
Mary	4	Yes (mother of Jesus, Magdalene, Mary of Bethany, mother of James & Joses)	Thomas, Philip	1–2	Often generic (“Mary”)
Petronius	0	N/A	Peter	1	N/A
Mariamne	0	N/A	Thomas, Philip	1	N/A
Eliezer	0	N/A	Infancy Gospel of Thomas	1	N/A

Evidence #4: Aramaic/Hebrew influence on the NT

The New Testament existed in a trilingual world

1. Aramaic (mother tongue)
2. Greek (lingua franca)
3. Hebrew (Religious/Cultural language)

The New Testament exhibits Aramaic and Hebrew influence on Greek. This demonstrates

1. Probably from traditions that are pre- AD 70
2. Certainly composed by people from the requisite time and place
3. Composed using accurate oral traditions

Early on, most Christians were not Aramaic (or Hebrew) speaking. These details would have been almost impossible to fake

Grammatical/Discourse Semitisms

Feature	Greek Example	English	Semitic Origin
Kai connectors	Καὶ ἐγένετο ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις ἐκείναις...	And it came to pass...	Repeated vav-consecutive
Historical present	Καὶ ἰδοὺ ἄγγελος Κυρίου προσήλθεν...	And behold, an angel comes...	Hebrew va-yiqtol verbs
Amen, amen, I say to you	ἀμήν ἀμήν λέγω ὑμῖν...	Truly, truly, I say to you...	Hebrew/Aramaic emphatic idiom
Answering, he said	ἀποκριθεὶς αὐτῷ ὁ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν...	And Jesus answered him, saying...	Semitic dialogue style

Lexical Semiticisms

Semiticism	Greek (NT)	English	Semitic Origin
“Sons of Light”	υἱοὶ τοῦ φωτός (Luke 16:8)	“Sons of light”	Daniel 12:3 בני אור
“Sons of the Kingdom”	υἱοὶ τῆς βασιλείας (Matt 8:12)	“Sons of the kingdom”	Psalms 82:6 בני עליון
“Son of Perdition”	υἱὸς τῆς ἀπωλείας (John 17:12)	“Son of perdition” / “son of destruction”	Literally bar-’onash in Aramaic
“Talitha Kumi”	ταλιθά κούμι (Mark 5:41)	“Little girl, I say to you, arise”	A normal Aramaic phrase
“Abba”	Ἀββᾶ (Mark 14:36; Romans 8:15)	“Father” / “Daddy”	Aramaic term of intimate address to God.
“Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani!”	Ἠλί, Ἠλί, λεμὰ σαβαχθανί; (Matt 27:46)	“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”	Psalms 22:1 אֱלִי אֱלִי לָמָּה עֲזַבְתָּנִי
“Son of Man” (bar enash)	υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου (Mark 2:10, et al.)	“Son of man”	Aramaic bar enash; literal translation into Greek

Thanks a lot!