

# I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist

## Session 9

### 1. Chapter 14: What did Jesus teach about the Bible?

- a. Woe to Hypocrites
  - i. Jesus taught with authority and had no tolerance for error.
  - ii. Since Jesus is God, and God cannot err, then whatever Jesus taught is true.
  - iii. Jesus taught that the Scriptures are true because they are the words of God.
- b. Jesus and the Old Testament
  - i. **Divinely Authoritative.**
    1. "it is written..." is used 92 times in the NT to appeal to the highest level of authority over any theological position or earthly dispute
    2. The Scriptures were viewed by Jesus and His Apostles as the ultimate authority
  - ii. **Imperishable**
    1. Not the smallest mark or letter in the Scriptures would ever pass away
    2. The Word of God stands forever, outlasting the heaven and the earth
    3. Jesus could not express the imperishability of the Scriptures more forcefully.
  - iii. **Infallible**
    1. The Scriptures cannot be broken (John 10:35)
    2. Jesus prayed to the Father, "Sanctify them by the truth; Your word is truth." (John 17:17).
    3. Recall that truth is a fact that is applied to all people at all times and in all situations. Truth can never be nullified.
  - iv. **Inerrant**
    1. "You are in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God (Matt. 22:29)
    2. This claim relies on the foundation that the Scriptures are without error / inerrant
  - v. **Historically Reliable**
    1. Jesus affirmed the two most disputed stories on the Old Testament and clearly referred to these men and their lives as being true accounts found in the Old Testament.
      - a. Noah (Matt. 24:37-38)
      - b. Jonah (Matt. 12:40)
    2. Jesus affirmed Daniel was a prophet, not a historian (Matt. 24:15)
    3. Isaiah was a single prophet and author of the book that bears his name (Matt. 7:6-7; 13:14-15; Luke 4:17-19; John 12:38-41)
  - vi. **Scientifically accurate**
    1. Man and woman were created with a specific purpose – biologically and reproductively.
    2. Creation of the universe (Gen 1; John 1:3).
  - vii. **Ultimate Supremacy**
    1. The word of God is supreme over the teachings and traditions of men (Matt. 15:3,6)

2. Jesus uses the Scriptures to correct the false claims and practices of men. When he rebukes the Pharisees and Jewish leaders in Matt. 23, He draws from every one of the 39 books and historical record of the Old Testament – from righteous Abel to Zechariah (Genesis 4 through Chronicles, the end of Jewish Old Testament history).
  3. Jesus and the Apostles quote the Old Testament with conviction that they are true and reliable accounts.
- c. Could Jesus have been wrong?
    - i. Jesus did not tolerate error
    - ii. He did not accommodate any false beliefs or practices
    - iii. Jesus' entire ministry was founded on the truths of Scripture (Luke 24)
    - iv. To charge Jesus with error is to charge God the Father with error, because Jesus said He only spoke what the Father told Him to speak (John 8:28; 17:8, 14)
    - v. Jesus is God; He cannot lie or be in error. Therefore, whatever He teaches is true.
  - d. Other evidence supporting the Old Testament
    - i. Like the New Testament, the Old Testament is not an invented storyline
      1. It reveals Olympic-quality sinners as the protagonists of the story:
        - a. Adam
        - b. Noah
        - c. Abraham
        - d. Isaac
        - e. Jacob
        - f. Moses
        - g. Aaron
        - h. Saul
        - i. David
        - j. Solomon
        - k. Kings and priests of the Judah and Ephraim
      2. Independent, non-biblical sources confirm Israel's history and the basic storyline presented in the Old Testament
  - e. Is the New Testament also divinely authoritative, imperishable, infallible, inerrant, historically reliable, scientifically accurate, and does it hold ultimate supremacy in the same way as Jesus taught about the Old Testament?
    - i. Jesus promised that He would send the Holy Spirit to lead His followers into all truth (John 14:25-26; John 16:12-13)
    - ii. The New Testament canon is the result of the Holy Spirit ensuring that God's truths were communicated about the New Testament church and the New Testament itself.
    - iii. Jesus Christ is the chief cornerstone who has built His church on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets (Eph. 2:20)
    - iv. The church devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching (Acts 2:42)
    - v. The apostles are from God (1 John 4:6)
    - vi. Paul claims that his words are "taught by the Spirit" (1 Cor. 2:10, 13)
    - vii. Paul's writings are the Lord's command (1 Cor. 14:37)
    - viii. Paul tells us that the gospel he preaches did not come from man, but by direct revelation of God (Gal. 1:11-12)
    - ix. Paul's letters are the word of God (1 Thes. 2:13)

- x. Paul quotes Luke and Matthew as “Scripture” with the same divine authority as Deuteronomy (1 Tim. 5:18; Luke 10:7; Matt. 10:10)
  - xi. Peter claims that Paul’s letters are Scripture (2 Pet. 3:15-16)
  - xii. Peter says that no word of Scripture came by the prophet’s own interpretation but men spoke on behalf of God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit (2 Pet. 1:16-21)
  - xiii. The apostle’s ministry and writing of Scripture was accompanied by their ability to perform miracles by the will of God (Acts 1:22; 1 Cor. 9:1)
  - xiv. Signs, wonders and miracles were a regular part of Paul’s ministry (2 Cor. 12:12)
- f. Discovering the Canon
- i. According to Jesus, the only books that should be in the New Testament (Scripture) are those that are authored and / or confirmed by His apostles with accompanying signs (Mark 16:20; John 14:26; 15:26-27; 16:13-15; 17:14-19).
  - ii. The church discovered which books God intended to be included in the New Testament, they did not make the determination on their own authority.
  - iii. The New Testament book did not derive authority because they were selected, each book was authoritative before being gathered together into a completed canon.
  - iv. The questions for inclusion were – Who were the apostles of Jesus Christ, and what did they write?
    - 1. The early church fathers had no difficulty discovering which books met this criteria and which ones did not, with the exception of Philemon, 3 John and James. The rest were known to have been written by apostles or their associates who had authority to write for them.
    - 2. The apostles were known to have their ministries confirmed by miracles which then served to authenticate that they had in fact written Scripture
    - 3. The canon was easily known to the church because there was an unbroken chain of testimony from the apostles to the church fathers.
      - a. Polycarp (69-155) was John’s disciple (lived the longest of all apostles)
      - b. Irenaeus (130-202) was Polycarp’s disciple
      - c. Polycarp and Irenaeus directly quote from 23 of the 27 New Testament books and treat them as having the full authority as Scripture. In some cases they make explicit statements about their authority from God.
      - d. Irenaeus explicitly confirms the authorship of the four gospels.
      - e. Papias (60-120) also affirmed Matthew and Mark authorship.
      - f. No scholar seriously doubts the major letters that Paul wrote.
    - 4. The major writings of the New Testament were immediately affirmed as Scripture, and most of the New Testament was accepted as authoritative by 200 A.D. All of the remaining works were recognized as Scripture, with divine authorship, by the Council of Hippo in 393. See Table 14.2 (pg. 369)
  - v. Christianity was considered illegal until 313 A.D., so those few minor writings were not recognized until the church could legally assemble and weigh the evidence for or against the remaining them.
  - vi. In the end, the 27 books we have in the New Testament are the only ones the church fathers used and referenced as authoritative. Once they had a chance to discover the truth about each, they were easily accepted in the canon.
- g. How can the Bible be inerrant?
- i. Logical premise
    - 1. God cannot err

2. The Bible is the word of God
3. Therefore, the Bible cannot err
- ii. The Bible self-identifies as the Word of God
- iii. The Bible tells us God cannot err.
- iv. If the Bible erred in anything it affirms, then God would be mistaken. But God cannot make mistakes.
- v. When we think we have found errors or contradictions, it is most often a misunderstanding of the text, not an error. There are a limited number of human errors in the manuscript copies of the Bible, but these are easily identifiable as copying errors and do not affect the doctrines of faith for which we have clear evidence in undisputed passages.
- vi. Four major interpretive errors humans make when reading (criticizing) Scripture
  1. Assuming divergent accounts are contradictory (one angel or blind man vs. two)
  2. Failing to understand the context of the passage (The fool has said in his heart, there is no God Ps. 14:1)
  3. Presuming that the Bible approves of all that it records (polygamy, lies of Satan)
  4. Forgetting that the Bible is a book co-authored by humans and their characteristics. The writers were human composers who employed their own literary styles and idiosyncrasies into their writings. Recording sun rises and sun sets is clearly from a human perspective, and also based on the knowledge they had available to them at the time. Even today, knowing what we know, all people, including scientists and meteorologists on the local news still speak of sunrise and sunsets.
- vii. Objections to Inerrancy
  1. Humans err, so the Bible must be in err. But fallible people write factual books without errors in them all the time. Fallible people, guided by the Holy Spirit, are certainly capable of writing Scripture without any errors.
  2. Inerrancy could be proven wrong if someone could directly trace a real error back to the original writing of the Holy Spirit inspired writer. But, after 2,000 years, not one irreconcilable error has been found.
  3. Even if some real error could be found, the basic storyline, including the accounts of miracles, have all been confirmed by independent sources including non-Christian historians and by archeological discoveries. Christianity is still true beyond any reasonable doubt even if a few errors could be found (they won't).
  4. Unlike other worldviews, Christianity can be proven or falsified based on objective historical investigation. The problem for skeptics and critics is that all the historical evidence points to the truth of the Resurrection and thus all of the New Testament facts are also confirmed (Jesus is God, He was raised from the dead to offer eternal life to all who believe in Him).
  5. It is the critic who actually maintains an unfalsifiable position. How much more evidence would have to be amassed for them to accept the claims of Christianity?
- h. Conclusion and summary
  - i. Truth about reality is knowable
  - ii. The opposite of true is false
  - iii. A theistic God must exist
    1. Cosmological argument

2. Teleological argument (Anthropic principle, design and interdependence of all life)
3. Moral Law
- iv. Miracles are not only possible, but are a necessity since we in fact exist
- v. The New Testament has been proven to be historically reliable
- vi. The New Testament presents Jesus as God, the Son.
- vii. Jesus' claim to be God was confirmed by:
  1. Fulfillment of prophecies written about Him hundreds of years before His birth
  2. His sinless life and the miracles He performed
  3. His predicted death, burial and resurrection
- viii. Therefore, Jesus is God
- ix. Whatever Jesus teaches is true for God cannot lie or err
- x. Jesus taught that the Bible is the Word of God
- xi. Therefore, the Bible is the inerrant Word of God. Anything that contradicts or opposes the Bible must be false
- xii. The revelation of Judaism is true, but is not complete in light of the Resurrection
- xiii. The revelation of Islam has some truth, but it has fundamental errors that contradict the Bible, and thus cannot be true in all that it teaches, especially when it contradicts both the Old and New Testaments.
- xiv. Only the revelation of Christianity is true, as it is attested to by the completed and inerrant Word of God.
- i. Could all of this be wrong? Perhaps, but do you have enough faith to believe that all of the facts presented are wrong? In short, do you have enough faith to believe any other worldview in light of the completed box top you now have?

## **2. Chapter 15: The Judge, the Servant King and the Box Top**

- a. A righteous judge must punish the lawbreaker. God must punish sin or He could not be just.
  - i. Sin must be punished, but a substitute can willingly choose to pay the penalty for sin instead of the sinner. The substitute must be sinless in order to accomplish true justice.
  - ii. All humans have sinned. The only available substitute is God Himself, taking the form and likeness of man, to pay the penalty for sinful man as a man Himself (substitutionary atonement).
  - iii. Jesus is the only way of salvation because there is only way God can reconcile his requirement for infinite justice and His infinite love for mankind. If there was any other way to accomplish this, then Christ died in vain.
  - iv. God offers His love and forgiveness of sins as a free gift, but He does not force anyone to accept this gift. The gift of salvation must be freely chosen by each person who desires to receive God's forgiveness and love.
- b. The Servant King
  - i. The Kenosis (Phil 2:5-11)
  - ii. The Box Top of Life
    1. Origin: where did we come from? – We are created and made in the image of God Himself (Gen. 1:27; Ps. 139:14)
    2. Identity: who are we? - Created beings of supreme worth to our Creator. We are loved by God who has given us rights and responsibilities (John 3:16-18; 1:12; Gal. 4:5)
    3. Meaning: why are we here? – to bring God glory, to live according to His will, and to be prepared to live in eternity with Him (Isa. 43:7; John 15:8)

- a. Accepting the ransom Jesus paid on our behalf (Mark 10:45; 1 Tim 2:6; Heb. 9:15; Luke 16:9; John 14:2)
    - b. Serving as ambassadors for Christ to reveal Him to those who have not yet received Him (2 Cor. 5:17-21; Matt. 28:19)
    - c. Counting our own sufferings as all joy, and comfort others who are also suffering (2 Cor. 4:15-5:1; 2 Pet. 1:5-11; James 1:2-4)
  - 4. Morality: how shall we live? – Fear God and keep His commandments in faith (Eccles. 12:13-14)
  - 5. Destiny: where are we going? – He has offered salvation freely to all who will believe in Him through faith (John 3:16; Eph. 2:8-9; Rev. 22:17). This cannot be earned through any good work and it is not based on merit (Eph. 2:8-9)
- c. Individual destinies:
  - i. Suppressing the truth and living as if He did not exist is a choice everyone has in this life. He will not force anyone to receive His salvation or His love.
  - ii. You can reject Christ, but you cannot honestly say there's not enough evidence to believe in Him.
  - iii. There are only two kinds of people (C.S. Lewis)
    - 1. Those who say to God, "Thy will be done."
    - 2. Those to whom God will say, "Thy will be done."
  - iv. All that inhabit hell have chosen that incomprehensibly terrible place as their eternal destiny. It was never God's plan or choice for them to be there.
  - v. By contrast, all who seek the Lord earnestly through faith will find eternal rest and joy by being ever present with the God.
  - vi. Jesus spoke on (warned of) hell more than He spoke about heaven.
  - vii. Annihilation is not an option for unbelievers. God will not destroy those that have been made in His image. Hell is simply the place God created for Satan and the fallen angels to quarantine evil, which is contagious.
  - viii. Regardless if it comes from general or special revelation, those who believe in God and seek His goodness will receive all of God's love and grace that He desires to show them (Heb. 11:6).
  - ix. God wants everyone to be saved (2 Pet. 3:9)
  - x. C.S. Lewis – "If you are worried about people on the outside, the most unreasonable thing you can do is to remain on the outside yourself."
  - xi. Without hell, injustices would never be righted, free choices would not be respected, and the greater good of redemption could never be accomplished. If there is no heaven to seek and no hell to shun, then nothing in the universe has any ultimate meaning. Without heaven and hell, this incredibly designed universe is just a stairway to nowhere.
  - xii. Choices in life matter, and life does indeed have an ultimate meaning.
  - xiii. Do you have enough faith to believe anything else?