

Apologetics How to Know What We Know Truth and the Bible

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Welcome

In the next four weeks we are going to scratch the surface of the topic known as apologetics. This is not four weeks learning how to apologize for what we believe about Jesus Christ. Not hardly. Nor shall we be learning how to argue and debate others about our faith.

Basically, we are going to learn how to fish more effectively. It's all about bait presentation and we have competition from someone who uses false lures that promise nothing, and he has no intent of ever releasing his catches. We only use the real thing as bait, and we catch, He cleans and releases.

Warning: do not get sucked into cleaning the pond.

Ground Rules

- Questions? Please write them down.
- You can give them to us before you leave or
- Email them to kenb@calvarychurchfl.com
- Depending on the question, I will either send you an answer, send an answer to everyone, or talk about it next week.
- Warning: This class is not fully comprehensive.

This is also not a memory course where we learn snappy comebacks to common questions. I have learned over the years that no one question is common, they are all unique to the individual who is asking.

In some cases, the question is asked as a lead in to defame us and our Lord. In other cases, they ask because they do not know any better.

Then there are those who are genuinely wanting to know what it is you believe and why. Then there are those who will ask questions and go nowhere. And then there are those who just want to attack.

My goal is to help us understand that “apologetics specifically serves to show to unbelievers the truth of the Christian faith, to confirm that faith to believers, and to reveal and explore the connections between Christian doctrine and other truths. As a theoretical discipline, then, apologetics is not training in the art of answering questions, or debating, or evangelism, though all of these draw upon the science of apologetics and apply it practically. This means that a course in apologetics is not for the purpose of teaching you “If he says so-and-so, then you say such-and-such back.” Apologetics, to repeat, is a theoretical discipline that tries to answer the question, What rational defense can be given for the Christian faith? Therefore, most of our time must be spent in trying to answer this question.” (Craig 1994, XI)

In this class, we will scratch the surface as this is not intended to be a deep dive.

Where do we get the term apologetics from?

It comes from the Greek word apologetikos which we see in 1 Peter 3:14 – 17.

1 Peter 3:14–17

“But even if you should suffer for the sake of righteousness, you are blessed. AND DO NOT FEAR THEIR INTIMIDATION, AND DO NOT BE IN DREAD, but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, **always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, but with gentleness and respect**; and keep a good conscience so that in the thing in which you are slandered, those who disparage your good behavior in Christ will be put to shame. For it is better, if God should will it so, that you suffer for doing what is right rather than for doing what is wrong.” (NASB 2020)

ἀπολογία (apologia) - a speech of defense, defense, reply. (Arndt, et al. 2000, 117)

The key idea is that we as believers, need to be prepared to make a defense to whoever asks about the hope within us. The hard part though is to be able to do so with gentleness and respect.

The way some of the questions come across at times requires us to keep the flesh at bay.

At the end of the day, this rules out thug evangelism, turn or burn evangelism, one upmanship or being a troll for Jesus. But it is about evangelism.

It is not learning how to argue with someone about our faith, but to listen, answering questions, and asking questions. We are simply being salt and light to those who need to know about who it is we love and serve.

Learning to know what we know, and then be able to use that practically, in other words, apologetics; helps us to become healthy sheep and participate more in the Great Commission.

Mark 16:15

“And He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation.” (NASB 2020)

My goal over the next four weeks is to help provide a small bit of framework so those discussions can take place when someone asks questions and happens to be in our corner of the world. This is not an if proposition.

This study will make our heads hurt and our hearts ache.

Our Road Map

- Week 1 – **What is truth and how can we know that the Bible really is God’s word?**
- Week 2 – God – How do we know He exists and that our God is THE God?
- Week 3 – Jesus Christ – Who is He, is He God and did He really rise from the dead?
- Week 4 – Why am I here, how should I live and where am I going...ultimately? And other stuff.

Truth and the Bible How do we really know? The Problem with Truth

Why the big deal about truth? Your view of truth derives from your worldview. The twisting of truth begins with a lie with the desired outcome of causing us to question God’s word. The enemy still uses this tactic today. The lie then can become a wedge between God and His creation.

“The lie” changed the worldview of Adam and Eve and is part of the problem today. Worldview? What is that?

Whether you realize it or not, in times of trouble, your worldview is your most treasured possession—arguably your only treasured possession. Why? Because it’s pulling your strings. It’s controlling how you see and react to whatever is vexing you. (Guillen, PhD 2021, xvii)

My worldview is _____

The idea is to grow a Biblical worldview.

What about “the lie?” Where did this come from?

Genesis 3:1–4

“Now the serpent was more cunning than any animal of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, “Has God really said, ‘You shall not eat from any tree of the garden?’” The woman said to the serpent, “From the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat; but from the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, God has said, ‘You shall not eat from it or touch it, or you will die.’ ” The serpent said to the woman, “**You certainly will not die!**” (NASB 2020)

LIE!

That was a lie, and it was aimed directly at God’s word. First a bit about truth because the basis of our faith involves a reliance on the reality of the truthfulness of God’s word. It begins with the realization that at some point, we were all slaves to the lie.

Jesus pointed to this event in Genesis 3 in His discussion with the pharisees about what it was that was motivating them to act and say what they did.

The pharisees had their own definition of what was truth, driven by their worldview.

John 8:44–47

“**You are the children of your father, the Devil, and you want to follow your father’s desires.** From the very beginning he was a murderer and has never been on the side of truth, because there is no truth in him. When he tells a lie, he is only doing what is natural to him, because he is a liar and the father of all lies. But I tell the truth, and that is why you do not believe me. Which one of you can prove that I am guilty of sin? If I tell the truth, then why do you not believe me? He who comes from God listens to God’s words. **You, however, are not from God, and that is why you will not listen.**” (GNB)

This is a key point; unbelievers are biased not to listen.

Psalm 31:5

“Into Your hand I entrust my spirit; You have redeemed me, **LORD, God of truth.**” (NASB 2020)

God has “attributes” or qualities that make God GOD and without which He could not exist and could not be distinguished from anything else. These attributes cannot be applied to any other being. They belong only to God. Thus it is only by virtue of God’s essential attributes that we can distinguish Him from the world and from the false gods of the heathen. (Morey 1989, 152)

One of the attributes of God, is that He is truth. Jesus made that clear in three declarative statements to His disciple Thomas.

John 14:6

“Jesus said to him, “**I am** the way, and **the truth**, and the life; no one comes to the Father except through Me.” (NASB 2020)

The pharisees had reached the point of defining their own truth and then believing that. They had their own version of truth. True truth no longer existed since they had begun to believe lies.

This truth problem also took place earlier in Judah (Isaiah 59:14 – 15) oh and is evident all around us today. Thus, the issue is still about truth.

Isaiah 59:14–15

“Justice is driven away, and right cannot come near. Truth stumbles in the public square, and honesty finds no place there. There is so little honesty that those who stop doing evil find themselves the victims of crime.” (GNB)

Those in Judah had their own version of truth, and it did not involve the Torah, God’s Word. When you remove the yardstick for truth, you are in trouble.

In the Judah of Isaiah’s day, truth was at risk; we learn the following about what the conditions were at the time of Isaiah’s writing; “moral absolutes have disappeared (14ab), public morality has collapsed (14cd) and individual moral character is under threat (15ab).” (Motyer 1996, 491)

Without the existence of objective truth, then all truth becomes subjective. For us today, the Bible is our baseline of objective truth.

The conditions of Judah, circa 700 BC seem to also be the conditions we see around us today, circa 2021 AD.

When we use the term moral absolutes, which implies that there is objective truth, we are using a term foreign to the 21st century. It was also foreign in 700BC.

Judah had rejected objective truth, thrown out moral absolutism, embraced relativism, rejected God’s word as being foundational objective truth and did whatever the culture and the situation they found themselves in said was ok to do.

What is Moral Absolutism?

Moral absolutism is the philosophy that mankind is subject to absolute standards of conduct that do not change with circumstances, the intent of the acting agent, or the result of the act. These standards are universal to all humanity despite culture or era, and they maintain their relevance whether or not an individual or a culture values them. It is never appropriate to break a law which is based on one of these absolutes. Moral absolutism does not dictate which acts are moral or immoral, however, merely that absolute morality does exist. (Got Questions Ministries 2002-2013)

For example, lying is always wrong, no matter the reason for the lie. Today we do not say someone lied; we say they misspoke. God's opinion regarding truthfulness verses lying though has never changed.

Proverbs 12:22

“Lying lips are an abomination to the LORD, but those who act faithfully are his delight.” (ESV)

2700 years ago, the people of Judah were not following YAHWEH alone, but had added in other things as well. They were idolators, had a syncretistic theology, and they did not hold to moral absolutes but held to a form of relativism, like many around us today.

The most widely held moral view in our culture is called relativism. Relativism holds that societies and/or individuals decide what is right and wrong and that those values vary from culture to culture or person to person. There are no objective, universal moral truths—just conventions for behavior that are created by people for people and that are subject to change.” (Powell 2006, 72)

It would then follow that if there are no truths other than your truth, then only your truth is true truth, to you, but maybe not to me.

Lying becomes acceptable and normal behavior.

Relativism not only is unlivable, but it also turns out to be self-defeating or what philosophers call self-referentially absurd.

Consider the statement “There is no absolute truth; that is, there is nothing that is true for all people at all times in all places.”

“Ask the question, is that true? That is, is it true that there is no absolute truth?”

Does it hold for all people that there is nothing that holds for all people?

Is it the case for all people in all places at all times that there is nothing that is the case for all people in all places at all times?

Or is relativism merely my opinion? If it is my opinion, why should you accept it?

If, on the other hand, it is true that there is no truth, then the relativist has admitted that there is, in fact, something that is true for all people at all times in all places.” (Anderson 2021, 57)

If truth is relative, then no one is ever wrong—even when he is. As long as something is true to him, then he is right even when he is wrong. The drawback to this is that I could never learn anything, either, because learning is moving from a false belief to a true one—that is, from an absolutely false belief to an absolutely true one. (Geisler 2002, 121)

What about the truthfulness of Word of God then?

It is an important principle to remember, in the contemporary interest in communication and in language study, that the biblical presentation is that though we do not have exhaustive truth, we have from the Bible what I term “true truth.” In this way we know true truth about God, true truth about man, and something truly about nature. Thus on the basis of the Scriptures, while we do not have exhaustive knowledge, we have true and unified knowledge. (Schaeffer 1982, 218-219)

The Bible is true truth. All of it. Even the parts you don't like.

But the worldview of most today does not accept this.

We will come back to this. But there is one more thing about truth and relativism.

Relativism leads to situational ethics. “Situational ethics is a particular view of moral ethics that holds that the morality of an act is determined by its context. Situational ethics states that if there is a right and wrong, it is merely determined by the desired outcome of the situation. Situational ethics is different from moral relativism in that moral relativism states that there is no right or wrong. Situational ethics envelopes a code of ethics in which meeting the needs of each situation determines what is right or wrong.” (Got Questions Ministries 2002-2013)

But one who holds a Biblical worldview would say that “God’s word though clearly states God is sovereign (1 Timothy 6:15). He is the creator (Genesis 1:1) and sustainer of His creation (Colossians 1:17). God’s word provides for how we should and should not act. He has not changed His mind. “All of God’s Word is true. To suggest that the Bible advocates situational ethics would be to imply that there are errors contained therein. That is not possible. It is not possible because of number 1, God is creator and sustainer.”” (Got Questions Ministries 2002-2013)

What About the Bible?

The Bible makes the claim that it is a book that comes from God. In our current culture, we would be correct in stating that the Bible has a source that is extraterrestrial, literally not of this world. It is 66 books written by 40 authors in three different languages over thousands of years with one unified theme...the redemption of mankind.

As believers, we should derive our worldview from the Bible. That is a problem today. Not all believers follow the Bible.

In fact, most people who say they are born again, do not have a Biblical worldview.

“...only half of the nation’s adult population (54%) believes that the Bible is the word of God. Even fewer – just four out of ten (41%) – believe that the Bible is totally true in all of its empirical and historical statements.

Stunningly, when comparing the current data with that from 2000, there has been 21 percentage point decline in the proportion of adults who believe the Bible is the word of God (from 75% to 54%) and a 17-point drop in the number who believe the Bible is without error (from 58% to 41%).

As a person’s trust in the Bible declines, so does the likelihood they will develop a biblical worldview. For example, “born-again” Christians constitute one-third of the population (33%) but less than one out of five holds a biblical worldview (19%), a figure that while low, is triple the national average (6%). Unsurprisingly, among “Spiritual Skeptics,” the fastest-growing faith segment in the nation (21%), less than one-half of one percent hold a biblical worldview. (Cultural Research Center Arizona Christian University 2020)

The Dominant Worldview Embraced by American Adults

Dominant Worldview	% of Adults
Biblical	6%
Secular	2%
Moralistic Therapeutic Deism	1%
Postmodernism	1%
Nihilism	1%
Eastern Mysticism	Less than ½ of 1%
Marxism	Less than ½ of 1%
Syncretism	88%
(Barna 2021)	

Let's cover some reasons from the Bible as to why the Bible is God's word. Some unbelievers may listen, most will not. Some believers may even challenge us. But we need to know this as there are some important points to remember.

2 Peter 1:20–21

“Above all, you must realize that no prophecy in Scripture ever came from the prophet's own understanding, or from human initiative. No, those prophets were moved by the Holy Spirit, and they spoke from God.” (NLT)

So, what is it about the Bible? Peter tells us that the message originates with God, He is the true source. Key point. When we use scripture as part of our discussion, we are using God's word and He promises to stand behind that word (Hebrews 4:12). The Holy Spirit is the one who will show the person you are talking to the truth of what you are saying.

2 Timothy 3:16

“All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right.” (NLT)

Paul says it becomes the written Word of God. God is the ultimate Cause, and the Scriptures are the authoritative result. (Geisler 2002, 230)

Key point – Scripture is true truth from God.

Well, that's all fine and good for the New Testament, but what about the Old Testament.

Deuteronomy 18:15–22

“Instead, he will send you a prophet like me from among your own people, and you are to obey him. On the day that you were gathered at Mount Sinai, you begged not to hear the LORD speak again or to see his fiery presence any more, because you were afraid you would die. So the LORD said to me, ‘They have made a wise request. I will send them a prophet like you from among their own people; I will tell him what to say, and he will tell the people everything I command. He will speak in my name, and I will punish anyone who refuses to obey him. But if any prophet dares to speak a message in my name when I did not command him to do so, he must die for it, and so must any prophet who speaks in the name of other gods.’ “You may wonder how you can tell when a prophet's message does not come from the LORD. If a prophet speaks in the name of the LORD and what he says does not come true, then it is not the LORD's message. That prophet has spoken on his own authority, and you are not to fear him.” (GNB)

David attested to speaking the words of God (2 Samuel 23:2)

God, when speaking to Isaiah, told Him “...My words which I have put in your mouth...” (Isaiah 59:21b, NASB 2020)

God told Ezekiel very clearly to “go to the house of Israel and speak with My words to them...” (Ezekiel 3:4b, NASB 2020)

The mere fact that the Bible claims to be the Word of God does not prove that it is such, for there are other books that make similar claims. The difference is that the Scriptures contain indisputable evidence as being the Word of God. (McDowell and Stewart 1993)

A study of the various prophecies in the Old Testament alone from a statistical perspective, is hard to refute. We will talk a bit more about this.

What we see is this, “The biblical text was produced by men who lived in the ancient Near East and Mediterranean between the second millennium BC and the first century AD. To understand how biblical writers thought, we need to tap into the intellectual output of that world. A vast amount of that material is

available to us, thanks to modern technology. As our understanding of the worldview of the biblical writers grows, so does our understanding of what they intended to say—and the mosaic of their thinking takes shape in our minds.” (Heiser 2015, 16)

We see that the book we call the Bible, “is the form of God’s Word that is available for study, for public inspection, for repeated examination, and as a basis for mutual discussion. It tells us about and points us to the Word of God as a person, namely Jesus Christ, whom we do not now have present in bodily form on earth.” (Grudem 2020, 34-35)

This is what we are commanded to study. The King of Israel was commanded to make a personal copy.

The king was called to “write for himself a copy of this law on a scroll in the presence of the Levitical priests” (Deuteronomy 17:18 NASB). By copying the covenant anew, each king of Israel would engage in a sacred act that would produce a sacred artifact. Through this act and artifact, every king of Israel would participate anew in Yahweh’s covenant with Israel. This personal copy of the covenant would serve as a working document to direct every judgment that the king handed down. The same words that once thundered from the peak of Mount Sinai would rest at king’s fingertips to mold his life and his leadership. The result would be a leader who feared God, submitted to God’s instruction, enacted God’s statutes, and taught his sons to do the same (17:19–20).” (Jones 2016, 87-88)

The idea is that the Kings would find themselves meditating and obeying the Lord.

Psalm 1:1–2

“How blessed is the one who does not follow the advice of the wicked, or stand in the pathway with sinners, or sit in the assembly of scoffers! Instead he finds pleasure in obeying the LORD’s commands; he meditates on his commands day and night.” (NET)

As it pertains to the Bible, “It is for the objector to show them spurious; for on him, by the plainest rules of law, lies the burden of proof.” (Greenleaf, L.L.D. 1847, Kindle Location 641)

Our Doctrinal Premise

We believe that the entire Bible is the inspired Word of God and that it is without error. It is the final authority for faith and life.

We believe in the verbal, plenary, infallible, unlimited inerrancy of the Bible.

Some Definitions

- Verbal inspiration
 - The very words are inspired by God
- Plenary
 - The whole Bible, all 66 books written by 40 authors
 - Completely, every part of the words and all they teach or imply
- Infallible
 - The words are the exact words God wanted
 - This includes the exact letters and numbers

Jesus of Nazareth regarded the Old Testament copies of his day so approximate to and identical with the prophetic writings that he rebuked religious leaders with the warning, “Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures” (Matt. 22:29, KJV), and appealed to the Word of God as authoritative in its objective written form of the then-existing scrolls. The factor of human error in copying and translating the autographs justifies the critical search and demand for the best available texts. Translations and paraphrases may be said to be infallible only to the extent that they faithfully represent the copies available to us. (Henry 1999, 14)

- Authoritative
 - Every word is authoritative
 - Every place name
 - Every phrase
 - Every number
 - The Bible is the final word
- Unlimited inerrancy
 - The Bible is fully inspired of God
 - There is no error
- The major theme is redemption

Themes of the Bible

- Creation
 - Genesis 1 – 2
- The Fall
 - Genesis 3 – 11
- Redemption
 - Genesis 11 – Revelation 20
- Re-creation
 - Revelation 21-22

Fulfilled Prophecy

One of the internal pieces of evidence we have in scripture regarding the infallibility of the scriptures and attesting to their supernatural origin of this being God's word is the evidence of fulfilled prophecy. (Brown 2021)

There are at least 20 prophecies to be found between Isaiah 52: 13 and 53:12. The notes provide for the source verse of the prophecy and the fulfillment of the prophecy as well as a detailed bibliography for additional research.

Ezekiel 26 predicted the fall of Tyre. Tyre was originally a city on the coast of what is today Lebanon. They were attacked by Babylon and withstood a 13-year siege, they moved their operations to an island offshore out of reach of Nebuchadnezzar.

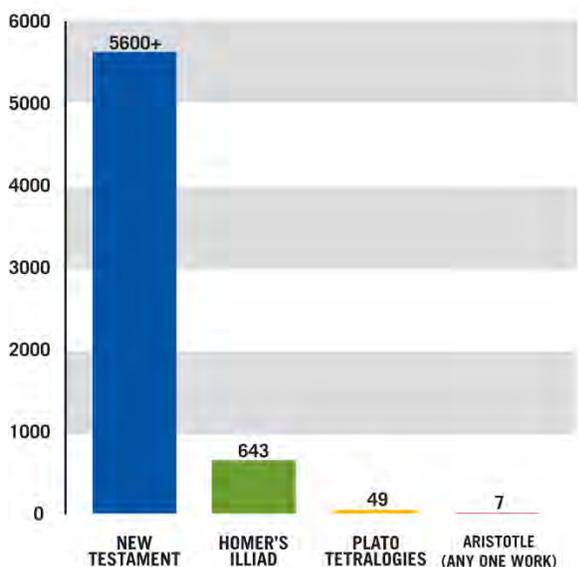
Ezekiel predicted that others would try to conquer Tyre but that eventually Tyre would indeed fall. Ezekiel 26:12 said the city, would be thrown into the sea. Alexander the Great, upon arriving at Tyre and unable to take the island, used the ruins of the old coastal city of Tyre to build a causeway to the island and then conquered it.

Then there is the extraordinary number of manuscripts, parchments, scrolls and fragments that we have of both the old and new testament books. Looking at the New Testament, "according to their (INTTR) tally from January 2017: minuscules = 2,937; majuscules (uncials) = 323; papyri = 131; lectionaries = 2,465 for a total of 5,856. The official number of 5,856 requires some revision, however. One should deduct MSS that have gone missing, those that have been destroyed, and those that have been discovered to be a part of a known MS. (McDowell and McDowell, Evidence That Demands a Verdict: Life-Changing Truth for a Skeptical World 2017, 48)

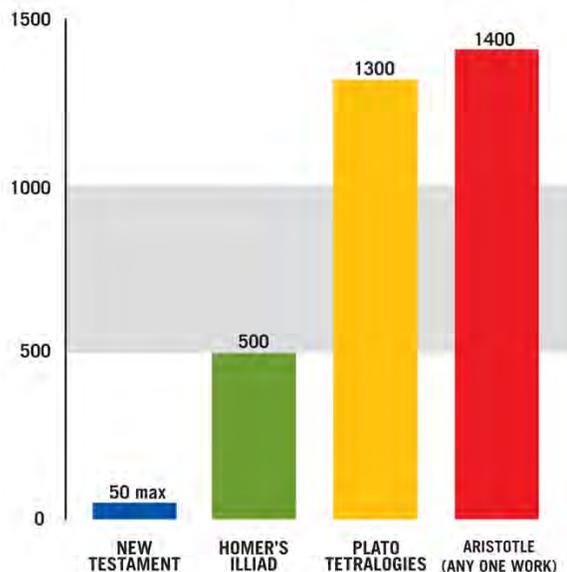
I have included the source for that number, which is constantly changing, in your notes. (Institut für Neutestamentliche Textforschung, INTF 2007)

When you compare the overall source document evidence with that of other ancient writings, the difference becomes rather stark.

NUMBER OF ORIGINAL LANGUAGE MANUSCRIPTS



SPAN OF YEARS BETWEEN COMPOSITION AND OLDEST COPY



(McDowell, Evidence that Demands a Verdict 1992)

The Old Testament was translated into Greek in the mid-third century BC. “The earliest source of information on the origin of the LXX Pentateuch is the Alexandrian Jewish philosopher, Aristobulus (c. 170 BC), the surviving fragments of whose writings have in recent years been proved authentic. Aristobulus asserts that a translation of the Law was made in the reign of Ptolemy II Philadelphus (285–247 BC), and we have no reason to doubt it.” (Martin and Millard 1996, 1169)

Then there is the discovery of the Dead Sea scrolls.

Isaiah Scroll



Isaiah Scroll “A,” one of the Dead Sea Scrolls from the Qumran caves, open to columns 32 (right) and 33, Isaiah 38:8–40:28. (Achtemeier, Harper & Row and Society of Biblical Literature 1985, 1168)

For more information:

(Israel Antiquities Authority 2022)

(The Dorot Foundation Dead Sea Scrolls Information and Study Center 1995 - 2022)

(The Dead Sea Scrolls, The Ancient Library of Qumran and Modern Scholarship 2022)

Why are the Dead Sea Scrolls important to the Christian faith?

FLINT: The Dead Sea Scrolls are the greatest find of our time. They affect our understanding of the Bible and they confirm the accuracy of Scripture. They enhance our understanding of Jesus and help us interpret the New Testament. The past can be confusing, but if one understands the relevance of the Scrolls to the Christian faith, it is quite illuminating. One example of this illumination is the Great Isaiah Scroll. In many ways, the scroll affects the Christian faith and our understanding of the Bible. The Great Isaiah Scroll contains more than 25% of all the biblical text among the Dead Sea Scrolls. It is almost completely preserved. Virtually every part of all 66 chapters of Isaiah are found in the Great Isaiah Scroll. (Barry 2010, 110-111)

...the Bible is truthful and reliable in every area in which it is possible to investigate: its historical, archeological, cultural, scientific, and geographical claims; its textual coherence and the accuracy of its transmission down through the ages; the precision with which its many hundreds of prophecies have

been fulfilled; its accuracy in explaining human nature as we experience it; and its ability to meet people's deepest emotional needs. (Story 1999, 52)

What's more, the Bible's historic authenticity is corroborated by a great deal of archaeological evidence. As of June 2017, according to Lawrence Mykytiuk, a renowned expert in Hebrew and Semitic Studies, science has confirmed the existence existence and time stamps of at least fifty-three people in the Old Testament alone; and the number continues to increase. (Guillen, PhD 2021, 162)

We are at war with an unseen enemy who has all of the questions to prevent someone from coming to the Lord. We need to simply accept the Bible and what it says as true and do so without lensing everything through lies and myths. Most of what we believe about hell comes from Dante and not the Bible.

Bible reading is not Bible study, and that truly understanding much of the Bible requires seeing it in its original context, not filtering it through a familiar tradition. (Heiser, I Dare You Not to Bore Me with the Bible 2014, X)

A lot of what Christians imagine to be true about the unseen world isn't. Angels don't have wings. (Cherubim don't count because they are never called angels and are creaturely. Angels are always in human form.) Demons don't sport horns and a tail, and they aren't here to make us sin (we do that just fine on our own). And while the Bible describes demonic possession in rightfully awful ways, intelligent evil has more sinister things to do than make sock puppets out of people. And on top of that, angels and demons are minor players. Church never seems to get to the big boys and their agenda. (Heiser, Supernatural: What the Bible Teaches about the Unseen World - And Why It Matters 2015, 19)

We have talked about truth which then leads us to the truthfulness of the Bible. College courses exist on the topic of the Bible as well as truth and the subject of apologetics. We are scratching the surface.

Next week - God – How do we know He exists and that our God is THE God?

The Suffering Servant Prophecy
(Brown, The UnSafe Bible 2021)
(Brown, The UnSafe Bible 2021)
(Brown, The UnSafe Bible 2021)
(Brown, The UnSafe Bible 2021)

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