

HOW CAN WE TRUST THE BIBLE?

As a church we agree with the EA statement of faith in which it states:

WE BELIEVE IN...

The divine inspiration and supreme authority of the Old and New Testament Scriptures, which are the written Word of God -fully trustworthy for faith and conduct.

WHY IS IT SO IMPORTANT?

The declaration that the Bible is divinely Inspired, Infallible and inerrant is foundational to our faith.

Without its trustworthiness, truth and accuracy our agreements and reasoning carry little meaning

- **INSPIRATION** deals with the origin of the Bible. Christians believe that “God breathed out” the words of the Bible using human writers as the vehicle. (See 2 Tim. 3:16-17)
- **INFALLIBLE** means that something is incapable of failing and therefore is permanently binding and cannot be broken. (see 1 Pet. 1:23-25)
- **INERRANCY**, simply means that *the Bible is without error*. It’s a belief in the “total truthfulness and reliability of God’s words” (Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, Inter-Varsity, 2004, 90). This inerrancy encompasses historical and scientific statements as well salvation.

We now turn to our helpful framework.

RECOGNISING THE MESSAGE

What worldviews negatively influence the trustworthiness of the Bible?

- **RELATIVISM** – The belief that there no absolute truths. Truth is not found in God, instead it is found, or created, within the individual, who defines for themselves what is true. Therefore, truth can be changed and moulded.
- **EMPIRICISM** - Empiricism is often related to science with an emphasis on evidence, through experimentation.

So when we recognise the prevailing worldviews we can begin to reveal the strengths they contain, and then begin to addresses their weaknesses and errors.

REVEALING THE TRUTH

RELATIVISM - If it is claimed that truth is relative and there is no absolute truth, can that statement be absolutely true?

If the response is yes, then there must be absolute truth, and if no, then how can we define whose truth is truth, if at all?

In this worldview it is held that truth is defined by reality and experience – we would agree!

- We can use the reality around us that points us to the reliability of the bible
- We can draw on the experiences of countless people who claim to have experienced the Bible to be true.

EMPIRICISM - There are there scientific methods we can apply, or experimentations we can use to help us find evidence to support the claim that the Bible is trustworthy and inerrant?

REASONING

For the Bible to be trust worthy it must be **accurate, reliable** and **relevant**.

Accuracy - The message first written by the author is the message we have in our Bible's.

We can verify this by the 'Date & Copy' method looking at similar aged documents

- **Plato's – The Republic** – 400BC / Earliest Copy 9th Century = 1300 Year gap – 7 Copies
- **Julia Caesar – Gallic Wars** – 100BC / Earliest copy 9th Century = 1000 Year gap – 10 Copies
- **Homer – Iliad** – 800BC / Earliest Copy 400BC = 400 Year gap – 643 Copies
- **THE New Testament** – 50-100 AD / Earliest copy 125AD = 25 Year gap - 24,000 copies in Greek, Latin & Other languages with a 99.5% accuracy to one another
- **Old Testament** completed 400BC / Earliest copy 1st Century BC / 300 Year gap – which were 95% accurate to those from a 1000 years later and most of those discrepancies were spellings (E.g. John & Jon)

The Bible is the most accurately preserved and verified document of the ancient world.

Reliability

The Bible is made up of multiple genres, History, Biographies, Letters, Poetry, prophetic and more. So not all of it is literal. To read 'symbolism' as 'literal' would be wrong. It is often from this idea that many think science and Christianity are at odds. But that's just not the case.

- The Bible has explained 1000's of years ahead what only recent scientists have discovered with the use of modern technology.
- The Bible has been proven accurate in the realms of physics, astronomy, genetics, geology, meteorology, oceanography, epidemiology, pathology, ecology, biology, zoology and more.
- Archaeology findings have proven its reliability
- There are an additional 39 extra-biblical sources that attest to more than 100 facts regarding the life and teachings of Jesus.
- There are numerous first and second-century extra-biblical writings that witness to the fact that Christians believed that Christ did extraordinary things, died on a cross, and rose from the grave.
- There is more evidence for Jesus than any other person from this period both from within and outside the Bible.

Relevance

The Bible provides insights to the big questions of life - What happens when I die? Is there any purpose to life? It answers these questions, provides wisdom, comfort, reveals God, His love, Nature, Character, Plans and purposes for Humanity in and through His son Jesus.

Isaiah 53 was written as a piece of prophetic literature 700 years before Christ, and yet it spells out in detail what we see recorded in the four gospels of Jesus' crucifixion.

From looking to the evidence and seeing the accuracy, reliability and relevance of the Bible, we can be sure we have a trustworthy document. It claims to be inspired, infallible and inerrant, and testifies to Jesus as the, "The Way, The Truth & The Life", - what will we make of this Jesus?

REINFORCE

Today has been like a whistle-stop tour, in which we have pointed to the locations, but haven't had much time to stop and look around.

As life-groups and individuals we really encourage you over the next month to Reinforce this topic in study together, or on your own through the resources on the website.