

INTRODUCTION

This is the year of the Bible, and I hope you get to know the Bible better. Over the next couple of Sundays we are going to examine the issue, "Can You Really Trust the Bible?" I suppose if I asked each of you this question, "Do you trust the Bible?" I would get a range of answers. They would range from all the way from some of you saying, "No question. I trust the Bible 100% as the Word of God!" And there may be some all the way on the other side who would say, "No, the Bible is a just an old book of stories written by people. You can't trust it because it's full of errors, anyway."

But many of you might be somewhere between those two extremes. You might be saying, "Yes, I believe the Bible, but I have some doubts about it. I have some unanswered questions when it comes to the Bible."

There are many Americans who make fun of the Bible. A sharp young college girl got on an airline flight with her Bible. After she started reading, the man next to her looked over and asked, "Is that the Bible?" She said, "It is." He said, "You don't believe all that stuff in the Bible, do you?" She said, "I certainly do." He said, "Now come on. You don't really believe that Jonah got swallowed by a whale for three days and still survived?" She said, "I believe it happened." He said, "So tell me HOW that could happen." She replied, "I don't know HOW it happened. I suppose I will just wait until I get to heaven and I'll ask Jonah myself." The man said, "Well, what if Jonah's not in heaven?" She looked at him and smiled and said, "Then YOU can ask him!" And he didn't bother her any more.

Have you ever been curious about exactly what Jesus had to say about the scriptures? Of course, when we talk about Jesus and the Bible, we're talking about the Old Testament scripture, because the New Testament hadn't been written yet. But what He said about the Old Testament certainly holds true for the entire Bible. Let's explore three things Jesus had to say about scripture.

1. JESUS CLAIMED THAT SCRIPTURE IS THE WORD OF GOD.

When Jesus walked and taught in Israel two thousand years ago, the Jewish people had access to the Torah, the books of Law, the Wisdom literature like Psalms and Proverbs, and they had the writings of the prophets. Jesus knew the scriptures so well that when He was just twelve years old He was asking questions of the wisest men in the Temple. The Bible says that these sages were astonished by His understanding and His answers. So apparently He was asking questions they couldn't answer, and then He would give the answers. So Jesus KNEW the Jewish scriptures. He quoted them dozens of times in the four gospel accounts.

So what did He say about the scriptures? Let's look at an occasion where Jesus shows us what He believes about the scriptures. In Matthew 22, the Sadducees were trying to trip up Jesus by asking a convoluted question about marriage. They spun an unlikely scenario about a woman whose husband died. Then she married his brother and he died. She did this until all seven brothers had been her husbands and all seven died. My first thought is to wonder what she was

putting in the soup! But as the Sadducees came to the punch line, they asked, "And in the resurrection whose wife will she be?" And I imagine they began to laugh—and it is pretty funny because the Sadducees didn't even believe in a resurrection of the dead.

Jesus waited for their laughter to die down because He had something serious to say to their foolish question. He gave a straight answer to a crooked question. Notice His words. Jesus answered them, "You are mistaken, because you don't know the Scriptures or the power of God...Now concerning the resurrection of the dead, haven't you read what was spoken to you by God: I am the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob? He is not the God of the dead, but of the living." (Matthew 22:29, 31-32)

Rather than focus on the answer Jesus gave about the resurrection, or Heaven, I want you to focus on what Jesus said about the scriptures. Look at these ten words: HAVEN'T YOU READ WHAT WAS SPOKEN BY GOD TO YOU? Notice Jesus didn't ask, "Have you read what was written?" And he didn't say, "Haven't you heard what was spoken?" Jesus believed God has spoken to us and someone wrote it down for us to read. He claimed that the written Bible truly conveys the words of the living God.

So when you open your Bible do you read the words of man or the words of God? The answer is yes. It's both. We'll talk more next week about the miracle of inspiration. But God used people to write down what He said. There are only two occasions in the Bible where God actually wrote something. Do you know where they are? On Mt. Sinai God gave Moses the Ten Commandments and the Bible says they were written by the finger of God. But God didn't write another word of the Bible. He inspired forty different men over a period of 1,600 years to write down what He spoke. What about the second time God wrote something? In John 8 Jesus knelt down and wrote something in the sand but we don't know what He wrote.

So, according to Jesus, when you open this book, you can read what was spoken by God to you. That's Jesus' belief about the Bible. It's mine, too, so when I read the Bible, or listen to it, I pray, "Lord speak to me."

2. JESUS CLAIMED THAT SCRIPTURE CONTAINS TRUE HISTORY.

Through the years I've met some folks that claim Jesus is their savior, but then they toss away parts of the Bible. It's like they're saying, "Jesus, I believe you for what it takes to go to Heaven instead of Hell, and that type of thing, but that whole idea of God creating two people in a Garden, I'm not too sure about that. I believe in evolution. And some of that other miracle stuff. Give me a break. Those were probably just stories that somebody made up because all those ancient people told myths and legends."

The Bible claims God created the universe and every creature in it. That includes us. So where did we come from? Most of us grew up being exposed to the Theory of Evolution postulated by Charles Darwin. Did humanity arrive at where we are today after evolving from a one-celled protoplasm, then evolve into fish, lizards, monkeys, and then finally into human beings? Or as someone has said, "We went from goo to the zoo to you."

The Bible isn't a science book; it's a history book. The Bible never says *how* we were created; it tells us *why* we were created—to have a personal love relationship with our Creator. What did Jesus believe about that? After all, He knew all things.

And when it comes to moral issues like gender identity and same sex unions, people love to say that Jesus was silent on those topics. Not so fast. Let's see what Jesus had to say about our origins and the definition of marriage.

The Pharisees asked Jesus about divorce and here's His reply, "Haven't you read," He replied, "that he who created them in the beginning made them male and female," and he also said, "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two will become one flesh?" (Matthew 19:4-5)

Now, Jesus was referring to Creation as an historical event. He didn't refer to Creation as a fairy tale or a myth, but as a historical fact. Jesus said, "He (God) created them."

But this just isn't historical truth; it is moral truth. When it comes to sexual morality, Jesus said that God's only acceptable sexual expression is one man and one woman together for one lifetime. That's not popular today, but Jesus was never running a popularity contest.

Jesus described Divine Creation as an historical event and Adam and Eve as real people. But that's not all. Jesus made dozens of references to people and events in the Old Testament. Here's a list of just some of them.

(1) Abel

He referred to Abel in Luke 11:51 Abel, the son of Adam and Eve, was a real man.

(2) Noah

He mentioned Noah in Matthew 24:37. He said the immorality of the days of Noah would be happening again just before Jesus returns. He was confirming the truth of the story of Noah.

(3) Abraham

He mentioned Abraham many times and in John 8:56 and said that Abraham saw Jesus and rejoiced over the time when He would come.

(4) Sodom and Gomorrah

He mentioned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah in Luke 10:12 and said if they had seen Him, they would have repented. In Luke 17 Jesus confirmed that Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed by fire and sulfur rain. That actually happened.

(5) Lot and his wife

Jesus mentioned Lot and his wife in Luke 17:28. He said that the fire fell after Lot left Sodom, and then Jesus said, "Remember Lot's wife!"

(6) Moses

Jesus referred to Moses many times and in John 5:45 He said, "If you had believed Moses you would believe me, because he wrote about me."

(7) Manna

Jesus mentioned the manna of the Old Testament. Some people scoff at the idea that God would feed His people for forty years with little white pieces of manna that covered the ground each morning. But in John 6:31 Jesus confirmed that this was a real historical event, and He compared Himself to manna as the Bread of Heaven.

(8) The Serpent on a stick

Jesus referred to the serpent on a stick. He confirmed the historicity of a story we read in Numbers 21 where Moses put a bronze serpent on a stick and held it up for those who were snake-bitten to look at for healing. In John 3:14 Jesus said, "Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up."

(9) Many other Old Testament Characters

In addition to these eight examples, Jesus referred to MANY more Old Testament characters and events. Even though Jesus taught in parables and used metaphors and analogies, He never even hinted the Old Testament events weren't true historical events.

One of the reasons I believe Adam and Eve were real historical characters is because Jesus believed it.

3. JESUS CLAIMED THAT ALL SCRIPTURE IS ABOUT HIM

When Jesus was talking to the scribes and Pharisees, whose full time job it was to read and copy the scriptures, He said something that was either foolhardy or revolutionary, you decide. In John 5:39 He said, "You pore over the Scriptures because you think you have eternal life in them, and yet they testify about me." Remember, this was the Old Testament, and Jesus said, "These scriptures are about me."

On that first Easter afternoon Jesus was walking along the road that led from Jerusalem to Emmaus, a journey of about nine miles. He joins a couple of unnamed disciples who are heavy-

hearted because they had just witnessed the brutal crucifixion of Jesus. They don't recognize Jesus. As they walk along Jesus gives them a lesson from the Old Testament.

"He said to them, 'How foolish and slow you are to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Wasn't it necessary for the Messiah to suffer these things and enter into his glory?' Then beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted for them the things concerning himself in all the Scriptures." (Luke 24:25-27)

You'll find Jesus on every page of the Bible. He is found in every book of the Bible. Most of you had heard this before, but I challenge you to follow up and check for yourselves.

In Genesis Jesus is the Ram at Abraham's altar.

In Exodus He is the Passover Lamb.

In Leviticus He's our High Priest.

In Numbers He's the cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night.

In Deuteronomy, He is the city of our refuge.

In Joshua, He's the scarlet thread hanging out of Rahab's window.

In Judges, He is our judge.

In Ruth, He is the Kinsman Redeemer.

In 1 and 2 Samuel, He is the Trusted Prophet.

In Kings and Chronicles He is our reigning King.

In Ezra He's the Faithful Scribe.

In Nehemiah He is the rebuilders of everything that is broken.

In Esther, He is the Mordecai sitting faithful at the gate.

In Job He is my Redeemer who ever lives.

In Psalms, the Lord is my Shepherd.

In Proverbs and Ecclesiastes He is our wisdom.

In the Song of Solomon He's the beautiful bridegroom.

In Ezekiel He's the wonderful four-faced man.

In Daniel, He's the fourth man in the midst of the fiery furnace.

In Hosea, He is my love who is forever faithful.

In Joel, He baptizes us in the Holy Spirit.

In Amos He's our burden bearer.

In Obadiah, He's our Savior.

In Jonah, He's the great foreign missionary who takes the Word of God around the world.

In Micah, He's the messenger with the beautiful feet.

In Nahum He's the avenger.

In Habakkuk, He's the watchman who is ever praying for revival.

In Zephaniah, He is the Lord, mighty to save.

In Haggai, He's the restorer of our lost heritage.

In Zechariah, He's our fountain.

And in Malachi, He's the Son of Righteousness, risen with healing in His wings.

In Matthew, You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God.

In Mark, He's the miracle worker.

In Luke, He's the Son of Man.
In John, He's the door through which every one of us must enter.
In Acts, He's the light that appeared to Saul on the road to Damascus.
In Romans, He's our righteousness.
In 1 Corinthians, He's our resurrection.
In 2 Corinthians, He's our sin bearer.
In Galatians, He redeems us from the law.
In Ephesians, He's our unsearchable riches.
In Philippians, He supplies our every need.
In Colossians He is the fullness of the Godhead bodily.
In 1 and 2 Thessalonians, He's our soon coming King.
In 1 and 2 Timothy, He's the Mediator between God and man.
In Titus, He's the blessed Hope.
In Philemon, He's a friend who sticks closer than a brother.
In Hebrews He's the blood of the everlasting covenant.
In James, he is the Lord who heals the sick.
In 1 and 2 Peter, He is the Chief Shepherd.
In 1, 2, and 3 John, it is Jesus who has the tenderness of love.
In Jude, He's the Lord coming with ten thousand saints.
And in Revelation, lift up your eyes Church, for your redemption is drawing nigh. He is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords!

So what does this mean for me? Here's the personal application: The best way to know God is to experience Him through His Word. Jesus prayed: "This is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and the one you have sent—Jesus Christ." (John 17:3)

Eternal life isn't just living forever. That would be torture for some people. Eternal life isn't a time span—it's a relationship. It is knowing God. You don't get to know God by going to a mountain-top to meditate. You experience the life of God in direct proportion to the amount of time and energy you invest in His Word. Jesus said, "Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away."

CONCLUSION

Can you trust the Bible? I want to tell you a true story about a young pastor who started having doubts about whether or not he could trust the Bible. He had some friends who had been talking to him about the Bible being full of errors. They tried to convince him the Bible was an old-fashioned book that had no place in a modern age of science. This young preacher became very confused and frustrated. He turned down a preaching engagement because he wasn't sure if he could put any confidence in the Bible. Like one of his preacher friends, he was considering just walking away from the Bible and pursuing a career in sales.

In the middle of this period of suffering, he was at a Christian retreat center and he walked out into the forest around midnight. He was carrying his Bible and he placed it on a tree trunk to

see if there was any word from God. But it was so dark he couldn't read any of the words on the page.

He fell to his knees in front of that stump and began to pray, "Oh, God! There are many things in this book I do not understand. There are many problems with it for which I have no solution. There are some areas of it that do not seem to correlate with modern science. I can't answer some of the philosophical and psychological questions my friends are asking."

He continued to pray and he soon began to weep. He felt so alone there in the midst of his despair. He kept waiting for a voice from heaven, or a light to shine on his Bible, but nothing happened. But then he made a decision by faith. He prayed, "Father, I'm going to accept this book as Your Word—by faith! I'm going to allow faith to go beyond my intellectual questions and doubts, and I will believe this to be your inspired Word."

He got up and grabbed his Bible and walked back toward the retreat center. Years later, as he looked back on that life-changing night, he wrote: "When I got up from my knees, I sensed the presence and power of God as I had not sensed it in months. Not all my questions were answered, but I knew in my heart and mind a spiritual battle had been fought and won."

Some of you probably have guessed the identity of that young preacher who struggled with whether he could trust the Bible. His name is Billy Graham and he has preached to truth of the Bible to more people than anyone in history. He has preached the Bible face-to-face to over 215 million people, and to millions more through television and radio. I'm glad he came to a place where he believed He could trust the Bible!

My friend, this is the Word of God and you can trust it because you can trust God to always keep his word. The Bible: Read it. Study it. Pray it. Live it!

OUTLINE

1. JESUS CLAIMED THAT SCRIPTURE IS THE WORD OF GOD.

Jesus answered them, "You are mistaken, because you don't know the Scriptures or the power of God...Now concerning the resurrection of the dead, haven't you read what was spoken to you by God: I am the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob? He is not the God of the dead, but of the living."
Matthew 22:29, 31-32 CSB

2. JESUS CLAIMED THAT SCRIPTURE CONTAINS TRUE HISTORY.

"Haven't you read," He replied, "that he who created them in the beginning made them male and female," and he also said, "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two will become one flesh?" *Matthew 19:4-5 CSB*

- (1) Abel (Luke 11:51)
- (2) Noah (Matthew 24:37)
- (3) Abraham (John 8:56)
- (4) Sodom and Gomorrah (Luke 10:12)
- (5) Lot and his wife (Luke 17:28)
- (6) Moses (John 5:45)
- (7) Manna (John 6:31)
- (8) The Serpent on a stick (John 3:14)

3. JESUS CLAIMED THAT ALL SCRIPTURE IS ABOUT HIM.

"He said to them, 'How foolish and slow you are to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Wasn't it necessary for the Messiah to suffer these things and enter into his glory?' Then beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted for them the things concerning himself in all the Scriptures." *Luke 24:25-27 CSB*

Personal Application: The best way to know God is to experience Him through His Word.

Jesus prayed: "This is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and the one you have sent—Jesus Christ." *John 17:3 CSB*

— MESSAGE DISCLAIMER —

These messages are offered for your personal edification and enrichment. I have used many sources, and I have always attempted to cite any exact quotations and/or use material that is not under copyright. Any failure to cite a quote is simply an oversight on my part.

If you are a preacher or teacher, I encourage you to use this material stimulate your own Spirit-driven preparation—*it is never intended as a substitute for your own study of Scripture.*

If you borrow the majority of a message or outline, it is good scholarship (not to mention the right thing to do) to cite the source. If you are teaching, you may simply preface your remarks by saying something like: **“Some (or “much” as the case may be) of the ideas I’m sharing in this message came from a message by Pastor David Dykes in Texas.”** This simple citation also applies to any work you may publish, too, as I routinely publish my material in books that are protected by copyright.

This careful effort on your part may prevent any criticism that may be directed toward you. I trust you will find that additional study beyond this material will benefit both you and your listeners.

For the Joy...
Pastor David Dykes



*David O. Dykes, Pastor
Green Acres Baptist Church
Tyler, Texas*
