

The BIG QUESTIONS about Christianity
Why I Believe the Bible is God's Word
9-26-10
Scripture Reading - Psalm 119:9-24

Does God exist?

- Revealed Himself in four ways: His Creation, His Word, His Son, His Bride, (His Spirit)
- Wonder of creation points toward the existence of a higher power / creator god / intelligent designer and away from random change and time with an unknown cause
- The uniqueness of humanity points not only toward A creator god but THE Creator God of the Bible who created mankind in His image to rule over His creation under His loving authority and to bring glory to Him

Is the Bible God's Word? Millions have thought so, and it claims to be throughout

- From its inception, millions of people have thought the Bible to be the very Word of God
 - o No book more influential
 - o No book more read
 - o No book has been more loved and treasured
 - o Completely changed the lives of millions of individuals, communities, and societies for the better
 - o Thousands have died in order to preserve and pass it on to others
 - o And many, including myself, would claim that it is just as powerful, relevant, and applicable today as it was 2,000 years ago
- Despite it being 66 books, 30+ authors, 1500 yrs, it tells one consistent story about God and His interaction with His people and claims to be His very Word throughout.
 - o **2 Timothy 3:16-17 (ESV)**
¹⁶ All Scripture is breathed out *by God* and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, ¹⁷ that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work.
 - o **2 Peter 1:20-21 (ESV)**
²⁰ ...no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's

own interpretation. ²¹ For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke *from God* as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

Yet despite its rich history and lofty claim to be God's very Word, it is surrounded by many questions and much controversy

- How can we trust that the Bible is God's Word when it was written by sinful men?
- How can we trust that the Bible is God's Word when its 66 books were chosen and canonized by sinful men?
- How can we trust that the Bible is God's Word when there are so many different translations of it?
- How can we trust that the Bible is God's Word when there are so many different interpretations of it?
- How can we trust that the Bible is God's Word when it contains so many miraculous and far-fetched stories that simply can't be true?
- How can we trust that the Bible is God's Word when it contains so many strange and troublesome teachings?
- How can we trust that the Bible is God's Word when it seems to contradict modern science?
- How can we trust that the Bible is God's Word when it seems to contradict itself?
- How can we trust that the Bible is God's Word when there are other holy books out there, like the Koran, that seem to be just as influential?

As a result of these questions and controversy, many have written the Bible off without ever reading it for themselves

- That's what I did
 - o Very little exposure (confirmation verse), not reader (Drive), A LOT of questions
 - o So when Jess began to read it, follow it, and suggest we build our lives on it 15 years ago, naturally I was hesitant
 - o It became an increasing source of irritation in our relationship until one day Jess said, "How can you always argue against the Bible when you've never read the Bible for yourself?"

- o So I set off to prove Jess wrong and slowly read the Bible for myself, from cover to cover, over the course of the next two years
- o By the time I was done, instead of proving her wrong as I had set out to do, *I became convinced that she was right*

Faith comes through hearing

- Romans 10:13-17 says...
 - o Romans 10:13-17 (ESV)

¹³For "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." ¹⁴But how are they to call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? ¹⁵And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!" ...¹⁷ *So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ (or in other words, the Word of God).*
- I now FIRMLY believe that I am a living testimony to the truth of Romans 10:17 and many other passages like it.
 - o When I began reading the Bible I didn't believe. By the time I finished reading the Bible I did.

But not everyone who hears believes

- It says as much in this very same passage
 - o Romans 10:16 (ESV)

¹⁶But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?"
- We find out why in 2 Corinthians 4:3-4
 - o 2 Corinthians 4:3-4 (ESV)

³And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled only to those who are perishing. ⁴In their case *the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.*

- Thus the Bible teaches that not everyone will be able to recognize the Gospel as good news
 - o 1 Corinthians 1:18 (ESV)

¹⁸For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.
 - o 1 Corinthians 1:21-24 (ESV)

²¹For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe. ²²For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, ²³but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, ²⁴but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

- The Bible teaches that in order to recognize the Gospel as good news, believe it, and be saved, we must be born again.
 - o Jesus says in John 3, “Unless you are born again you cannot see the Kingdom of God. Unless you are born again you cannot enter the Kingdom of God,” and that “flesh gives birth to flesh and Spirit gives birth to spirit.” (verses 3,5, and 6)

- To be born again means to be filled with or *receive* the Holy Spirit
 - o 1 Corinthians 2:12-14 says this...
 - 1 Corinthians 2:12-14 (ESV)

¹²Now we have *received* not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God. ¹³And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual. ¹⁴*The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are *spiritually discerned*.*

- While He was still on earth, Jesus Himself helped his followers to understand His words and the Scriptures that pointed to Him
 - o Mark 4:33-34 (ESV)

³³ With many such parables he spoke the word to them, as they were able to hear it. ³⁴ He did not speak to them without a parable, *but privately to his own disciples he explained everything.*
 - o Luke 24:25-27 (ESV)

²⁵ And he said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! ²⁶ Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?" ²⁷ *And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.*
 - o Luke 24:32 (ESV)

³² They said to each other, "Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, *while he opened to us the Scriptures?*"
 - o Luke 24:44-49 (ESV)

⁴⁴ Then he said to them, "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled." ⁴⁵ *Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures,*

- But when He ascended into Heaven, Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to help His followers to not only understand the Scriptures but to obey them as well
 - o Ezekiel 36:26-28 (NIV)

²⁶ I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. ²⁷ And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws. ²⁸ ...you will be my people, and I will be your God.
 - o John 14:25-26 (ESV)

²⁵ "These things I have spoken to you while I am still with you. ²⁶ But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, *he will teach you all*

things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.

- o John 16:7-8 (ESV)
⁷ Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you. ⁸ And when he comes, *he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment:*
- o Acts 16:13-15 (NIV)
¹³ On the Sabbath we went outside the city gate to the river, where we expected to find a place of prayer. We sat down and began to speak to the women who had gathered there. ¹⁴ One of those listening was a woman named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth from the city of Thyatira, who was a worshiper of God. *The Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul's message.* ¹⁵ When she and the members of her household were baptized, she invited us to her home. "If you consider me a believer in the Lord," she said, "come and stay at my house." And she persuaded us.

- I FIRMLY believe that God opened my heart to respond to His message as well, by His Holy Spirit, through His Word.

Simple Beginnings

- I first realized I had been born again when my daughter Eva was born
 - o Explain
- One of the biggest clues was that my BIG QUESTIONS no longer bothered me.
 - o Skeptics hate this!
 - o I know I did
 - o Especially with Jess
- If your faith is simple and childlike like mine was, don't be ashamed, REJOICE!!!
 - o My MG experience last week
 - o Simple faith is not only ok, *it's required*
 - Mark 10:14-15 (ESV)
¹⁴ ... "Let the children come to me; do not hinder

them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God. ¹⁵
Truly, I say to you, *whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it.*"

- Luke 10:21 (ESV)
²¹In that same hour he rejoiced in the Holy Spirit and said, "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, *that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children*; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will.
- o Trusting in Jesus is not rocket science
 - All it requires is a little faith from God
 - The answers to the BIG QUESTIONS will come in
 - Since the simple, child-like beginnings of my faith 12 years ago I've wrestled with the BIG QUESTIONS about the Bible and Christianity and come up with what I believe to be some very good answers. *But these answers have only served to strengthen the faith that I'd already been given by God.*

Big Changes

- Though my faith may have started out small, at least in terms of its complexity, *its impact on my life was not!!!*
- Hebrews 4:12 (NIV)
¹²*For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.*
- All of the sudden I could actually *HEAR the Word of God* and it was both terrible and wonderful all at the same time.
 - o Limping out of church
 - o Getting up earlier and earlier to read the Bible
- I realized for the first time that God Himself actually speaks to us through His Word and I just couldn't get enough of it!
 - o Reading (Bible and Christian books)

- Bible in a year
 - Chapters at a time (walking, exercising, and reading)
 - Most of the Left Behind series
 - Piper, Bridges, Mahaney, Grudem, Driscoll, Tozer, Packer, Bunyan, etc.
 - Purity, prayer, apologetics, holiness, godliness, justification, sanctification, glorification, you name it!
 - Becoming a better Christian, a better husband, a better father, a better man, a better leader
 - I couldn't read enough of God's Word, and I still can't 12 years later!!!
 - o Listening to preaching (16 men)
 - o Memorizing (verse cards)
 - o Conversation (Bible study at my house, late night conversations, trip to George Barna)
- God began to quickly and radically change my life, my heart, and my affections and He's been doing so ever since. Thanks to the Word of God and the power of the Holy Spirit, I'm becoming more and more like Jesus every day!
 - o 2 Corinthians 3:18 (ESV)
 - ¹⁸ And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.
- But I'm not the only one who has experienced the life changing power of God's Word.
 - o Conversions stories throughout history
 - o Around the world
 - o And in our own back yard
 - Two brothers whose marriages are struggling
 - Lunch with Erik LoFald

Why do I believe the Bible is God's Word?

- BECAUSE I'VE EXPERIENCED ITS LIFE CHANGING POWER FOR MYSELF!!!

- o If someone were to put a gun to my head today and tell me to deny that the Bible is God' s Word, I would have to take the bullet because He has used it to *COMPLETELY change and transform my life for the better* over the course of the last 12 years.
- o But the crazy thing is, I would have taken the bullet 12 years ago in Eva's hospital room as well.
- o That's the power of the Word of God!

- And that's the reason I love the story of the man born blind in John 9 so much.
 - o John 9:25 (ESV)
²⁵ He answered, "Whether he is a sinner I do not know. One thing I do know, that *though I was blind, now I see.*"

- God lifted the veil from my eyes 12 years ago when I read through His Word for the first time as a skeptic. *I promise that He'll do the same for you, if you'll just give Him and His Word a chance.*

- Jeremiah 29:13 says if we seek Him we will find Him if we seek Him with all our hearts. We seek God in and through His Word, which I believe with ALL MY HEART is the Bible. Dedicate yourself to seeking God today!

Let's pray