

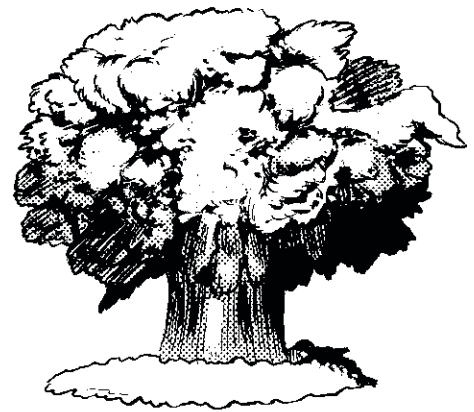
GOOF PROOF

CAN I TRUST THE BIBLE?

“The Scriptures possess the quality of freedom from error. They are exempt from the liability to mistake, incapable of error.” E. J. Young

The Japanese word, *mokusatan*, may have changed all our lives. It has two meanings: one, “to ignore;” the other, “to refrain from comment.” The release of a press statement using the second meaning in July 1945 might have ended World War II at that point. The Japanese Emperor was ready to end it, and had the power to do so. The Japanese cabinet was preparing to accede to the Potsdam ultimatum of the Allies—surrender or be crushed—but wanted a little more time to discuss the terms. A press release was prepared announcing a policy of *mokusatan*, with the *no comment* implication. But it got on the foreign message wires with the *ignore* implication through a mix-up in translation: “The cabinet ignores the demand to surrender.” To recall the release would have entailed an unthinkable loss of face. Had the *intended* meaning been publicized, the cabinet might have backed up the Emperor’s decision to surrender. In which event, there might have been no atomic bomb over Hiroshima and Nagasaki, no Russian armies in Manchuria, no Korean war to follow. The lives of tens of thousands of Japanese and American young men might have been saved. One word, misinterpreted. (*Great Commission Evangelism: Touching Lives With Media*. Nashville, TN: Convention Press, 1994)

It is very popular today to treat the Bible as if it is just another ancient book, full of contradictions and errors. Your teens need to know that they can trust the Bible because it has no mistakes. Every word is important.



To prove that the Bible can be trusted.

Teens will:

- Understand why it is important that the Bible have no mistakes
- Make choices between two unreliable things
- Understand what the Bible says about itself
- Know what Jesus said about the trustworthiness of Scripture

LESSON AIM

OBJECTIVES

TEXTS

2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:21

In these two texts, the Apostle Paul says volumes about the trustworthiness of the Word of God.

What You Need:

- copies of “What is Truth?”
- copies of “Views of the Bible”
- copies of “Which Is Better?”
- pens or pencils
- chalkboard and chalk

The Lesson

WARM-UP

What you need: copies of “What is Truth?” and pens or pencils

Using the handout, have the students decide which quotes came from the Bible.

1. Koran, 2. 1 Chronicles 26:18, 3. Late rigvedic hymn (Hindu), 4. Book of Mormon, 5. Psalm 57:9, 6. New World Translation (Jehovah’s Witness), 7. Ezekiel 18:2

BRIDGE

Say, “The Bible is different than these other ancient religious books. Other religions and cults have books that they think are sacred, and sometimes they even sound like the Bible. But the Bible is different because it is always true.”

CONTENT

QUESTION AND ANSWER

Why is it important that the Bible is error free? Because if the Bible is false where we can double-check it, we will never be able to trust it where we can’t. If we are going to live our lives based on the Bible, we have to be able to believe it.

I. DEFINING THE INTEGRITY OF THE BIBLE (Psalm 12:6)

The illustration contained in this passage is of absolute perfection. God’s words have been refined until there is no possible chance of error. Other biblical passages also speak

to the absolute integrity of God’s Word. We learn that God’s words are pure and tested (Ps. 18:30; 119:140; Prov. 30:5). They are firmly fixed in the heavens and cannot be altered (Ps. 119:89). The Bible has absolute integrity.

It is important that we define what we mean when we say that the Bible is without any errors or mistakes because people have different views.

Give your class some time to read and choose a definition from the handout. Obviously the correct answer is the fourth one, but let’s define this further. When we say that the Bible is without error we mean that when all the facts are known, the Bible will be proved to be true in everything it says, whether it is history, science, morality, or doctrine.

Does this mean that every statement recorded in the Bible is biblical truth upon which you should base your life? NO! Why? Because Satan, Ahab, Absalom, and others made statements that are wrong from a biblical point of view, but they are accurately recorded in the Bible.

When we talk about the Bible being true, we mean that there are no mistakes of any kind in it. If we don’t believe this, then we have no reason to come to God’s Word with our problems. How could we trust God’s Word if it wasn’t right every time? How could we trust it if it wasn’t pure? (Ps. 12:6)

Have them answer the questions and then discuss their answers. The point of this exercise is for them to realize that if something is not reliable, it is really no help at all. God’s Word must be 100% reliable for us to be able to trust it at all. We don’t want to be taking a chance that the Bible will give us wrong advice when we come to it with our problems.

II. THE BIBLE’S TESTIMONY ABOUT ITSELF

But how do we know that this the right way to look at God’s Word? Let’s see what the Bible says about itself.

Whether the Bible has mistakes or not would be a debatable issue if the Bible had nothing to say about it. However, the evidence seems clear.

A. God Is The Source Of All Scripture (2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:21).

These passages clearly teach that God is the Source of *all* Scripture. All Scripture came out of Him. Yes, human au-

HANDOUT

What you need: copies of “Views of the Bible,” and pens or pencils

QUESTION

HANDOUT

What you need: copies of “Which Is Better?” and pens or pencils

A/a

SMALL GROUP STUDY

thors recorded it, but God is the source of it. The relationship between God and the human authors can be illustrated this way. (Copy the illustration in the margin on the chalkboard and continue teaching.) The small “a” stands for the human author of a Bible book. The capital “A” stands for God. The human author had his own style of writing, but the Divine author (God) was the source of it.

Have your teens look up the following references to see what they say about God.

Jeremiah 10:10; John 1:14; 14:6; 17:3; God is true
Numbers 23:19; 1 Samuel 15:29; Titus 1:2; Hebrews
6:17-18; God cannot lie

We can come to a couple of conclusions about God’s Word from these verses. If God is true and He cannot lie, then since He authored the Bible, it must be true. There is no escaping this conclusion! The definition of true is without error or mistake. The Bible cannot have any error or mistake in it.

B. The Holy Spirit Superintended The Writing (1 Corinthians 2:13; cf. John 16:13).

In this passage the Apostle Paul is telling us how he came to write the words of Scripture that he wrote. We are told that he did it under the influence of the Holy Spirit—the same Spirit who is called the Spirit of truth in John 16:13. If Paul wrote under the influence of Holy Spirit, then what he wrote must be truth—it couldn’t have any mistakes in it!

In these few passages we see that Bible itself claims to have come from God. We know then that the Bible is true. If this was all the proof we had, it would be enough. But we have more.

III. JESUS’ VIEW OF SCRIPTURE

Once again it would make no difference what we thought if Christ said that there were mistakes in the Bible. But when we look at Christ’s attitude towards Scripture, we find that He consistently affirmed its reliability (Matthew 19:4-5; 22:31-32).

A. He Believed It Was True (John 17:17).

In this passage Jesus is praying for His disciples and He clearly says that God’s Word is truth. Something can only be

true if it doesn't have any error in it. Jesus believed that God's Word was true!

B. He Believed It Was Authoritative (John 10:35).

In this somewhat confusing passage, Jesus makes the emphatic statement that the "Scripture cannot be broken." What He was saying is that it cannot be wrong. It is authoritative. If it was false, how could it have any authority over our lives?

C. He Believed It Was Dependable (Matthew 5:17-18).

Christ clearly says that what the Scripture (law and the prophets) says will happen will indeed happen. You can count on it. This is because what the Bible says is entirely true. Christ believed it and so should you.

What does this mean for you? It means several things.

1. You can trust God's Word.
2. You can trust God. His Word tells us the truth about Him.
3. You can know God personally. His Word says we can trust Him as Savior.
4. You can confidently live for Him. If you follow God's Word, you will be blessed.

Some of you may have been told by an unsaved friend, "The Bible has all sorts of errors and contradictions in it." The next time you hear someone say that, ask them to point out just one to you. They won't be able to do it! No one can! While there are many things that we don't understand about God's Word, when all the facts are known, it will be proved right every time.

CLOSING

NOTES

What Is Truth?

CHECK THE following statements that you think came from the Bible.

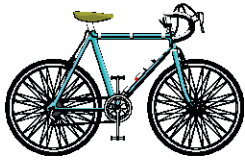
- "Praise belongs to God, the Lord of all being, the All-merciful, the All-compassionate, the Master of the Day of Doom. Thee only we serve, to Thee alone we pray for succor."
- "At Parbar westward, four at the causeway, and two at Parbar."
- "Who knows for certain? Who shall here declare it? Whence was it born, and whence came this creation? The gods were born after this world's creation: Then who can know from whence it has arisen?"
- "And if our plates had been sufficiently large we should have written in Hebrew; but the Hebrew hath been altered by us also; and if we could have written in Hebrew, behold, ye would have had no imperfection in our record."
- "I will praise thee, O Lord, among the people: I will sing unto thee among the nations."
- "In the beginning the Word was, and the Word was with God and the Word was a god."
- "What mean ye, that ye use this proverb concerning the land of Israel, saying, The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge?"

Views of the Bible



READ THE different views that people have of the Bible and check the one that you feel best represents what you believe.

- The Bible was written by men and men are capable of making mistakes. As such, we should not be surprised if some of the scientific and historical observations in the Bible are in conflict with what we know today. These men were not perfect and could have made mistakes even concerning spiritual truth.
- The purpose of the Bible is to bring people to Christ, not to teach truth. The Bible does this effectively. Truth is not in the facts of the Bible but in whether it accomplishes its purpose.
- The Bible makes no mistakes in its truth about salvation, Jesus, God, or other spiritual matters, but its history and science reflect what people thought at that time. God was not concerned that they be historically or scientifically correct but that they be doctrinally correct.
- The Bible is fully true in all details that it relates whether they are scientific, historical, or spiritual. Any apparent "errors" are due to our misunderstandings and not a reflection on the Bible.
- Whether the Bible has errors or not is not really a very important issue. If we believe that the Bible is without error, we are not free to fully investigate it, and this keeps us from discovering whatever truth might be there.
- The presence of any errors in the Bible in no way reflects upon God. These are the problems of Samuel, Moses, David, Paul, and other biblical authors who made mistakes because they were human. The Bible is still useful in spite of these problems.



Which Is Better?



For each of the questions listed below, decide which one you would rather have.

- ◆ Which is better...A watch that loses a minute every hour or one where the hands don't move at all?
- ◆ Which is better...A computer which erases your document every fifth time you save it or a typewriter?
- ◆ Which is better...A bike, or a Porsche which won't start?
- ◆ Which is better...A paycheck which fluctuates from week-to-week or a steady salary?
- ◆ Which is better...A teacher who gave two tough tests or one who gave ten easier ones but they were all pop quizzes?
- ◆ Which is better...A blind date or a date with a guy/girl who is average looking?
- ◆ Which is better...Having \$10,000 or giving it up for a chance at \$100,000?
- ◆ Which is better...A chance at the Publisher's Clearing House sweepstakes or your present job?
- ◆ Which is better...Eating at an elegant restaurant that has been cited for health code violations or eating at Burger King?