THE HARVEST IS PLENTIFUL
PREPARED WORKERS ARE FEW

APOLOGETICS
IN AN AGE OF QUESTIONS

PROCLAMATION PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
SUNDAYS 9:30 A.M. ROOM 017
How reliable is the Bible?

Turn to your neighbor and discuss: (put a % on it)

• Historically

• Scientifically

• Literarily

• Culturally (outmoded vs. progressive/relevant)
Why did we answer as we did?

Mixture of: what we’ve experienced, our basic beliefs (core assumptions, Worldview, paradigm), processed over time.

We have been told/experienced issues with the Bible, we have deeply held beliefs, and overtime we have to various degrees “tested” it to arrive at our conclusion(s).

Thomas Kuhn, Hans-Geog Gadamer, Cornelius Van Til

Our deepest beliefs control how we think about EVERYTHING.

- no one is a “robot” Reason and Trust go together

Refuse:
“please don’t confuse me with the facts” – denial, idealism -tic
“please don’t bring your beliefs into this” - denial, scientism -mic
1 Peter 3:15 – Reasons for the Hope?

How can we give *Reasons* without acknowledging our *Hope* Beliefs?

Today’s project: “Trust and Verify” Is the Bible reliable or not?

Distrust and Verify leads to non-validation only
Trust and Verify leads to validation or invalidation

1. What does the Bible say about itself?
2. What have others said about the Bible?
3. What reasonable responses can be given?
What does the Bible say about itself?

The Bible is God’s words... the following is a *mere* sample...

2 Tim. 3:15 - God spoken (Ps. 95:7-8, Heb. 3:7-8 God’s voice)
2 Peter 1:21 - God originated, directed in human authors
Rom. 3:2, 2Pt 3:16 – OT and New Testament God’s Words

The Bible carries power, authority, helpfulness
Ps. 19:1-4a, 7-8 - Revelatory, Perfect, Helpful
Rom. 15:4 - Instructive, Historical
Heb. 4:12 – Living, Active, Powerful

The Bible is our Historical access given by God about Himself
1 Cor. 15:1-8 - Jesus and news about him is Historical, accurate
2 Pt. 1:12-21 – Eye witness account, not invented
Luke 1:1-4 – Eye witness account, carefully examined and presented
Here is the big idea...

The Bible claims to be God’s testimony, through human authors, about his interaction with us. Revelatory in Jesus (living Word) / Bible (written Word)

Here is the big question...

If God entered space, time and history as a man in the person of Christ – can we trust the NT documents which give us access to these claims?
– Amy Orr-Ewing, RZIM Oxford
What have others said that challenge the Bible? What assumptions lie behind the challenges?

**Historically** – The Bible is not history but legend
- etiological, written by “winners” divine view, construction of diverse communities, evolved stories from oral tradition.
- constructed, codified and collected long after actual events, largely by moves of power, seeking power (circa 200-300 A.D.)
- can’t be taken seriously due to superior Scientific knowledge of today, primitive stories from and for primitive people

**Literarily** – The Bible is full of errors, variations, fiction literature.
- texts are corrupted by errors and variants – untrustworthy
- ancient fiction (Beowulf, Iliad) morality plays

**Culturally / Scientifically** – another class, see syllabus
What is a reasonable response?

The Challenge of Oral Tradition – sociological construction

Let’s play a game: Telephone / Whisper down the lane

I’m going to say something. Last person writes it down.

What was said? What was the final product? Is the Bible like this?

Bart Ehrman accuses the NT of being a telephone game, at best.

- NT is not from witnesses, has errors, is legend, oral tradition is not reliable, not from God but only flawed men

Is this true?

Let’s take a look...
Is oral tradition like the telephone game?

No. - poor scholarship, lack of evidence, reading arrogantly w modern bias, sociological and historical ignorance, and unbelief concluded this.

Oral Tradition is almost “air-tight”—does NOT function like telephone
Socio-historical aspect of Oral Tradition ensures accuracy

The Bible is NOT like Telephone game in any way: Lk. 1:1-4, 1 Cor. 15
Eyewitness wrote not just spoke, eyewitnesses encouraged to check
Ancient Legend “fiction” did NOT include historical detail (CS Lewis)
Content fails ANE construction / power consolidation genre
- Jesus didn’t talk about circumcision, women witnesses, failures in leadership, vivid selective detail (irrelevant? 153 fish, boat cushion)
When was the NT written and codified?

Dead Sea Scrolls, other manuscripts early as btwn 90-130 AD!
P52 John 18:31-33, 18:37-38
    -debunks idea of 250 AD!

160 AD Irenaeus of Lyons confirms only 4 gospels
185 AD Origen described the Bible as we have it
325 AD Codex Sinaiticus – whole Bible
367 AD Athanasius Letter – whole Bible confirmed

Most open-minded scholars date books of the Bible as far back at 50 AD for Pauline literature, a mere 20 years post events.
What about “errors”?

Do you know who Plato is? How abt Alexander the Great? No one doubts them, right?

Only 10 MMS 1,400 years later for Plato!

How many MMS for the Bible?

over 5000, separated by mere decades.

Why is this important?

- Text Criticism (examining all the copies) reveals 98% accurate, not even Ehrman thinks the “errors” challenge any significant beliefs! (Bible is beyond well attested)

Are we dealing with Science or with “Please don’t confuse me with the Facts” – the very accusation made against Christians by skeptics!
But is it accurate?

Tests of Accuracy

Recollection – Details! *Jesus and Eye Witness* – R. Bauckahm
Geography – accurate, multiple – drop out of MMS 2\textsuperscript{nd} cent.
Botany – plants amazingly described. What is a durian?
Architecture – detailed accounts, e.g. I can describe St. Peter
Cultural Practices – constant references to explain to readers
Economics – money, coins, measures, on and on it goes!
Language – accurate to the time and place “groovy” “rad”
Law – detailed accounts of law that occurred in time period
Personal Names – match top Names, Mk. 15:21, Erastus 3x!
Etc….. Do we need to go on?
Any questions?