

Don't Be Confused, Part 2

Steve Berger April 30, 2017

Don't be confused

Last Week — Sources and Results of Confusion: 1) Rebellion against God, 2) Idolatry, creating and worshiping false gods, 3) Self-Devotion, self-seeking

Today — In 1803 President Thomas Jefferson cut out the passages of the Bible he didn't like or disagreed with. He wrote Philosophy of Jesus, which was lost; in 1819 he did it again, writing, Life and Morals of Jesus of Nazareth, cutting out miracles, signs, wonders, and divinity.

Question — Why would he do that?

- “Among the sayings and discourses imputed to him (i.e. Jesus) by his biographers, I find many passages of fine imagination, correct morality, and of the most lovely benevolence; and others again of so much ignorance, so much absurdity, so much untruth, charlatanism, and imposture, as to pronounce it impossible that such contradictions should have proceeded from the same being.”¹ Letter to William Short, April 13, 1820.

Bottom Line — it has been fashionable to **blaspheme God** and **pervert the Bible** when we **disagree with its contents**. Then we then twist and turn, pick and choose, and cut and paste **not just to our liking—but to our destruction!** **TODAY in the WORLD and in the CHURCH!**

In others words — “When the Bible contradicts our lifestyle, we attack its authority over our lifestyle by saying it's contradictory!” It produces rebellion, idolatry, self-devotion!

God's Word has been under attack from the beginning

- **Garden of Eden** — “Has God indeed said...” Portraying God's Word as **unreasonable** and **ridiculous**...
 - Unreasonable and Ridiculous restrictions — “can't eat from every tree”
 - Unreasonable and Ridiculous judgments — “you will not surely die”
 - Unreasonable and Ridiculous motives — “He's withholding good from you”

God's Word was/is satanically attacked to create doubt, disdain and distance between God and man!

- **Jesus in Desert** — Satan says, “It is written” — twisting context.

If Satan can't keep you from rejecting God's Word altogether, he tries to get you to believe a perverted version of it, to pacify your religious inclinations.

¹ Dickinson W. Adams, *Jefferson's Extracts from the Gospels: The Philosophy of Jesus and The Life and Morals of Jesus*, (Princeton University Press, 2014), 392

- **Church immediately**

- **2 Timothy 3:13-15**

But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them, and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

Amazing — *Evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse... we're 2,000 years later... infinitely worse! It's the **scriptures that keep you from being confused, so Satan cunningly challenges and lies about the scriptures to confuse people.***

Why should we believe and submit to Bible's authority? It's reliable.

Manuscripts, Archaeology/History, Prophecy/Statistics

- **Reliable!** Series of Sermons Pastor Steve preached previously

Available to watch online, or to purchase in Resource Center

- below is quick synopsis of that series

- **MANUSCRIPTS**

- **Old Testament — Dead Sea Scrolls** – greatest archaeological discovery in 20th Century, in 1947. Written around Christ's time. **When compared with oldest existing complete version of Old Testament from 916 A.D. — they are 95% textually identical.** *The 5 percent that was different were mainly misspellings of words and did not constitute any threat to the content, doctrine or reliability of the text.* This shows how unbelievably accurately it was transmitted! **We have extremely accurate translations of Old Testaments in our laps!**
- **New Testament — testing for accuracy — bibliographic test** — quantity of manuscripts and time span between original and copied manuscripts.

- Currently over **5,700 Greek manuscripts** are in existence. **Total manuscript base is over 24,000** (Syriac, Latin, Coptic, and Aramaic).

- Manuscripts allow themselves to be cross-checked for accuracy. New Testament manuscripts **completely agree on 99.5% of content** — 5% difference is spelling, grammar, etc. **NO DOCTRINAL DISCREPANCIES EXIST!**

We have substantially superior criteria for affirming reliability of NT documents — MORE THAN any other ancient writings — why aren't we doubting those?

- *"In no other case is the interval of time between the composition of the book and the date of the earliest manuscripts so short as in that of the New Testament... the last foundation for any doubt that the scriptures have come down to us substantially as they were written has now been removed."* ² Sir Frederic Kenyon, Director British Museum.

² Josh McDowell, *Evidence that Demands a Verdict*, (Harper Collins, 1999)

- C.S. Lewis said, “All I am in private life is a literary critic and historian, that's my job... and I'm prepared to say on that basis if anyone thinks the Gospels are either legends or novels, then that person is simply showing his incompetence as a literary critic.”³

Manuscript accuracy proves the reliability of God's Word!

• ARCHAEOLOGY / HISTORY

- Respected scholar / archaeologist Dr. J. O. Kinnaman, declared, “Of the hundreds of thousands of artifacts found by the archeologists, not one has ever been discovered that contradicts or denies one word, phrase, clause, or sentence of the Bible, but always confirms and verifies the facts of the biblical record.”⁴
- Thomas L. Thompson, “The existence of the Bible's 'United Monarchy' during the tenth-century [B.C.] is . . . impossible” (Early History of the Israelite People, [Brill: 1992]).⁵

One year later — archaeological dig found Tel-Dan Stele in 1993-94, with “House of David” 900 B.C., written by King of Damascus! Since then, City of David discovered!

Ancient city of Ebla — discovery in 1960's-70's in Northern Syria has brought to light a wealth of historical material that supports the biblical record.

- An article in **Time** magazine reported, “Their discovery does more than provide documentary evidence of a little-known kingdom that existed between 2400 and 2250 BC; it also provides the best evidence to date that some of the people described in the Old Testament actually existed” (Oct. 18, 1976, pg.63)⁶

Secular historians like the **Jewish Josephus** (before A.D. 100), the **Roman Tacitus** (around A.D. 120), and **Pliny Secundus** (A.D. 100-110) make **direct reference to Jesus** or **affirm one or more historical New Testament references**. **Skeptical secular historians** prove there is **strong external evidence** to support the **Bible's account**. (Hank Hanegraaf).⁷

- **Dr. John Warwick Montgomery** has written, “What, then, does a historian know about Jesus Christ? He knows, first and foremost, that the New Testament documents can be relied upon to give an accurate portrait of Him. And he knows that this portrait cannot be rationalized away by wishful thinking, philosophical presuppositionalism, or literary maneuvering”⁸

- **the evidence is too strong!**

³ Justin Phillips, *C.S. Lewis in a Time of War*, (Zondervan, 2006), 310

⁴ Grant R. Jeffrey, *The Signature of God, Revised Edition*, (Crown Publishing Group, 2010), 57

⁵ *ibid*, 58

⁶ Britton Hadden, Henry Robinson Luce, *Time, Volume 108* (Time Inc., 1976)

⁷ <http://www.equip.org/article/bible-reliability-m-a-p-s-to-guide-you-through-bible-reliability/>

⁸ John Warwick Montgomery, *History and Christianity* (Bethany House Publishers, 1986), 40

• PROPHECY / STATISTICS

Prophecy is God telling the end from the beginning, through men!

• Isaiah 46:9-10

Remember the former things of old, for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like Me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things that are not yet done, saying, 'My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure,'

- **Israel prophecy-** 600 years before its destruction...prophecy of its restoration!

• Ezekiel 36:24,34-36 (600 B.C.)

For I will take you from among the nations, gather you out of all countries, and bring you into your own land. The desolate land shall be tilled instead of lying desolate in the sight of all who pass by. So they will say, 'This land that was desolate has become like the garden of Eden; and the wasted, desolate, and ruined cities are now fortified and inhabited.' Then the nations which are left all around you shall know that I, the LORD, have rebuilt the ruined places and planted what was desolate. I, the LORD, have spoken it, and I will do it."

- **He did — on May 14th, 1948**, nearly **2,000 years after its destruction; 2,600 years after prophecy**, in the last days. As Ezekiel prophesied, Israel again became a nation... **NOT desolate, wasted and ruined, Garden, fortified, inhabited**. We have indeed been given a **sure word of prophecy** and we would **do well to heed it**, it **shines like a light in dark times**. *Prophecies of Israel's/world's future are on the front page of the paper!*

JESUS PROPHECIES

Is there a **sure word of prophecy** about Jesus to **solidify our position and faith?**

- **Jesus** fulfilled over **300 prophecies** regarding His **first coming** to earth
- *what are the odds of one man fulfilling 300 prophecies that were written over 2000 years by dozens of people, in varying locations, from different walks of life?*
- to put it plainly... **it is statistically impossible for Jesus NOT to be the Christ**, the long-awaited Messiah of whom the prophets spoke!
- **to give you an idea of one man fulfilling just 8 prophecies... not the 300 He did**
 - Based on the math, stats and probability done by **Professor Emeritus of Science** at Westmont College, **Peter Stoner**, estimates that one man fulfilling these **8 prophecies is 10 to the 17th power...48 prophecies 10 to 157th power... imagine 300 prophecies!**
 - **8 prophecies, 10 to 17th power...visual example...**
 - Cover the entire state of Texas, 266k sq. miles, 2 feet deep in silver dollars, mark one of them and place it among the rest. Blindfold a man, tell him to find the specially marked silver dollar. The odds of him doing so are 10 to the 17th power... absolutely impossible!

**The chance of one man fulfilling just these 8 prophecies
and NOT being the long-awaited Messiah is statistically impossible —
it is as likely as the blindfolded man finding the silver dollar!**

- Professor Stoner states, “Any man who rejects Christ as the Son of God is rejecting a fact, proved perhaps more absolutely than any other fact in the world.”⁹

Church Challenge

This is not the time to be confused and deceived about the Word of God and its authority over our lives. It is not the time to twist and turn, pick and choose, cut and paste according to our own sinful or confused desires.

It is time to realize that the Word of God is bibliographically, archaeologically, historically, prophetically, and statistically accurate.

Therefore we are accountable for what we do with its truth.

We either believe, submit, and be blessed —or we doubt, reject, and die... your choice!

***Don't be confused about
the authority, accuracy, and reliability of God's Word!***

Discussion Questions

1. Have you ever found yourself disagreeing with any of the contents of the Bible, picking and choosing what you like or dislike?
2. What happens inside of us when the Bible contradicts our lifestyle?
3. Discuss: “If Satan can't keep you from rejecting God's Word altogether, he tries to get you to believe a perverted version of it to pacify your religious inclinations.”
4. What are some specific statistics about the reliability of scripture that you can memorize—so you can tell someone else the truth?
5. Explain to each other why it is statistically impossible for Jesus NOT to be the Christ, the long-awaited messiah of whom the prophets spoke.

Before the Throne: Worship Night

Tuesday, May 2nd

6:30 pm

Sanctuary

⁹ Peter W. Stoner, R.C. Newman, *Science Speaks* (Moody Publishers, 1958)