

# Fellowship Bible Summer Apologetics Series

## Session II : Has God Spoken?

### Transfer In

- Welcome : Glad you are here joining us this morning
  - o We're in week 2 of a 5 week series on Apologetics
  - o During this time we'll be addressing some of the objections to the Christian Faith
  - o Purpose of this series is to equip you to be better prepared to give a "ready defense"

### Recap :

- If you missed last week, we learned that the Bible in your hands has successfully survived the passage of time.
  - o We looked specifically at the NT and discovered that it is a trustworthy translation directly from the original Greek, and did not come into being through a game like telephone.
- So what does that mean we have we established thus far?
  - o We have an accurate reproduction.
  - o I've heard a non believer say, "so what, I have an accurate copy of Shakespeare at home"

### Let's move forward today in our ready defense : Our question for today is Has God Spoken?

- Is this book from God or from man?
  - o Some well intentioned Christians when confronted with some version of this question will quote scripture to their questioners and recite 2Tim 3:16
    - ALL scripture is God Breathed...
- While it is true that this verse says that God is the author of scripture, how does this line of defense fall short when presented to the questioner?
  - o Why is the Bible the word of God?.....Because it says so
- There's two ways this falls short :
  - o First : Its circular reasoning (when you assume the premise you've been asked to prove)
  - o Second : Do other Holy Books exist (other religions) that also claim divine inspiration?
    - So now we're just one of many and it's a jump ball
- I want you to wrestle with a question in your minds for me
  - o **If God in fact wrote a book**, how would we know?
  - o What might be some of the indicators we would we look for as his fingerprints?

### The way I am going to approach the topic is through the following question :

#### How is the Bible Unique from anything else ever written?

- Some of these answers fall in the category of "interesting". Others are absolutely compelling
- There are actually about 7 ways in which the Bible is unique, today due to time we'll look at a few

### Unique in Survival

- We discussed the Bible's survival last week
  - o We learned that there are more manuscript copies and closer dating to the originals than any other work from antiquity.
  - o You might be saying.... "Yeah but what's unique about that"
- What makes it unique is what it had to go through to survive to this time
  - o You need to realize that no book has been more loved and no book has been more hated
- Numerous Emperors from Nero to Diocletian (250 year period) stated that Christians were breaking the covenant between Rome and her gods.
- They ordered numerous edicts of persecution that called for three things
  - o The destruction of churches / the killing of Christians / the burning of all NT writings.
    - Not only was there an enormous loss of life during this time for the church
    - Hundreds if not thousands of manuscripts were destroyed across the Roman Empire in this persecution which lasted until 312 (Constantine)
- To spare their lives, Christians simply needed to hand over their writings and agree to worship Caesar
  - o Some did. **But many refused**
- The fact that the Bible survived the first 250 years is amazing but its persecution didn't end there
  - o Prohibitions against reading it (middle ages and dark ages)
  - o Denials against its authority (modern times / liberalism)
  - o But somehow it's still here

"In less than 100 years, Christianity will be swept from existence"  
**(Voltaire)**

- 50 years after Voltaire's death, the Geneva Bible society bought his house and began printing Bibles on his very own press. Do you think God has a sense of humor?

"A thousand times the death knell of the Bible has sounded, the funeral procession formed, the inscription cut on the tombstone and the committal read. But somehow, the corpse never stays put."  
 (Bernard Ramm)

"Sire, the Bible is an anvil that has worn out many hammers."  
 (Theodore Beza writing to King Navarre of France)

- Guys, no one has ever tried to rid the earth of the writings of Plato or Homer (other ancient writings)

**"Heaven and Earth** will pass away but my words will not pass away" (Matt 24:35)

"I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear..." (Matt 5:18)  
 The Bible is Unique in its SURVIVAL

**Unique in Unity**

- A few Bible facts for those who might be interested
  - o It took 1500 years to complete the Bible : Moses 1400 BC – John @ 95AD.
- The Bible in your hand is 66 books (39 OT and 27 NT) written by 40 different authors
  - o These authors varied widely in their backgrounds, education levels, locations and occupations.
  - o Kings ( David / Solomon), cupbearers (Neh), military leaders (Josh), Tax collectors (Matt) physicians (Luke), fisherman (Peter), prime ministers (Dan), shepherds (Amos), rabbi's (Paul)
- The Bible was originally composed in three separate languages (Greek, Hebrew & Aramaic)
  - o written on 3 separate continents (Europe, Africa and Asia)

**Even though the Bible was composed by many people of diverse backgrounds over many years, Scripture speaks from one mind. It is remarkably (uniquely) unified amidst its tremendous diversity.**

- From paradise lost (Gen) to paradise regained (rev) there is a single central story of the Bible
  - o God's redemptive plan for human beings.
- There is one central theme : the person of Jesus Christ
  - o You might be thinking, how can you say that, Jesus doesn't show up until Matthew 75% through
  - o In the OT he is anticipated, in the NT he is realized

**"And beginning with Moses** and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself." (Luke 24:27)

- There are specific promises of his coming which we will look at in greater detail in just a bit
- But there is also very intriguing foreshadow of Jesus as well.
  - o Time prevents us from being thorough here but let's just look at just a few of these from Gen

Jesus is foreshadowed in **Abel**

- Who although innocent was slain and whose blood cries out

Jesus is foreshadowed in **Isaac**

- Who carried his own wood to the place where we would lay down his life to be sacrificed

Jesus is foreshadowed in **Joseph**

- At Bible School, I found 21 parallels between the life of Christ and the life of Joseph
  - Check out some of these
  - Both betrayed by a man named Judah
  - Both betrayed for the price of a slave
  - Both falsely accused
  - Both would be placed between two criminals, one who would be saved the other lost
  - Both would sit at the right hand of Power

- Both would use this power to extend forgiveness and provision to those who had wronged them
  - This is just some of the foreshadowing in Genesis (1 of 39 Books)
- Such incredible unity can only be accounted for by the existence of a divine mind that inspired each of the writers of scripture. This mind wove each of the **individual pieces into one mosaic of truth.**

### **Unique in Predictive Prophecy**

- The bible is unique in that it contains Predictive prophecy.
  - This is when God enables human messengers to foretell future events
  - God seems to use prophecy as an indicator light that it is Him (not just the messenger) speaking

“Now I have told you before it comes to pass, that when it comes to pass, you may believe.” (John 14:29)

- Scattered throughout the Bible are a multitude of very specific predictions
  - Many of these recorded hundreds of years in advance of their fulfillment
- I’m fully convinced that there would have been times that the authors of scripture would have been scratching their heads at what they were writing down on the parchment
  - Example : Isaiah prophecies in chapter 44 & 45
  - He predicts that the Babylonian exile would end with a return to Judah and restoration of their ruins
  - He also predicts that a man named Cyrus would authorize the rebuilding of the temple
    - Here’s what’s weird
    - At time of prophecy, the people of Judah were not even in captivity
    - The city of Jerusalem was intact and the temple was standing
    - Cyrus wouldn’t be born for over 100 years
    - See Ezra 1:2-4 for the fulfillment of this
- Regarding Jesus (the anticipated Messiah of the OT), there are literally dozens of predictions about his life, ministry, death
  - What are some of the predictions found in the OT about the promised Messiah? **(DRAW)**
  - Would be from line of Issac, tribe of Judah, a direct descendant of David
  - Born in Bethlehem, born of a virgin
  - Minister in Galilee, would perform many miracles
  - Would have a forerunner announcing his coming
  - Would ride into Jerusalem on a Donkey
  - Would be rejected by his own people, would be betrayed for 30 pieces of silver
  - That his hands and feet would be pierced (crucifixion not invented at time of this prophecy)
  - None of his bones would be broken (interesting that his neighbors had broken bones...)
  - He’d be with a rich man in his death but assigned a grave with the wicked
- Pertaining to the fulfillment of these, I’ve heard some critics say, yeah but he could control some of these things

- He knew if he got in enough trouble that he'd be crucified (hands and feet pierced)
- He could easily have chosen to ride a donkey into Jerusalem
  - Yeah but could he control where he would be born or what his family line was
- **So... Lets talk odds**
- Peter Stoner (Professor of science and mathematics at University of Chicago)
  - Posed the challenge to a group of his graduate students
    - Take 8 of the prophecies of Christ and calculate the conservative odds of fulfillment
- Time won't allow us to go into this, but **let's talk odds**
  - There are over 60 prophecies about the messiah that were fulfilled in Jesus, let's use 8
  - Bald guy = 1 in 10 / fingerless = 1 in 100 so bald and no finger = 1/1000
- **The mathematical probability** of only 8 fulfilled in JC = 1 in 10 to 17 power
  - Silver dollars in **Texas (269,000 sq miles) 2 feet deep** with 1 pull
- Guys, you need to know that there isn't another holy book out there that contains predictive prophecy
  - Not the Qur'an, not the Hindu Vedas, not the Book of Mormon
  - This is truly the signature of God

## Unique in Grace

- Lastly, (and this won't necessarily resonate with the critic or the skeptic) but it resonates with me...
  - The Bible is unique in grace

There are three things that are consistent within every world religion

- 1) **All world religions** believe in some divine essence (a concept of God).
  - a. Pantheist, Dualist, Polytheist, Monotheist.
- 2) **All world religions** believe that there is a Moral Law
  - a. A standard of conduct that we are conscious of

“Human beings all over the Earth have this curious idea that they ought to behave a certain way, and cannot really get rid of it...Something appears in me as a law urging me to do right and make me feel responsible and uncomfortable when I do wrong...”

- b. That we all know we have all broken

“I am only trying to call attention to the fact that this year, or this month, or more likely this very day, we have failed to practice ourselves the kind of behavior we expect from other people... all cultures agree in prescribing behavior which their adherents fail to practice. All men stand under condemnation, and this condemnation does not come by alien code of ethics, but by their own, and men therefore are conscious of guilt”

- 3) Somehow this Divine Essence and the Moral Law are linked
- a. Some religions believe that the divine essence is the custodian of the Moral Law
  - b. Others believe that the divine essence is the Originator of the Moral Law.
  - c. If we violate the Moral Law we offend the divine essence

‘All have sinned...’ (Rom 3:23)

Your sin has separated you.. (Isa 59:2)

This is a common teaching among all religions.

All great world religions agree on the above. If a 4<sup>th</sup> point were made, Christianity would break free from the rest.

- 4) The only way man can fix his precarious position is by...
- a. Abiding by a new set of moral laws to try to merit or earn his way back into favor. **(DO)**
  - b. Christianity came to distinguish itself this way.

- The Bible stands alone in this regard in that it says there’s nothing we can DO to balance the scales
  - a. The getting right with God has been **DONE** for us
  - b. All that is required of us is to trust Christ and embrace him

**“For it is by grace you have been saved through faith and this not from yourself, it is a gift of God. It is not by works, lest any man should boast.”**

**(Eph 2:8-9)**