

**Welcome to the
Common Ground Café!**



Sunday, October 21, 2018

**Doubting the Reliability of the Bible
Week 4 in the series “Don’t Stop Believing”
1 John 1:1-3**

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What is your favorite book of the Bible and why?

Choose one of the following questions to answer:

If you've tried to read the whole Bible through and didn't finish, why did you stall out?

If you've read the whole Bible through, what value, if any, did you find in the effort?

Our series is called "Don't Stop Believing." Many people "stop believing" because they doubt that the Bible has accurately preserved the words and actions of Jesus. Instead, they believe that the Bible includes many legends about Jesus, including claims he never made himself. For example, many believe that the claims we see in the Bible about his divinity or his redemptive death don't go all the way back to Jesus. Instead, they believe these were beliefs that developed much later in the church. Pastor Tom mentioned five things you can trust about the Bible.

**First: You can trust that
Jesus' contemporaries wrote the New Testament**

Read 1 Corinthians 15:3-4; 2 Peter 1:16; 1 John 1:1-3.

Why is it important to point out that eyewitnesses wrote the New Testament?

Why does the wide public exposure of the early New Testament accounts increase their dependability?

**Second: You can trust that
the Bible was faithfully copied**

Read 2 Timothy 3:16-17 and 2 Peter 1:20-21.

In what ways might God have been involved in what was included on our Bible?

Pastor Tom talked about “variants” in ancient copies of the Bible. What are they? Do variants between ancient copies undermine the reliability of the Bible?

**Third: You can trust that
archaeology verifies the Bible**

Nelson Glueck wrote, “It may be stated categorically that no archaeological discovery has controverted a biblical reference.” Has anyone in this discussion group been exposed to anything in print or media that would make them tend to agree or disagree with this viewpoint?

Since you can trust the Bible in terms of what archaeological digs can validate, doesn't it stand to reason that some of the Bible's more remarkable claims deserve a more serious look?

**Fourth: You can trust that
the Bible is consistent**

There are minor differences in some gospel narratives. For example, read Matthew 8:5-13 and Luke 7:1-10 and identify the differences.

Pastor Tom said such differences actually strengthen the claim that they are eyewitness testimony. Why?

**Fifth: You can trust
the selection of included writings**

The early church did not invent the Bible to have a source for the stories they taught about Jesus. But the early church did identify which gospels and letters were written by apostles (or associates of apostles). Why would this be an important qualification for identifying a book as a reliable guide to the words and actions of Jesus?

Conclusion

The Bible encourages us to be “constantly nourished on the words of the faith” (1 Timothy 4:6 NASB). From now until the end of 2018...

...what can you change in your schedule so that you can be “nourished” from reading Scripture on your own?

...what can you change in your schedule so that you can be “nourished” from studying Scripture with others?

...who will you try to bring with you to the worship service and to your Life Group?



Close with praise reports and prayer requests