

SERMON NOTES
I Peter 1:10-12; II Peter 1:16-21
“Myth or Fact?”

Intro:

- **True or False?**
- *Chocolate is toxic to dogs and can kill them* – **True**
- *Eating turkey makes you sleepy* – **False**
- *Coca-Cola originally contained cocaine* – **True**
- *A computer keyboard harbors more germs than a toilet seat* – **True**
- *The day after Thanksgiving is the biggest shopping day of the year* – **False**
- *The poinsettia plant is highly toxic and can kill a pet that eats its leaves* – **False**
- *The teddy bear was named after Theodore Roosevelt* – **True**
- *The observance of an annual Thanksgiving holiday is the result of a campaign by the author of the poem: “Mary Had a Little Lamb”* – **True** (*Sarah Hale*)
- *Sweet potatoes and yams are the same thing* – **False**
- *No two snowflakes are exactly alike* – **True**
- *Lightning never strikes twice in the same place* – **False**

(Discovery Channel “Myth or Fact” Quizzes)

- **How about these Bible stories – myth or history?**
- *Adam and Eve and the Garden of Eden*
- *Noah and the Flood*
- *The Exodus and the Red Sea crossing*
- *The Battle of Jericho*
- *David and Goliath*
- *Jonah and the whale*
- *Daniel and the Lions Den*
- *Jesus walking on water*
- *Jesus feeding the 5,000*
- *Jesus healing the man born blind*
- *Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead*
- *Jesus rising from the dead the third day*
- *Jesus ascending into heaven*

- **How much of the Bible is myth – and how much is historical fact?**

- *Many of the teachings of the Bible are distasteful to the spirit of the age in our culture – especially to the under-30 generation:*
- **God is our Creator and Judge and we are accountable to Him for all our words and actions**
- *Man was created good but after the fall has a sinful nature*
- **Marriage is the union of a man and a woman**
- *Sex is God's gift to be enjoyed only in marriage – between a husband and wife – all sex outside of marriage is sinful*
- **Living together and sleeping together before marriage is wrong**
- *Yahweh – The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob is the one and only true and living God*
- **Salvation is only through Jesus Christ and his death and resurrection**
- *Jesus Christ is uniquely God's Son and the Savior of the World*
- **Those who reject the salvation of Jesus Christ will be condemned to hell**

- *Unpopular teachings – teachings most people today would rather not believe*
- **If the Bible is the Word of God – then it would be foolish to reject any of the Bible's teachings – because the Word of God must be true and authoritative**
- *But if much of the Bible consists of stories that are really myths – then it would be a lot easier to just pick and choose which Bible teachings we want to accept and which we can disregard*
- ***“I believe in God – I just don't believe everything that is in the Bible. I follow some of the Bible's teachings – such as the Golden Rule – and don't judge lest you be judged – and stuff like that. But some of the Bible's teachings are out-dated and really hard to accept – so I disregard those since many of the Bible stories are just myths anyway.”***

- **You see what's at stake?**
- *If the Bible is the Word of God – truth and not myth – then to say “I believe in God but I just don't follow the Bible's teachings” is sheer hypocrisy*
- **That's like a child who says: “I really love and respect my parents – I just don't do what they say. I routinely disobey many of their rules because their rules are stupid. But I really love and respect my parents.”**
- **You cannot respect a person and disrespect their word. If you treat their word with contempt – then you are treating them with contempt.**
- *Likewise with God – you cannot honor Him and dishonor His Word*

I. THE CLAIMS OF SCRIPTURE TO BE GOD'S WORD

Susan Wright: While sitting next to my first grade daughter during our morning worship service one Sunday, I noticed her look down at my open Bible. In a low whisper, she asked, "Did God really write that?"

"Yes," I quietly whispered back.

Looking down at my Bible again, she said in amazement, "Wow! He really has neat handwriting!"

Of course, that's not what we mean when we say the Bible is the Word of God --the handwriting is not God's (except on the tablets of the 10 Commandments that Moses took down from Mt. Sinai)

But the Bible does claim to be the inspired Word of God – what does that mean and what is the evidence supporting that claim?

2 Peter 1:20 - 21 (NIV) ²⁰Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. ²¹For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

- *The prophetic writings of the Old Testament – indeed, all the Scriptures – are not the product of the prophets' or human writers' imaginations or insights*
- The prophets and biblical authors spoke and wrote what the Holy Spirit intended
- **Men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit**
- **The words of the prophets originated in the mind of God**
- *Yet they are still the words of the prophets – who chose their words in accordance with their own vocabulary and style and life experiences*
- The prophets did not merely dictate what they heard from God
- *The words of the Bible are the words of the prophets and the Word of God concurrently*

- God prepared specific human beings to communicate His word
- *These human beings spoke and wrote their own words in their own style*
- And these words were also just those words that God wanted them to use

- Jeremiah did not write with the same style as Isaiah – nor did Paul write with the same style as John
- *The individuality of each author is evident*
- **Yet all the words of all the human authors of the Bible had their origin in the mind of God**
- *Just as Jesus is both fully human and fully divine – so also the words of the Bible are both the words of men and the words of God*

- **And since the words of the Bible are the Word of God – they are true and authoritative – and without error or mistakes**

II Timothy 3: 16 ¹⁶All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness,

- John Stott: *The term “inspiration” means that the words the human authors spoke (and wrote) were actually breathed out of God’s mouth...*
 --God spoke through the human authors in such a way that his words were simultaneously their words, and their words were simultaneously his. This is the double authorship of the Bible. Scripture is equally the Word of God and the words of human beings. Better, it is the Word of God through the words of human beings...
 --*On the one hand, God spoke, revealing the truth and preserving the human authors from error, yet without violating their personality. On the other hand, men spoke, using their own faculties freely, yet without distorting the divine message. Their words were truly their own words. But they were (and still are) also God’s words, so that what Scripture says, God says.”*

The Bible is the Word of God through the words of human beings

-God-breathed means that what the Holy Spirit has spoken through the human authors of Scripture is true and without error

-God communicated his truth through the words of the human authors, so that the Scriptures are equally the words of God and the words of men

2 Samuel 23:1 - 2 (NIV) ¹These are the last words of David: “The oracle of David son of Jesse, the oracle of the man exalted by the Most High, the man anointed by the God of Jacob, Israel’s singer of songs: ² “The Spirit of the LORD spoke through me; his word was on my tongue.”

In a prayer recorded in Acts 4:25, the believers quote Psalm 2 with this intro: **“You spoke by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of your servant, our father David”**
 –that is what is meant by the Scriptures being “God-breathed” – **God spoke by the Holy Spirit through the words of the human authors**

If Scripture is the God-breathed Word of God – then all of life’s most important questions – *What is God? What is man? What lies beyond the grave? How may salvation and eternal life be secured? What does it mean to love God and love my neighbor? What is God’s plan for marriage and human sexuality?* -- the definitive and truthful and authoritative answers to these and other vital questions are found in the Bible, the Word of God

II. REASONS TO BELIEVE THE BIBLE IS GOD'S WORD

- The Bible does not set forth a logical argument proving its inspiration any more than it sets forth a philosophical argument proving the existence of God or a scientific argument proving God's creation of the heavens and the earth
- **These realities are simply stated as truth**
- *Yet biblical Christian faith is a reasonable faith – and there are good reasons to believe that the Bible is God's Word*

(1) Jesus Christ is the risen Lord and He says so

Ultimately our confidence in the authority and truthfulness of the Bible rests on the authority of Jesus Christ Himself as the risen Lord

Christianity rises or falls with Christ=s resurrection

-if Jesus was merely a dead Jewish Rabbi still buried in a tomb outside Jerusalem, then the faith of Christians is worthless, and the advocates of religious pluralism and relativism are right

-but if Jesus is risen from the dead, then He is the Truth and the Life and the only Way to God

The evidence in support of Christ=s resurrection makes belief more reasonable than unbelief

The heart of the biblical message is the Good News that “God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.”

--And the most important truth of the Gospel is that *Christ died for our sins, was buried, and on the third day was raised from the dead*

Christianity rises or falls with the resurrection of Jesus Christ

--*if Jesus Christ is risen from the tomb, then there is a God*

--*If Jesus Christ is risen from the tomb, then Jesus Christ is the Way, the Truth and the Life – and the Only Way to God*

--*If Jesus Christ is risen from the tomb, then there is life after death – and eternal life is found in Jesus Christ – who is the Resurrection and the Life*

--*If Jesus Christ is risen from the dead, then his death on the Cross is God's only provision for the forgiveness of our sins – and the only way to be saved is by trusting Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord*

And if Jesus Christ is risen from the dead, then He is Lord – He is, in truth, God in human flesh

--If Jesus is risen from the dead and God in human flesh, then his view of Scripture is authoritative – in fact, his view on everything is authoritative

And what was Jesus' view of Scripture?

-Jesus said: *AThy Word is truth.*@ (John 17:17)

In Matthew 15, Jesus contrasts the religious traditions of the Pharisees – traditions they misrepresented as biblical truth – with the actual word of God written in Scripture

--Quoting Scripture, Jesus said: “For God said”

--And he rebuked the Pharisees with: “You nullify the Word of God for the sake of your tradition.”

In another dispute with the Pharisees, Jesus quoted from Psalm 110, using these words:

Matthew 22:41 - 45 (NIV) ⁴¹While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, ⁴²**“What do you think about the Christ? Whose son is he?”** “The son of David,” they replied. ⁴³He said to them, **“How is it then that David, speaking by the Spirit, calls him ‘Lord’? For he says,** ⁴⁴**“The Lord said to my Lord: “Sit at my right hand until I put your enemies under your feet.””** ⁴⁵**If then David calls him ‘Lord,’ how can he be his son?”**

“How is it then that David, speaking by the Spirit, calls him (the Messiah) Lord?”

What was Jesus' view of Scripture?

--That it is the Word of God

--That the human authors, such as David, were speaking and writing by the Spirit of God

--that what they wrote was “God-breathed”

--Jesus testified to the complete authority and reliability of the OT Scriptures

Jesus claims that same authority for himself – that he was speaking the words of God

John 12: 44-50 ⁴⁴Then Jesus cried out, **“When a man believes in me, he does not believe in me only, but in the one who sent me.** ⁴⁵**When he looks at me, he sees the one who sent me.** ⁴⁹**For I did not speak of my own accord, but the Father who sent me commanded me what to say and how to say it.** ⁵⁰**I know that his command leads to eternal life. So whatever I say is just what the Father has told me to say.”**

Jesus spoke the Word of God

--and Jesus authorized, equipped and empowered his apostles to write the Word of God under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit

(2) The NT is based on eyewitness testimony

- *We do not need to prove the inspiration or inerrancy of the Bible to establish the resurrection of Jesus Christ*
- Taken simply as a historical document – the NT is a reliable historical witness to Jesus of Nazareth
- *The historical evidence for the life, death and resurrection of Jesus is so strong because it is based on eyewitness accounts written while the contemporaries of Jesus were still alive to verify the facts*
- For example, the supernatural Transfiguration of Jesus: *Myth or Fact?*

Matthew 17:1 - 8 (NIV) ¹After six days Jesus took with him Peter, James and John the brother of James, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. ²There he was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as the light. ³Just then there appeared before them Moses and Elijah, talking with Jesus. ⁴Peter said to Jesus, “Lord, it is good for us to be here. If you wish, I will put up three shelters—one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah.” ⁵While he was still speaking, a bright cloud enveloped them, and a voice from the cloud said, “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!” ⁶When the disciples heard this, they fell facedown to the ground, terrified. ⁷But Jesus came and touched them. **“Get up,”** he said. **“Don’t be afraid.”** ⁸When they looked up, they saw no one except Jesus.

- *Myth or Fact?*
- Peter was there

2 Peter 1:16-18 ¹⁶For we have not been telling you fairy tales when we explained to you the power of our Lord Jesus Christ and his coming again. My own eyes have seen his splendor and his glory: ¹⁷⁻¹⁸I was there on the holy mountain when he shone out with honor given him by God his Father; I heard that glorious, majestic voice calling down from heaven, saying, “This is my much-loved Son; I am well pleased with him.”

- *The Greek word translated “fairy tales” is the word for “myth”*
- **The NT is not a collection of myths – the NT is based on eyewitness accounts written by people who saw the splendor and glory of Jesus with their own eyes**

John 19:35 (NIV) ³⁵The man who saw it has given testimony, and his testimony is true. He knows that he tells the truth, and he testifies so that you also may believe.

John 20:30 - 31 (NIV) ³⁰Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. ³¹But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

1 John 1:1-3 ¹The one who existed from the beginning is the one we have heard and seen. We saw him with our own eyes and touched him with our own hands. He is Jesus Christ, the Word of life. ²This one who is life from God was shown to us, and we have seen him. And now we testify and announce to you that he is the one who is eternal life. He was with the Father, and then he was shown to us. ³We are telling you about what we ourselves have actually seen and heard

- *The NT stories about Jesus and his miracles: Myths or Facts?*
- **Facts of history – written by eyewitnesses**

(3) *Fulfilled Prophecies*

Isaiah 46:9-10 ⁹And do not forget the things I have done throughout history. For I am God—I alone! I am God, and there is no one else like me. ¹⁰Only I can tell you what is going to happen even before it happens. Everything I plan will come to pass, for I do whatever I wish.

Isaiah 48:3 (NIV) ³ I foretold the former things long ago, my mouth announced them and I made them known; then suddenly I acted, and they came to pass.

- **Only God can announce what is going to happen before it happens and then bring it to pass**
- *We know that the Bible is the Word of God because of so many examples of prophecies being written down in the Scriptures and then fulfilled later in history just as God said*
- For example – long before the events took place, the prophets predicted the fall of Jerusalem, the destruction of the Temple, the exile of the Jewish people to Babylon, and the return of the Jews to Jerusalem after 70 years
- *The prophets also predicted that the Babylonian Empire would be followed by the Persian Empire and then Alexander the Great and the Greeks and then four smaller rulers and then the Roman Empire*
- Daniel's prophecies are so amazing and so detailed that skeptics can't believe the book of Daniel could possibly have been written before the events – yet it was

- *Then there are all the prophecies written about the coming Messiah that were fulfilled by Jesus of Nazareth*

III. THE PREDICTED COMING OF THE SAVIOR

1 Peter 1:10 - 12 (NIV) ¹⁰Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who spoke of the grace that was to come to you, searched intently and with the greatest care, ¹¹trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. ¹²It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves but you, when they spoke of the things that have now been told you by those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. Even angels long to look into these things.

* *Teresa Marx:*

My mother taught Sunday school in our small rural church. She began one lesson by asking the children if they knew what a prophet was.

-Little Donny showed his farming background when he offered, "*That's when you buy a lamb for 42 cents a pound and sell it for 69 cents a pound.*"

Of course, that's not the kind of prophets that Peter is talking about

-*Peter is speaking of the biblical prophets who spoke and wrote the word of God as they were inspired by the Holy Spirit*

-the prophets prophesied about the gracious salvation God had prepared for us

-*the Holy Spirit inspired them to write in advance about the Messiah's suffering and his great glory afterward*

-and even as the prophets were speaking and writing the word of God, they had many questions as to what it all could mean

-*inspiration did not bestow omniscience*

-they sometimes wondered about the meaning and means by which their prophecies would be fulfilled

-*and, of course, the things they wrote about did not happen in their lifetimes, but hundreds of years later*

-the fulfillment of their prophecies is the saving work of Jesus Christ that we now proclaim as the Gospel

BULLETIN INSERT: Some of the major prophecies of the promised Messiah (*God's anointed Savior & King*) – and how these prophecies were fulfilled by Jesus

(1) *The Messiah would be born of a virgin*

The virgin birth of Jesus – called Immanuel (“God with us”) - was prophesied by Isaiah:

Isaiah 7:14 Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.

(2) The Messiah would be born in Bethlehem

The promised King was to be the descendant of King David and it was prophesied that he would be born in the town of David, Bethlehem – some 700 years before Jesus' birth

Micah 5: 2 *“But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me One who will be ruler over Israel,*

(3) The Messiah would perform miracles

Isaiah 35:5-6 ⁵ Then will the eyes of the blind be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped. ⁶ Then will the lame leap like a deer, and the mute tongue shout for joy.

These were all fulfilled in the ministry of Jesus

Matthew 11:4-5 ⁴Jesus replied, **“Go back and report to John what you hear and see: ⁵The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is preached to the poor.**

(4) The Messiah would be crucified

The crucifixion was graphically foretold in Psalm 22 – complete with references to the piercing of Jesus' hands and feet and the casting of lots for his clothing.

Psalm 22:14 - 18 (NIV) ¹⁴ I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint. My heart has turned to wax; it has melted away within me. ¹⁵ My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth; a band of evil men has encircled me, they have pierced my hands and my feet. ¹⁷ I can count all my bones; people stare and gloat over me. ¹⁸ They divide my garments among them and cast lots for my clothing.

Isaiah 53:5 (NIV) ⁵ But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.

On several different occasions Jesus said to his disciples:

Luke 9:22 ²² **“The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.”**

Jesus knew from the OT Scriptures that he must suffer and be killed – and Jesus knew from the OT Scriptures that he would be raised to life

(5) *The Messiah would be raised from the grave*

Isaiah 53: 11 *After the suffering of his soul, he will see the light of life and be satisfied;*

Psalm 16:10-11 *Because you will not abandon me to the grave, nor will you let your Holy One see decay. You have made known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand.*

(6) *The Messiah will return to heaven in triumph*

Psalm 110:1 ¹ The LORD says to my Lord: “Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.”

And one day – He is coming again!

IV. THE PREDICTED SECOND COMING

Jesus the Messiah was born as the son of David in the town of David and has fulfilled the prophecies regarding his miracles, sufferings, death and resurrection – but Jesus has not yet fulfilled the prophecies concerning the Messiah’s everlasting reign of peace and righteousness on the earth

At Christmas time we celebrate the fulfillment of **Isaiah’s prophecy**

Isaiah 9:6 *For to us a child is born,
to us a son is given,
and the government will be on his shoulders.
And he will be called
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.*

But we still await the fulfillment of the next verse:

Isaiah 9:7 *Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end.*

*He will reign on David's throne
and over his kingdom,
establishing and upholding it
with justice and righteousness
from that time on and forever.
The zeal of the LORD Almighty
will accomplish this.*

Jesus promised his disciples that he was coming back to earth with power and great glory – just as Daniel prophesied:

Matthew 24: 30-31 **“At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory. And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other.**

Almost 2000 years have come and gone since Jesus made those promises

-How do we know that he will keep his promise to come back?

--How do we know that the same Jesus who rose from the dead and ascended into heaven will literally return to the earth in power and great glory to reign as King?

2 Peter 1:19 (NIV) ¹⁹And we have the word of the prophets made more certain, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts.

- *The same God who kept His promises to send His Son to be our Savior will also keep His promises to send His Son back to reign as King of kings and Lord of lords*
- **Furthermore, Peter – along with James and John – has already seen Jesus' Parousia glory – the glory of His Second Coming**

2 Peter 1:16 (NIV) ¹⁶We did not follow cleverly invented stories when we told you about the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty.

- ***Jesus promised that some of his disciples would see the Son of Man coming in His Kingdom glory***
- ***This was fulfilled on the mountain at the Transfiguration – when Jesus was revealed in the full glory of his coming Kingdom – on that sacred mountain Jesus’ appearance was transformed – the veil hiding his deity was removed – and the divine glory of Jesus that will be revealed to the whole world at his Second Coming – that same glory was revealed to Peter, James and John at the Transfiguration***
- ***Peter has absolute confidence that Jesus will return to earth in power and great glory as King of kings and Lord of lords – Why? – because Peter has already seen Jesus as the glorious King with his own eyes***

On the day that God does what He has promised to do – will you be ready?

--are you ready for the Return of the King?

One day every knee will bow and every tongue confess that *Jesus Christ is Lord*

--those who choose to do so during their lifetime from personal faith and reverent submission to Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior will experience the fullness of salvation at the Return of the King and will one day reign with him

--those who reject Jesus Christ as their Lord now will experience judgment at the Return of the King and will be separated from his presence forever

Are you ready for the Return of the King?

--the way to make yourself ready for the Return of the King is by acknowledging Jesus as your Lord and Savior now and by giving your life to serving him as your Sovereign King

Salvation Prayer

“The Days of Elijah”