

The Parish of Wellow

Is the Bible Reliable?

Passage, Sermon Notes and Questions

Please feel free to take these sermon notes home with you and you may wish to find some time during the next few weeks to consider the questions below.

1. Sermon Passage - 2 Timothy 3:14-17

14 But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it,

15 and how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

16 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, 17 so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

2. Sermon Notes

Have you ever thought:

- How can I be sure that God exists? or
- What happens when I die? or
- Why do we need the Church?

Then this new series called “Searching Issues” is for you!

2.1 People are sometimes told that the Bible is a very unreliable document

- How can we accept that the Bible is God’s word?
- How can we trust a document written so many years ago?
- How can we trust a document that clearly has internal inconsistencies?

These are the questions we are going to look at this morning but why start with the Bible?

- It is the primary source

2.2 How do we accept that the Bible is God’s word?

- Paul was helping both Timothy and the churches with this very point
- He was referring to the Old Testament as the New Testament as we know it did not then exist
- Paul says the Bible is ‘God-breathed’ and so confirming God’s active involvement in the writing of scripture
- The writer’s of the Bible were in such a close relationship with God that He inspired them to write His word.

Facts about the Bible

- Library of 66 books
- Written over 1500 years, by 40 writers
- Old Testament is made up of 39 books
- New Testament is made up of 27 books
- The Bible is the biggest selling book
- 90% of UK households own a copy

2.3 How can we trust a document written so long ago?

- Through the science of Textual Criticism - the more texts we have the less doubt there is in the original.
- The table below summarises the facts and shows the extent of the New Testament evidence

WORK	DATE	EARLIEST COPY	TIME SPAN	NO OF COPIES
Herodotus	488-428 BC	AD 900	1,300	8
Thucydides	C 460-400 BC	C AD 900	1,300	8
Tacitus	AD 100	1100	1,000	20
Caesar's Gallic War	58-50 BC	AD 900	950	9-10
Livy's Roman History	59 BC—AD17	AD 900	900	20
New Testament	AD 40—100	AD 130 (full manuscripts AD350)	300	5,000+ Greek 10,000 Latin 9,300 others

- In becoming a Christian we take a step of faith but this faith is based on historical evidence.
- There is a great deal of historical evidence for Jesus' existence from both Christian and non-Christian sources

2.4 How can we trust a document with internal inconsistencies?

- Some will question that the four gospels do not always agree on a particular passage
- Eye witness accounts eg of an accident do vary but the facts remain the same and no-one doubts that the accident didn't happen
- So it is with the Gospel writers the facts are the same but they put a different angle on the events.
- Some will also come with questions that are not necessarily appropriate for the Bible

3. Questions to consider back at home

- If someone asked you how can you say that the Bible is God's infallible word, how would you respond?
- In what ways is the New Testament evidence about Jesus 'very strong'? How convincing do you find it? Why?
- How do you consider the different reports of Jesus ie the four gospels, give us a greater understanding of His ministry?

If you would like to discuss these questions further please feel free to ring me on 01761 437724

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