

Truth Topics • How can I know the Bible is reliable?

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Well, we're doing something new here this summer and we're getting started tonight with our Truth Topics. And you can see on the screen there that our subject matter for tonight is, How can I know the Bible is reliable?

The reason that I'm starting off this series with this particular topic is because if we don't establish this issue in our hearts and minds, whether or not the Bible is reliable, we really have nothing to talk about henceforth, because everything is predicated upon an understanding that the Bible is reliable. That it is authoritative, that it is the Word of God. If it isn't, we have no basis from which to speak.

Now, that may sound weird, that may sound weird to an unbeliever. It probably sounds very understandable to you. But people outside of the body of Christ, truth has a completely different sort of a meaning.

And true is something that is constantly changing and evolving, and what is true for me might not be true for you. What's true for you probably isn't true for me, but that's okay. Truth has become this confusing mess where we've literally abandoned logic. We've abandoned practicality. We've abandoned facts in favor of a self-proclaimed truth that just comes into my head.

Now you guys know what the latest thing going on in our culture is. I'm a man, but if I decide tomorrow that I'm a woman, regardless of what the biological facts, regardless of what I have, how I was born. If I decide that I'm, I feel like I'm a woman, now I am free in some places of society, to waltz into a woman's restroom, or a woman's locker room, and whatever. And society is trying desperately to be okay with that. And why? Because true or truth has, as Isaiah said, stumbled in the streets. And now, the whole definition of true is up for grabs.

Well, you and I think differently as biblical Christians. To us, truth is what we see in the Word of God. It's what we find in the Scriptures. And so, we have a very sort of a, we have a very clear sort of an understanding of what true is and isn't. That's why we're starting with the Scriptures.

And can I encourage you? When you're talking to people, and a lot of what we're going to be dealing with this summer is going to be helping to not only establish truth in your heart, but to equip you for talking to unbelievers, and individuals who are wanting to understand more about your faith and what you do believe.

When you're talking to people, make sure everything that you say is punctuated with the authority of God's Word and let them know that what you are saying to them is not just your opinion. Because you see, the world that we live in today thrives on the idea of, well, anyway, that's what I believe. And as Christians, we can tend to talk to people without referring to the authority of God's Word. And what ends up happening is the conversation is really nothing more than, oh, you believe that, well, I believe this. And they're okay with that.

The world, for the most part, is okay with disagreeing because they want to be very tolerant and they want to be very open minded. And so, if you come along and make it sound like this is your opinion, more than likely they're just going to say, oh, well that's an interesting opinion that you have. Okay, goodbye.

Now, what you and I want them to do when we get done having a conversation, is we want them to realize, I didn't just give you my opinion, I told you what the Bible says. This is and, that is my authority. And when you're talking to people and they're saying things to you and giving you their opinions, it's okay to say on what authority is that statement based. Because people make truth statements all the time. Even if they make a statement like, there's no such thing as truth. Have you ever had someone say that? I had.

I remember years ago, I had an uncle say that to me. It was a long time ago, 30, many, 39 years ago, whatever. Very liberal sort of an uncle, and he said to me, he just said, well, all truth is relative. And at the time I was, I had never heard that before, like almost 40 years ago. And I thought, pfft. I have to think about that. Well, you think about it for a while, and you start to realize, wait a second, if all truth is relative, then what you just told me is relative. Right? If all truth is relative, you just told me. What I should have said to him is, is that true? All truth is relative, Paul. Really, is that true?

Like that old joke, there's no such thing as absolute truth. Really? Absolutely. But that's what you're dealing with. That's what you're up against in the culture in which we live. Let me show you a couple of interesting quotes from one of my favorite historical characters. Winston Churchill was heard to say,

“Truth is the most valuable thing in the world.” —Winston Churchill

“Men occasionally stumble over the truth, but most of them pick themselves up and hurry off as if nothing ever happened.”

—Winston Churchill

“Truth is the most valuable thing in the world.”

And I wonder sometimes, if as Christians, we feel the same way. Truth is so incredibly important, but please understand people, truth for you and I is more than just a series of facts or words strung together that somehow, some way, make sense to us.

Truth is more than that. Truth is a person. Jesus said, *“I am the truth.”* (John 14:6) He didn't just say, I speak the truth, I know the truth, I convey the truth, I live the truth. He said, *“I am the truth”* so we know the truth personified. It better be an important thing to us. It ought to be our lifeblood.

And then, another interesting comment. This one's funny, but sad. Winston Churchill also said,

“Truth is the most valuable thing in the world.” —Winston Churchill

“Men occasionally stumble over the truth, but most of them pick themselves up and hurry off as if nothing ever happened.”

—Winston Churchill

“Men occasionally stumble over the truth, but most of them pick themselves up and hurry off as if nothing ever happened.”

And what that means is they are confronted with the truth but they end up forgetting it, and just moving on with life, even though the truth hits them right between the eyes. Or, as he says, they literally stumble over it but it doesn't affect them in any sort of a long term way.

I don't need to tell you the truth is under attack today and the attack is growing. It is becoming more pervasive, and it is becoming more radicalized, and dangerous. And we're living in times when you and I simply telling the truth is something that could get us into some pretty serious trouble. This is one of those areas where we need to count the cost and say, am I willing to boldly

declare the truth. And we're going to talk about truth as it relates to the Word of God.

Now, if I was just talking to a group of Christians here tonight, which I am in you, and I wanted to talk to you about the Bible being reliable, and I said, how do we know that the Bible is reliable? Frankly, I would talk to you differently than I would a group of unbelievers. If I was standing tonight in front of a group of unbelievers, I'd probably, my knees would probably be knocking together for nervousness, but talking to Christians, piece of cake.

If I'm going to talk to you guys about the reliability of Scripture, all I really need to do is point to Jesus because you know Him, and you trust Him. And if you can trust Him for eternity, for your eternal soul, then you can probably trust some other things that He did too. And one of the things He did was He quoted often from the Scriptures.

In fact, He quoted from 24 different Old Testament books. Right? And quoted from them as if they were the final word on truth. He spoke of the Scriptures as if they were absolutely reliable. In fact, one of the statements that He made about the law, let me show you this one too. This is from Matthew chapter 5. It says,

Matthew 5:18 (ESV)

For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished.

For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished.

Let me show you this one from Matthew 24, verse 35. It says, He said,

Matthew 24:35 (ESV)

Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

Jesus said some pretty powerful things related to the Old Testament, related to the words that He spoke that are recorded in the New Testament. And coupled with some other statements, Jesus telling His disciples, you might remember, that the Holy Spirit would bring to their remembrance everything that He had said. (John 14:26) We read stuff like that and we go, wow.

See, we trust Jesus. You know Jesus and you trust Him. And you know that Jesus said to His disciples that the Holy Spirit is going to bring back to their remembrance everything He told them during His ministry. We put all that together and we realize that these are some pretty convincing arguments for believers concerning the Bible's declaration to be both authoritative and reliable.

But, we have a responsibility to share the Gospel outside of our four walls. The church, the fellowship of the saints. What if you're talking to somebody who doesn't know Jesus? Well, the first thing you should know when discussing this subject with an unbeliever is that it isn't a quick conversation.

I've had unbelievers ask me this question, and, because I'll quote from the Scripture and they'll say Scripture, Scripture, Scripture. How do you even know that's even true? And that's usually the way the question is asked, or something similar. You sitting here talking about the Bible. The Bible. The Bible. Pah! I mean, how in the world do you even know what you're quoting is right, or true, or something like that?

Well, once again, this is not a quick conversation. If somebody genuinely wants to know the answer, you need to understand that it is not going to present itself in a 60 second conversation. Okay? I wish we could. I wish you could say, well, hey... I wish it was as fast as giving somebody the 4 spiritual laws or something like that. But it's not. You can't just go, doink, doink, doink, there you go. It's too important for a rapid sort of a conversation.

But there's something else that you should know about somebody who may ask you about your belief in the Bible. Some people will do that assuming that your answer is going to be something really stupid for which they will be able to ridicule you. Just know that. Just know that. When someone when some people ask you, that question, it's just to hear how ridiculous your answer might be.

Secondly, others are going to ask you about your belief in the Bible, not because they want to hear an answer, but because they simply want to engage you in a conversation so they can tell you why they don't believe the Bible is reliable. In other words, they're starting what appears to be a two way conversation, but really it's only a one way sort of a thing. They have no intention of listening, they really only want to talk.

I strongly encourage you not to have a conversation with people who have those kinds of attitudes. And that may sound strange for me to say but let me show you, let me remind you of what Peter said to us in 1 Peter, chapter 5, verse 15. It says,

1 Peter 5:15 (ESV)

Always be prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect...

Always be prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect...

I want you to notice something about this verse. That the person who that you're preparing for is the one who asks for a reason, they genuinely want to know. They want a reason. They want to know your reason. Why do you believe? Why do you, I really want to know why you believe in the authority of the Bible. I genuinely want to know.

Sometimes that's hard to discern in a short term sort of a conversation but I want to remind you the fact that Jesus didn't respond to everyone who asked Him questions. Herod didn't get any response from Jesus. Pilate got a precious few. And Pilate is the man, when Jesus spoke about truth and how those who are of His kingdom will hear His truth and respond and so forth. All Pilate said was, yeah, well, what is truth? And he walked away. And here he was faced with the personification of truth and he didn't stick around for an answer. So, not everybody who asks questions wants to get an answer from you. And that's an important thing to think about.

But let's assume now for a moment that you are talking to someone who genuinely wants to know why it is that you believe the Bible is authoritative and reliable. And again, this isn't going, as I'm sharing these things with you, this is not something that's going to happen probably in a short term conversation, but I want you to think of this like a court of law. And I want you to think of it as if witnesses are coming forward to testify of this situation to convince the individual of the premise, and the premise is, the Bible is reliable. It is authoritative.

And so witnesses, it's just like a court of law. What happens in a court of law? There's a premise. This person is either guilty, or innocent, or there might be some other issue going on related to the court case. And sometimes witnesses are then called forth to give a testimony, right? To convince either the judge or, a jury of one side or the other, so that they walk away going into the jury box, if that's where their... Or jury room, if that's, if it's a jury trial. Or for the judge to go into his chambers to ponder all of the facts and say, this is the truth. This is what I got out of this, and this is the truth. I've heard from the witnesses.

So what we're going to do here tonight, is we're going to bring up 6 witnesses, and I'm going to put them on the screen for you, so that you can see them all together. And then we'll go back, and we'll talk about each one. We're going to look at:

- The witness of Unity
- The witness of Prophecy
- The witness of Archaeology
- The witness of Science
- The witness of History
- The witness of Changed Lives

The witness of Unity, the witness of Prophecy, the witness of Archaeology, the witness of Science, the witness of History, and the witness of Changed Lives.

I don't know how much time, I'm going to give you for Q&A at the end. You can see this one's probably not looking good, but we're going to give it the old college try here. But if you do have questions, jot them down because we'll try our best.

The first thing we're going to bring up is The witness of Unity. And when we talk about or refer to The witness of Unity of the Bible, we're talking about how the Bible conveys a singular message throughout the course of Scripture. And that may not sound like a huge deal for your consideration but let me just remind you of something.

The Bible was written by 40 different authors. 40 different authors over a period of 1,600 years. And what does the Bible talk about? Let me put the topics here on the screen for you. Here's what the Bible covers. It covers,

- God
- Mankind
- Sin
- Salvation
- Death

God. Now, let's just stop there. You go get 40 authors. Forget 1,600 years. Do it in just 1 year. Go get 40 authors from all walks of life and have them write about the topic of God and see if they agree. How about this?

- God
- Mankind
- Sin
- Salvation
- Death

Talk about **Mankind**. His origin, spiritual condition, his relationship to God, his future, things like that. You know what you'd get if you had 40 different authors from all different walks of life? You'd get some people talking about how we were created. You'd get some people saying that we evolved, right? You'd get some people saying, I don't really know. You'd get people coming, and you start talking about their relationship with God. Some of them would say, well, you can't know God. Others would say, sure, you can know God. Some would say, I don't know if you can know God. Some would say, I don't know if there is a God to know, right?

- God
- Mankind
- Sin
- Salvation
- Death

The Bible also talks about **sin**. It talks about how it started, its origin. It talks about its effects on mankind. And the Bible also talks about the cure for sin.

- God
- Mankind
- Sin
- Salvation
- Death

It talks about **Salvation**. What it is, how mankind can lay hold of it. What effect it's going to have on our lives.

- God
- Mankind
- Sin
- Salvation
- Death

And then the Bible talks about **Death**. It talks about the origin of death. It talks about the power of death and it talks about the future of death.

You know what's interesting? Those are incredible topics for you to sit and just find 40 people to write on. Now stretch it out over 1,600 years and just see if they agree.

Listen, you want to see confusion, grab a science textbook from about 30 years ago. You could start 20 years ago, 30 years ago, get one from 50 years ago. You would, you'd think you were reading a comic book at how many times it contradicted what is now being claimed as science. Even back then they were making the statement, we used to believe, but now we know. Because science is constantly evolving, constantly changing. We're changing our tune, we're changing our findings, we're changing our conclusions.

The Bible talks about science, too. We'll deal with that in just a little bit. But can you imagine if you got all these people together 1,600 years?

Here's what you find in the Bible. God is always the same. He's always the eternal, immortal, all powerful, living God.

Mankind is always the same. Created by God, fallen into sin, in need of a Savior, in need of forgiveness, in need of redemption.

Salvation is always the same. We don't talk about different kinds of salvation. We don't talk about, sin is always wrong, death is always an intrusion in God's, creation, and something that God is going to overturn one day. It's always the same throughout the course of the Bible.

One of the, one of the weeks that we're going to get together here, we're going to talk about all of the statements that people make about the Bible to you about how it's full of contradictions, and all those other things. We're going to spend one whole night just talking about all those things and helping you to answer those things.

But, let me just tell you right here. This whole idea that the Bible is full of contradictions could not be further from the truth. The Bible is one of the most amazing documents of consistency that you will, well, not one of, it is the most. It is the most amazing document of consistency that you will ever hold in your hands. And it is incredible as to the thread of unity that you find throughout the course of Scripture.

The next witness that we're going to look at here is,

• The Witness of Prophecy

The Witness of Prophecy.

Now one of the strongest arguments frankly for the truthfulness of the Bible is its accuracy in predicting the future. I don't know if you're aware of it, but there are approximately 2,500 prophecies that appear in the pages of the Bible, 2,500. And about approximately 2,000 of those have already been fulfilled with pinpoint accuracy.

The Bible, in fact, stands alone in this area of predicting the future with precision and accuracy. And I'm going to give you just one quick example from the Old Testament. Let me show you this Scripture from Isaiah chapter 44. We, this is great. This talks about something we dealt with recently in our study of Ezra and Nehemiah. It says,

Isaiah 44:24, 28 (ESV)

Thus says the LORD, your Redeemer, who formed you from the womb: "I am the LORD...who says of Cyrus, 'He is my shepherd, and he shall fulfill all my purpose'; saying of Jerusalem, 'She shall be built,' and of the temple, 'Your foundation shall be laid.'"

Thus says the LORD, your Redeemer, who formed you from the womb: "I am the LORD...who says of Cyrus, 'He is my shepherd, and he shall fulfill all my purpose'; saying of Jerusalem, 'She shall be built,' and of the temple, 'Your foundation shall be laid.'"

Now, this is a great prophecy. We read about this in Ezra, about how Cyrus made a proclamation to go back and rebuild the temple in Jerusalem. But this prophecy is Isaiah speaking about this situation. Talking about this Medo Persian king by name, and did you notice what He says in that passage? He says that by the proclamation of Cyrus, the temple foundation is going to be laid.

Guess what? The first temple was still standing when this prophecy was made. What in the world would you talk about the foundation of the temple being laid for? The first one is still there! This was given so far in advance, and you'll remember that Isaiah lived during the time of Hezekiah. But this was written approximately 690 B.C., about 150 years before Cyrus was born, and He calls him by name. And He calls him, my servant.

Makes you think Cyrus is going to be a godly man. Not necessarily. He was a Medo Persian pagan king but God moved upon his heart to release the Jews to go back to their homeland after 70 years of captivity and to rebuild the temple. And God calls him my servant and speaks of him by name.

Now, history and then other passages in the Bible tell us about king Cyrus and the Persian Empire. And how he gave the order to the Jewish captives living in Babylon to return to their homeland and begin the rebuilding process of the Jewish temple, which had been destroyed approximately 70 years previous to that. And it's all recorded in the Book of Ezra. We just, as I said, recently went through that.

But you know what? The details of this prophecy are so pinpoint and so amazing, the only thing liberal scholars could say to refute it is they basically came up with an accusation that the last several chapters of Isaiah were written after the fact. They have no proof of that, but they call it the second Book of Isaiah.

Here's the reasoning behind saying that those chapters came later. They have no natural explanation for something being this accurate. They can't explain it. And because they're naturalists, because they believe that everything has to have a natural explanation, they're, I mean, believing in God is out of the question so, what's left?

Well, obviously these things were written after the fact. How do you know? Because there's no such thing as miracles. Right? That's their foundational reason for basically introducing the idea that Isaiah has 2 parts. One that's written hundreds of years later after the first part. But that's the only thing they could come up with because they had no other explanation to explain it.

If they're going to say that this is an accurate prophecy that was written 150 years before Cyrus was born, then they got to believe God. And they got to believe all of the moral implications that go along with the fact that there's a God before whom we will stand one day. And that's not going to happen, at least in some people's hearts and minds.

Now, when it comes to prophecies concerning the coming of Messiah, the fulfillment rate goes off the charts. It is absolutely crazy.

Let me put up just a small cross section of what is a total of 60 prophecies of Messiah. You'll notice that the section I'm showing you here is just 1 through 10. There are 50 more of them, and they are:

60 Prophecies of Messiah

Concerning his birth	Prophesied	Fulfilled
1. Born of the seed of woman	Gen 3:15	Gal 4:4
2. Born of a virgin	Isa 7:14	Mt 1:18-25
3. Seed of Abraham	Gen 22:18	Mt 1:1
4. Seed of Isaac	Gen 21:12	Lk 3:23+34
5. Seed of Jacob	Num 24:17	Lk 3:34
6. Seed of David	Jer 23:5	Lk 3:31
7. Tribe of Judah	Gen 49:10	Rev 5:5
8. Family line of Jesse	Isa 11:1	Lk 3:32
9. Born in Bethlehem	Mic 5:2	Mt 2:1-6
10. Herod kills the children	Jer 31:15	Mt 2:16-18

Born of the seed of a woman, Born of a virgin, the Seed of Abraham, the Seed of Isaac. These are all things that were prophesied in the Scripture. Seed of Jacob, Seed of David, Tribe of Judah, Family line of Jesse, Born in Bethlehem, Herod kills the children.

All of these things on the first column there, under Prophesied, is where the Scripture shows that prophecy. And on the far right side, under Fulfilled, is where it was ultimately fulfilled. Now, I've got Some copies of all 60 of these prophecies, but I'm only going to give these to those of you who don't have the internet and or are not on Calvary Mail. This is for people that don't do computers. For those of you that do, tonight, I'm going to send this out in PDF form on Calvary Mail, okay? If you're not on Calvary Mail, just email me: paul@ccontario.com, and I'll send it to you. I'll send you the whole thing. But reserve these, would you for the people that don't have the internet or an address, because I want you guys to have. I want you to see all 60 of these prophecies just related to one man, His coming, the Son of God, the Messiah. It is amazing.

Let's look at the next witness. The next witness that we're looking at is the

- Witness of Archaeology

Witness of Archaeology.

The discoveries of archaeology can be just tremendously helpful when the truth of whether or not the Scripture is reliable comes up by skeptics. And one of the things that you can talk to them about are the vast, the abundance of archaeological evidence that can be used to demonstrate the fact that the people, the places, and the events of the Bible are real. And this is no small thing, you guys.

How long have we had archaeological supplements in our study Bible? I mean, like, forever? It's so easy for you and I. We don't even look at them anymore. You buy a big study Bible and it has this archaeological supplement and you're like, yeah, whatever.

But it's crazy. These things are amazing. All the time we keep unearthing new things that get, take us further back and show us more of the corroborative evidence of what the Bible has to say and you and I take it for granted. Imagine you were a Mormon and you have the books of Mormon, which speak about all of these civilizations that existed. These people groups that lived upon the earth, for which there is not one iota of archaeological evidence. They cannot prove anything that is written in the books of Mormon related to these civilizations, related to these peoples.

Listen, groups of people leave behind junk. They leave behind pottery, and silverware, and writings, and homes, and bones, and all kinds of things that show that's civilized... And people love to write things on things.

And you go to Israel and the areas of the Middle East and they uncover constantly evidence that shows that the places, the people, groups, the civilizations that the Bible speaks about, are true and valid. And it's a good grief... You read your Bible, most of these cities still exist. You can go to Bethlehem. You can see Jerusalem. You can go to the Kidron Valley. You can go to the Dead Sea. You can go to the Jordan where John the Baptist did his, dunked people. And you can just see all these places. They're right there.

You don't have to go, oh, wow, that's really cool story. It's really neat. Talks about this thing. Sort of, it's really, yeah. Boy, wouldn't that be fun if you knew where that was.

We know exactly where this stuff is. And throughout the years, there have been liberal scholars who've said, well, the Bible talks about this particular people group, but we've never found anything that proves they ever existed so there you go, the Bible is in question. Doesn't take long. Eventually we'll find we uncover something, oh, I guess the Amalekites did exist after all. Okay, well,

anyway. Got to find some other, something to complain about or try to cast a slur upon the Word of God. More they dig, the more your Bible becomes a factual piece of evidence of the existence of these groups and peoples and so forth. It's amazing.

Next, let's look at the next one. We have,

- The Witness of Science

The Witness of Science.

This one might sound like a strange one to you. Especially, with so many people today loudly declaring that science and the Bible are mutually exclusive. And we Christians, let me tell you something, we Christians have gotten intimidated. We've gotten intimidated into a corner when it comes to science.

And we've been backed into a corner, shouted into a corner, probably more like it. And we've sat back like a little meek little mouse and we don't want to say anything when it comes to science. We'll just go, well, okay, well, we'll talk about archeology, and we'll talk about prophecy, and stuff like that. When it comes to science, we're, it's like, well...

But there's a witness, there's a witness in the Bible related to science. And, although there is an assumption among many people that you can't trust the Bible for scientific details or facts, that the Bible is only given for moral or spiritual teachings, or whatever. But you know what?

Even though the Bible is not a scientific book, that wasn't the purpose for which it was given. Still, if we can't, if we can't trust the statements in the Bible, that speak of our physical universe accurately, then I don't think we can trust the moral or spiritual message that it's giving either. What we find in the Bible does, in fact, give accurate, scientific evidence information about our universe. Let me show you some quick examples. The first one is the Shape of the earth.

Shape of the earth

Isaiah 40:22 (ESV)

It is he who sits above the circle of the earth, and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers; who stretches out the heavens like a curtain, and spreads them like a tent to dwell in;

You might think this is really no big deal, but look with me. Isaiah chapter 40 verse 22 it says,

It is he who sits above the circle of the earth, and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers; who stretches out the heavens like a curtain, and spreads them like a tent to dwell in;

Now this is an interesting passage that was written. It's written down by Isaiah, but it's prophetic. It was written 700 years before Christ was born on the earth, right? And the word that is translated, circle, here in this passage is a Hebrew word that can also be translated, circuit or compass, depending on the context. And it indicates something spherical, not flat or square.

Look at the next point. The Vast Number of Stars.

Vast Number of Stars

Jeremiah 33:22 (ESV)

As the host of heaven cannot be numbered and the sands of the sea cannot be measured, so I will multiply the offspring of David my servant, and the Levitical priests who minister to me.”

Now, before I read the passage that goes along with it, let me just remind you that before the telescope was invented people liked to count the stars and they were doing it constantly. Hipparchus, back in 150 B.C. said there were exactly 1,026 stars. There you go, right? 150 years later, a Roman named Ptolemy said, no, there's 1,056. A man named Kepler said, you guys are both wrong, there's 1,006.

Today with our modern technology and high powered telescopes in space, astronomers estimate that in our Milky Way alone, that there are in excess of 100 billion stars in the Milky Way and there are an additional 20 to 100 billion other galaxies in the universe that we know of, or have guessed about.

So what does that tell you about the number of stars? It tells you they're uncountable, doesn't it? Guess what God has been saying since the time of Jeremiah?

Vast Number of Stars

Jeremiah 33:22 (ESV)

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As the host of heaven cannot be numbered and the sands of the sea cannot be measured, so I will multiply the offspring of David my servant, and the Levitical priests who minister to me.”

Isn't that crazy? About 600 years before the birth of Christ, God was making a scientific statement that the stars are uncountable. Man in his arrogance said, oh, there's just a few more than a thousand. And God was telling us something all along and making a scientific statement.

Let me give you another one. How about the Law of Increasing Entropy? It's like, the what? It's also called the 2nd Law of Thermodynamics, which scientists, by the way, will tell you that's a real law and it basically means that everything in our universe is in a constant state of deterioration. Everything's breaking down. Right?

You thought that just applied to your mower. But actually it, it applies to everything. Look at this passage from Psalm 102. It says,

Law of Increasing Entropy

(2nd Law of Thermodynamics)

In the beginning you laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands. They will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like a garment. Like clothing you will change them and they will be discarded.

Psalm 102:25-26 (NIV1984)

In the beginning you laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands. (look what it says) They will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like a garment. Like clothing you will change them and they will be discarded.

Isn't that interesting? Psalm 102, which by the way was written about a thousand years before the birth of Christ, give or take, has been saying this all along, making a scientific statement that the earth is wearing out. It is wearing out like your clothes wear out and get holes in them and that sort of thing. These

are just some examples of some of the statements, and there are tons more, tons more statements in the Bible that speak of scientifically accurate statements.

It'd be one thing if the Bible said something ridiculous like, the earth is ever increasing in strength. And then scientists come back and say, well, there's the 2nd Law Of Thermodynamics that says it's all deteriorating. But the Bible doesn't say it's getting better. It agrees with what scientists have found, you see.

Let's look at our next witness. It's The Witness of History.

• The Witness of History

The issue of the Bible's historical reliability is really asking the question, did what the Bible writers write about actually happen? We know the people were there. We know the cities were really there because archaeologically we can corroborate that, but did the events happen? Did the things that the Bible writers wrote about actually take place? Well, we ask this question and then we answer it by comparing whether the people and the events of the Bible harmonize with otherwise known historical information.

If the Bible is reliable, then we ought to assume that the things it talks about really took place, right? I mean, that's a given. Let me read for you, I won't put these up on the screen there, but let me just read for you a list of events, and then after I'm done reading them for you, I'm going to tell you what all these events have in common, okay?

Campaign into Israel by Pharaoh Shishak. Revolt of Moab against Israel. Fall of Samaria. Defeat of Ashdod by Sargon II. Campaign of the Assyrian king Sennacherib against Judah. The siege of Lachish by Sennacherib. The assassination of Sennacherib by his own sons. The fall of Nineveh. The fall of Jerusalem to Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon. The captivity of Jehoiachin, king of Judah in Babylon. The fall of Babylon to the Medes and the Persians. The freeing of captives in Babylon by Cyrus the Great. The existence of Jesus Christ. The forced removal of Jews from Rome during the reign of Claudius Caesar in about A.D. 41.

What do all these events have in common? They're in the Bible and they're corroborated by external historical evidence that we've discovered. Either a historian or something that we've uncovered that was written down talking about these events. In some cases, some of these things were written down inside of temples owned, used by these various people, groups, or cultures, or whatever. And these things, every one of them that the Bible declares is also

known to have taken place from an extra biblical source as well. And there are many others.

Let me go to the last witness here and frankly, this is one that I really like. It's, The Witness of Changed Lives.

- The Witness of Changed Lives

Romans 6:4 (ESV)

We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.

And that's a witness. That's a witness that can stand up. When you're talking to somebody about the reliability of the Bible, don't forget to talk about yourself. Don't forget to talk about what Jesus has done to you, how He has changed your life.

Let me show you a passage from Romans chapter 6, which is a claim given to us in the Word of God. It says,

- The Witness of Changed Lives

Romans 6:4 (ESV)

We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.

We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.

We went through this very same passage with our baptism group last Thursday because we were showing that water baptism is a picture of being raised up to new life. Well, that's a claim that Christianity makes.

You know what Christianity says to you? You're going to be different. You're going to be changed. You're not going to be the same person who met Jesus when you get down the road after walking with Jesus. You're going to be different. Your life will not be the same. It will improve in terms of walking with the Lord and the changes that He makes in your life.

And many of you in this room, if we had time, you could stand up and you could testify. You could be your own testimony, your own witness. To stand up and say, here's how God changed my life. Here's how God healed my marriage. Here's how God changed my thoughts. Here's how God cleaned up my language, my tongue. You talk about, you can talk about the person you used to be, and you can talk about who God has brought you to be or made you to be now.

And, if you're interested in reading some more of these stories, I would direct you to our bookstore. We've got a great book in there. Many of you have read it. It's called, Harvest. It was written by Pastor Chuck a number of years ago about the men who made up the original group of pastors that he raised up. They were, most of them were all drug heads and God just brought them up out of that culture of the late 60s, early 70s, cleaned up their lives and they went on to pastor churches. Mike McIntosh and Raul Ries.

Raul Ries story is crazy amazing, about I mean, it's just so drastic. All of the men were changed, but Raul was just, I mean, that'll blow you away if you read Raul's story. He's just, I mean, good grief. Here's a guy who's sitting in his living room with a loaded rifle, waiting for his wife and kids to come home so he can murder them. And he turns on the TV and hears pastor Chuck Smith share the Gospel, gets down on his knees, changes his life, and becomes a pastor of one of the biggest Calvary chapels. And continues to teach and minister today. What a testimony. What a witness of a changed life.

Let me very quickly share another testimony with you. This little story appears in a book that I've loved throughout the years written by a man who's with the Lord now. His name is Paul Little, and it's a book called, Know Why You Believe. And he tells a story in there, or recounts a story rather, of a man by the name of Ernest Gordon. Now, listen to this. This is amazing.

Ernest Gordon, a prisoner of World War II and later chaplain at Princeton University tells, in his book, Through the Valley of the Kwai, how he and the other prisoners of the Japanese on the Malay Peninsula had been reduced to acting like animals, stealing food from one another, and who were also starving. In their desperation, the group decided it would be good to read through the New Testament and because Gordon was a university graduate, they decided he should lead the Bible study. He didn't know anything more than any of the rest of them. By his own admission, he says, he was a skeptic. And those who asked him to lead them were unbelievers as well.

Gordon and the others eventually came to trust Christ through the reading of the New Testament and how this group of scrounging, clawing humans was transformed into a community of love. It's a touching and powerful story that demonstrates the power of God to change lives. It's an amazing sort of a story and it's something that we see repeated in our midst all the time.

And some people waltz into church thinking is the Spirit of God moving here? Oh boy. Sit down for a minute, let me tell you how the Spirit of God is moving in people's lives to do one of the most powerful transformations you'll ever see. To change them from the people they used to be, to the people that God is making them.

The six witnesses of giving testimony here tonight. I told you at the beginning, this is not a quick conversation. And I'm not saying that when you sit down to talk to somebody that you have to give them every single witness. Well don't have to say, well, sit down here, you got about an hour, we're going to talk about the six witnesses. And go through and talk about them, and I'm just going to do these from my notes here.

You might just want to say, you might just want to pick out, pray like Nehemiah did. Real quick, shoot up a prayer to God. Lord, what would you have me emphasize here?

That person might be just need to hear about something like the number of fulfilled prophecies in the Bible, and then just your personal testimony of how He's changed you.

Or one of the others, the incredible unity of the Bible. Or one of the other witnesses that are all in and of themselves profound and speak powerfully to the issue of how we know the Bible is reliable.