

LESSON 3: HOW DO WE REALLY KNOW THE BIBLE IS FROM GOD?

INTRODUCTION:

While using historical arguments to defend the Bible are helpful, there are a number of problems when it comes to that approach:

1. It is nearly impossible for the average Christian to remember all of the facts, data, and historical arguments.
2. The message of Christ is not meant to stay with the intellectuals, rather it is meant to go to the far reaches of the globe (even to people who are illiterate and preliterate).

“Miserable is the condition of the Houssatunnuck Indians and others, who have lately manifested a desire to be instructed in Christianity, if they can come at no evidence of the truth of Christianity, that will induce them to sell all for Christ, except historical reasoning.” (Jonathan Edwards)

DOES FAITH NEED TO BE PERSUADED?

The Bible clearly indicates that it does:

“Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world.” (1 John 4:1)

“And Paul went in, as was his custom, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures, explaining and proving that it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead, and saying, “This Jesus, whom I proclaim to you, is the Christ.”” (Acts 17:2–3)

“Now these Jews were more noble than those in Thessalonica; they received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so.” (Acts 17:11)

We must examine, think, and make sure we have appropriate reason and grounds for believing the things we do. At the same time, we realize that facts alone will not persuade. We must have faith in the God who has revealed himself to us:

“So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.” (Romans 10:17)

Something supernatural must happen for us to see that the Bible is from a supernatural God.

“And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. For what we proclaim is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus’ sake. For God, who said, “Let light shine out of darkness,” has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” (2 Corinthians 4:3–6)

<u>The god of this world</u>	<u>The one true God</u>
...has blinded the eyes of unbelievers so they cannot see the light.	...has said, “Let light shine out of darkness.”
...veils the gospel.	...has shone in our hearts to give us knowledge.
...will not let us see the glory of Christ (who is the image of God).	...opens our eyes to see his glory (in the face of Jesus Christ).

“The unbeliever “knows” the facts of the gospel, perhaps, but he does not see “the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ.” The Christ of the gospel does not shine in the eyes of the unbeliever’s heart. The unbeliever does not see the glory of Christ as divine beauty and thus as his supreme treasure. When the gospel is preached, or the Scriptures are read, he sees facts but not glory.” (John Piper)

Do we see the self-authenticating glory of God in his Word and does it produce a well-grounded confidence in Scripture???

We are expected to see God's glory, not only in his word, but also in his world. Understanding what it means to see his glory in the world will help us understand what it means to see his glory in the word.

Romans 1:19-21

What are the invisible attributes Romans 1 says God is revealing?

Three steps in Romans 1:20:

1. The world is created
2. We see the creation and grasp something about the creator
3. We clearly see what is unseen (something of the nature of God)

What is the connection then between seeing the self-authenticating glory of God in creation and seeing that same glory in the Bible?

The Westminster Confession Larger Catechism asks, "How does it appear that the Scriptures are the Word of God?" The answer is: "The Scriptures manifest themselves to be the word of God by...the scope of the whole, which is to give all glory to God." In other words, the aim and purpose of the Bible is the same as the aim and purpose of the world: to display, communicate, and lead us to glorifying God.

"...because we are all created in God's image, with the original destiny of imaging forth God's glory, there are traces of this design in our souls. Sin has dethroned the glory of God as our supreme treasure and pleasure, but it has not destroyed the God-shaped template that this dethronement left behind. We were made for the glory of God. Our minds are designed to know the glory of God, and our hearts are designed to love the glory of God. The deepest longing of the human soul is to know and enjoy the glory of God. We were made for this." (John Piper)

In the world and in the word, we see the self-authenticating glory of God that cries out to our hearts in a way nothing else can because we were created to see, savor, and enjoy this kind of glory. If we can see this glory, we are then held accountable to respond accordingly.

HOW DO WE SEE THE GLORY OF GOD IN SCRIPTURE?

1. God's glory is seen in our redemption

- a. Predestination—Ephesians 1:5-6
- b. Creation—Isaiah 43:6-7
- c. Incarnation (The coming of Christ)—Romans 15:8-9
- d. Propitiation (God’s wrath being satisfied)—Romans 3:25-26
- e. Sanctification—Philippians 1:9-11
- f. Consummation—2 Thessalonians 1:9-10

“From predestination in eternity past to consummation at the end of history, God’s ultimate aim in all his works has been the praise of his glory...the scope of Scripture is to show that God himself upholds and displays his glory, and that he calls us to join him by making this the aim of our lives down to its smallest details. ‘Whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God’ (1 Cor. 10:31).” (John Piper)

2. God’s Glory is seen in his majesty and meekness.

As you think about the ancients with their plethora of gods or many modern-day religions who worship false gods, what one attribute of their god(s) do you find dominant above all others?

The thing that marks the Christian God as being distinct is that he is majestic and powerful above all else, yet he does not demand that we become a slave labor force for him. Rather, he becomes a slave to set us free.

Isaiah 46:1-4: All of the other gods have to be carried by men and are a crushing burden, but the one true God carries us from birth to old age and gray hairs.

Isaiah 57:15: All of the other religions require their people to be strong, to work, to labor, to impress their god or gods. But the God of the Christian is the one who inhabits eternity and is with the contrite and lowly in heart.

“There is no god, and there is no human, like this God. He is too high to be the product of fear and too lowly to be the product of pride. He is not the creation of man, and he is not in the pantheon of the gods. He is real, and he is true.” (John Piper)

2 Chronicles 16:7-9: God is not waiting for people to serve him, rather he runs and looks for those whom he can serve in the midst of their battles.

Psalms 50:7-15: God cannot possibly be helped by humans. He has no need and if he had a need we could not possibly fulfill it. Yet this God delivers us, the neediest, the most helpless, the most frail and fragile.

Mark 10:45: "For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

Jesus is a lion and a lamb. He is transcendent above all yet submissive to the Father. His justice is uncompromised yet it is tempered by mercy. He is worthy of only good yet he willingly and patiently suffered evil. He stunned the scribes with his wisdom but was loved by children. He raised the dead yet willingly died.

3. God's glory is seen in the fulfillment of prophecies.

An excellent resource to see all of the prophecies Jesus has fulfilled:
www.accordingtothescriptures.org/prophecy/353prophecies.html

The purpose of prophecy:

"Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours searched and inquired carefully, inquiring what person or time the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories." (1 Peter 1:10-11)

4. God's glory is seen in miraculous power, especially in the resurrection
 - a. Example #1: Peter
 - b. Example #2: Paul
 - c. Example #3: Jesus' Brothers

CONCLUSION:

In the Scriptures, you see glory. You see glory in miracles and the life transforming power of the Word. You see glory through the ability of God to prophecy and then to bring to fulfillment. You see glory in the majesty and meekness of God and in his creating a people for himself, and this glory fits with our hearts. It makes sense to us in that the light of God shines into our hearts to give us knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ that we would see, believe, understand, and know that his word is true.

Up Next: Foundational issues in the New Testament Greek texts as it relates to Bible translation.