

roof of shields against you. He will direct the shock of his battering rams against your walls, and with his axes he will break down your towers. His horses will be so many that their dust will cover you... Your stones and timber and soil they will cast into the midst of the waters... I will make you a bare rock. You shall be a place for the spreading of nets. You shall never be rebuilt, for I am the LORD; I have spoken, declares the Lord GOD. Ezekiel 26:7–14 (ESV)



2 Timothy 3:16-17 – Can I Trust My Bible?

May 2, 2021

“People ask me if you have to read the Bible literally. That hinges on what parts of it you are reading. When you go to Genesis, Adam and Eve, and the Garden of Eden, those are archetypal stories. Those are not the stories of actual ancient people who lived thousands of years ago. They are trying to tell us about ourselves. We don’t read those stories literally. We are Adam and Eve. We don’t believe they are literally true... Take the story of Jonah being swallowed by a whale. That story is meant to be read prophetically, not literally. Did it really happen? I am ok if it did, but that is not the point of the story... When it comes to the gospels of Jesus, we read that more literally but even then we can’t read the gospels completely literally... So depending on what part of the Bible we are reading, we read it more or less literally.”

— Adam Hamilton, <https://www.umc.org/en/content/united-methodist-beliefs-is-the-bible-literal>

All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work. 2 Timothy 3:16–17 (ESV)

Life Group Questions

1. Take an extended time to review your sermon notes and the above outline. What stood out in this message? What did you learn that you didn’t know?
2. Before this message, what parts of the Bible did you find hardest to believe? What changed in your attitude toward those parts after this message?
3. Do you think you would pay closer attention if God spoke to you with a voice from heaven or if he spoke to you by His written words in the Bible on Earth? What positive steps can we take to make our attitude toward the Bible more like the kind of attitude God wants us to have?
4. What role does the Holy Spirit play in the life of a Christian when we read the Bible? See 1 Corinthians 2:14 and Ephesians 1:17-19.
5. As a Life Group, discuss what is your plan to regularly read and heed the Word of God in your life. Hold one another accountable for the week.
6. When you close in prayer, thank God for giving us His written Word in the Bible and His living Word in His Son.

1. What does it mean that all Scripture is breathed out by God?

Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son,... Hebrews 1:1–2 (ESV)

- The Old Testament was God speaking through the prophets in many different times and different ways.
- The New Testament is God speaking to us through His Son.

2. What does the Bible claim about itself?

A. The Old Testament claims to be God's Words.

Moses came and told the people all the words of the LORD and all the rules. And all the people answered with one voice and said, "All the words that the LORD has spoken we will do." Exodus 24:3 (ESV)

- Over 2,500 times in the Old Testament, the biblical writers claim to speak God's Words.

B. The New Testament claims to be God's Words.

But you say, 'If anyone tells his father or his mother, "What you would have gained from me is given to God," he need not honor his father.' So for the sake of your tradition you have made void the word of God. Matthew 15:5-6 (ESV)

- Over 40 times the New Testament, the writers claim to speak "the word of God."

C. Jesus claimed He spoke God's Words.

For he whom God has sent utters the words of God,...
John 3:34 (ESV)

D. The apostles claimed they wrote God's words.

...which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men but as what it really is, the word of God, which is at work in you believers. 1 Thessalonians 2:13 (ESV)

3. How did God put His words in the mouths of the biblical writers?

A. God put His words in the mouths of the biblical writers by carrying them along by the Holy Spirit.

6. Can we trust what the Bible says not just about the past but also about the future?

A. Since the Bible claims the people and events of the past are literally true, that means we should expect what the Bible says about the future to also be literally true.

B. If we can trust Jesus to save our souls, we should be able to trust what He says about the past and the future.

C. Since the Bible gives us prophecies that have already been accurately fulfilled in the past, we should be confident that what the Bible prophetically says about the future will also be accurately fulfilled.

The Destruction of Tyre

"Son of man, because Tyre said concerning Jerusalem, 'Aha, the gate of the peoples is broken; it has swung open to me. I shall be replenished, now that she is laid waste,' Ezekiel 26:2 (ESV)

...therefore thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I am against you, O Tyre, and will bring up many nations against you, as the sea brings up its waves. They shall destroy the walls of Tyre and break down her towers, and I will scrape her soil from her and make her a bare rock. She shall be in the midst of the sea a place for the spreading of nets, for I have spoken, declares the Lord GOD. And she shall become plunder for the nations, and her daughters on the mainland shall be killed by the sword. Then they will know that I am the LORD. Ezekiel 26:3-6 (ESV)

"For thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I will bring against Tyre from the north Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, king of kings, with horses and chariots, and with horsemen and a host of many soldiers. He will kill with the sword your daughters on the mainland. He will set up a siege wall against you and throw up a mound against you, and raise a

5. How did the other writers of the New Testament treat the Old Testament?

A. Paul considered Adam and Eve to be the first humans. He considered them specially created by God.

*For Adam was **formed** first, then Eve; 1 Timothy 2:13 (ESV)*

*For man was not **made** from woman, but woman from man.
1 Corinthians 11:8 (ESV)*

B. They considered Noah and the flood to be historically true.

By faith Noah, being warned by God concerning events as yet unseen, in reverent fear constructed an ark for the saving of his household... Hebrews 11:7 (ESV)

...God's patience waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through water. 1 Peter 3:20 (ESV)

if he did not spare the ancient world, but preserved Noah, a herald of righteousness, with seven others, when he brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly;... 2 Peter 2:5 (ESV)

C. They considered the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah by fire from heaven to be historically true.

...if by turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to ashes he condemned them to extinction, making them an example of what is going to happen to the ungodly;... 2 Peter 2:6 (ESV)

...knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. 2 Peter 1:20–21 (ESV)

- The writers of Scripture did not write by their own will or speak their own words.
- Like a ship carried in the wind, the writers of Scripture were carried by the Holy Spirit where God wanted them to go to speak only what God wanted them to say.
- God incorporated the biblical writers' personality, background, and experiences as they wrote God's Word.
- Since the biblical writers were writing God's words, this means the words they originally wrote were without error.

*Then the LORD put out his hand and touched my mouth. And the LORD said to me, "Behold, I have put my words in your mouth."
Jeremiah 1:9 (ESV)*

B. God wrote the words of the Bible, not just the concepts in the Bible.

The words of the Lord are pure words, like silver refined in a furnace on the ground, purified seven times. Psalm 12:6 (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.
Matthew 5:18 (ESV)*

4. What was Jesus' view of the Old Testament?

A. Jesus affirmed the authority of the Old Testament.

- When Jesus was tempted in the wilderness, he rebuked Satan by quoting the authoritative Word of God from the Old Testament.
- When Jesus was charged with breaking the Sabbath, He quoted from the Old Testament to justify His actions.

- Jesus recognized Moses, David, Isaiah, and Daniel as the human authors of biblical books while also claiming these books were written by God.

B. Jesus claimed every word of the Old Testament was flawlessly written by God.

...Jesus answered them, “Is it not written in your Law, ‘I said, you are gods’? If he called them gods to whom the word of God came—and Scripture cannot be broken— do you say of him whom the Father consecrated and sent into the world, ‘You are blaspheming,’ because I said, ‘I am the Son of God’?” John 10:33–36 (ESV)

‘I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob’? He is not God of the dead, but of the living.”
Matthew 22:32 (ESV)

Then Jesus said to them, “You will all fall away because of me this night. For it is written, ‘I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.’ Matthew 26:31 (ESV)

C. Jesus claimed every person and event in the Old Testament was historically true.

Jesus considered Adam and Eve to be historically true.

He answered, “Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, ‘Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh’?” Matthew 19:4–5 (ESV)

Jesus considered Noah, the ark, and the flood to be historically true.

Just as it was in the days of Noah, so will it be in the days of the Son of Man. They were eating and drinking and marrying and being given in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. Luke 17:26–27 (ESV)

Jesus affirmed Jonah, and his three days in the belly of a fish, to be historically true.

But he answered them, “An evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. The men of Nineveh will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and behold, something greater than Jonah is here. Matthew 12:39–41 (ESV)

Jesus affirmed the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah by fire from heaven to be historically true.

Truly, I say to you, it will be more bearable on the day of judgment for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah than for that town. Matthew 10:15 (ESV)

Jesus affirmed that God feed a nation for 40 years with bread from heaven to be historically true.

Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. John 6:49 (ESV)

Jesus claimed His words are no less authoritative than the words of the Old Testament.

Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own authority, but the Father who dwells in me does his works. John 14:10 (ESV)

The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever. Isaiah 40:8 (ESV)

Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away. Mark 13:31 (ESV)