CHRISTIAN FUNDAMENTALS PART II:

WHY WE BELIEVE

CHRISTIAN FUNDAMENTALS:

Remaining Schedule

5/4/21: Does Archeology support the Bible? / Are Miracles Possible?

5/11/21: Are science and faith at war?

5/18/21: Why does God allow suffering?

5/25/21: What about other religions? / Is Christian experience valid?

6/1/21: How to defend our faith with non-believers.

1. Is the Bible God’s Word?
2. No Ordinary Book:
3. God’s Instruction Manual
4. *Psalm 19* tells us that God speaks through nature and He speaks through His Word.
5. The Bible refers to itself as the Word of God over 394 times in the Old Testament alone
6. Although written by over 40 different authors between 1100B.C. and the first century, this extraordinary collection of writings shows a single theme woven through every book from beginning to end: God restoring relationship between Himself and humanity through His Son, Jesus Christ
7. Important questions to ask: Is the Bible really God’s Word? How do we know that the Bible in its totality is God speaking?
8. The Bible contains poetry, history, prophecy, instruction, and wisdom, is all this God speaking?
9. Authority of the Bible and the nature of its inspiration
10. *2 Timothy 3:16-17* tells us that All of Scripture is ‘God-breathed’ and therefore is authoritative on all matters.
11. Divine Inspiration of Scripture goes beyond typical inspiration, and clearly identifies God as the ultimate author of Scripture.
12. All of Scripture, Old and New Testament are God breathed (see *2 Peter 1:21, 3:16*)
13. The Bible is fully human, and fully divine as God did not use human authors as mere typist, but rather He worked through various human authors who brought their own writing styles, personalities, backgrounds etc. yet they wrote what God wanted written.
14. Jesus’ View of Scripture
15. What was Jesus’ view of Scripture? As the Incarnate Word of God, his view of Scripture and usage of Scripture would tell us a lot about how we should view it and apply it ourselves.
16. Jesus’ view of the Old Testament was emphatically clear in *Matthew 5:18, “I tell you the truth until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished”*.
17. Jesus would repeatedly appeal to Scripture as the final authority in all His teachings, disputes with religious leaders and even in battle with Satan himself.
18. Jesus said, *“The Scriptures cannot be broken.” (John 10:35)*
19. Jesus showed his disciples in *Luke 24:44-47* after His resurrection how the Old Testament is ultimately about Him and testify about Him.
20. Paul Little points out how inconsistent it would be to on the one hand accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, and yet disregard Jesus’s view of Scripture given that He is the Messiah and Son of God

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1. Helpful Definitions
2. A Literal View of the Bible does not mean that we do not recognize figures of speech in Scripture. The Bible has various types of literary forms used, and to take Scripture literally means that we take what we read as the author(s) intended for us to take it.
3. If we do not take a literal approach to the Bible, we can miss the clear intention and meaning presented and if we dismiss certain aspects of the Bible as nonfactual stories to ‘convey’ truth, where will it stop?
4. Inerrancy of Scripture means that we believe that the original manuscripts were without error, and that the thoughts God wanted written were written and the words used were guarded by God. This does not mean that there are not errors at all in the many copies of copies and translations we have today.
5. Biblical writers spoke ‘phenomenologically’ meaning as they appear to be, even as we today in the 21st century use figures of speech to communicate.
6. Astonishing Prophecies
7. Unlike typical vague fortune telling, Scripture has hundreds of specific in detail prophecies which further indicate to us that the Bible is of supernatural origin.
8. There are specific detailed prophecies concerning the coming Messiah, Jesus Christ. (see *Isaiah 53, Micah 5:2)*
9. There are specific detailed prophecies concerning the Jewish people. (see *Jeremiah 32*, *Hosea 3:4-5)*
10. There are specific detailed prophecies concerning nations, kingdoms, and empires. (*Book of Daniel)*
11. Aside from prophecy, there is also scientific knowledge in Scripture that is far ahead of man’s knowledge.
12. Scripture is alive.
13. Hebrews 4:12-13 tells us that Scripture is unlike any other collection of writings because it is living and active.
14. The Holy Spirit speaks to us through these words and reminds us of them.
15. We never get to a point of finishing the Bible.

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1. Are Bible Documents Reliable?
2. Defending the Accuracy of the Bible
3. Can we trust what is in our Bible today?
4. Attacks on the accuracy of the Scripture abound today in our culture and academia.
5. Understandable Questions we may ask ourselves is: How do I know that the text of the Bible after many translations over generations is not just an obscure reflection of what was there originally?
6. Textual Criticism: Examining the books of the Bible and their origins, to ascertain the reliability of the text and how our current text compares with the originals and how accurately they were copies from the ancient manuscripts.
7. Before the Printing Press
8. Prior to 1456, the ancient manuscripts of the Old Testament were recorded on clay, wooden tablets, reed papyrus and parchment skins were used and rolled into scrolls. A lot of Scripture was passed along orally.
9. The work of scribes was considered highly professional and carefully executed task. For the Hebrews, it was undertaken by devout Jews with the highest education.
10. Scribes understood they were handling the Word of God, so they would wipe a pen clean before writing the name of God, copy one letter at a time, often when discrepancies were found they would destroy their copy and start over again.
11. The earliest and most widely used complete copy of the entire Hebrew Old Testament is from around 900 A.D. Known as the ‘Masoretic Text’, it is the product of able Jewish scribes, who were custodians of the Hebrew test from 500 to 1000. Confirmation of the accuracy of the text is checked by comparing it with the Latin and Greek copies of the same period.
12. The Dead Sea Scrolls
13. In 1947, in caves on the valley of the Dead Sea, ancient jars were discovered containing what we call the Dead Sea scrolls. The scrolls were from a group of dedicated Jews who lives in a place called Qumran from 150 B.C. to A.D. Qumran was a communal society, and the scrolls were hidden from the coming Roman siege of 70 A.D.
14. The find included the earliest yet known manuscript copy of the book of Isaiah, and further discoveries included fragments of every book of the Old Testament except the book of Esther.
15. The significance of this discovery is that the Dead Sea scrolls show remarkable accuracy in the transmission process when compared to the Masoretic text. There are only a small number of grammatical differences which do not affect the meaning of the passage.
16. Three Versions
17. The Septuagint is a Greek translation of the Old Testament and is the oldest and most important. Translated by seventy-two Jewish scholars in the third century B.C., this Greek translation became a bridge for understanding the Hebrew history and theology in the Old Testament.
18. The Syriac version written in the Aramaic language of Syria is the oldest and most important translation after the Septuagint.
19. The Samaritan version is another ancient account like the others. It contains copies of the Hebrew Pentateuch and is derived from the split between Jerusalem Jews and the Samaritans. It helps show that copyists worked with great care and accuracy on the Old Testament, even back to 225 B.C.

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1. New Testament Documents
2. Not more than one-thousandth part of the whole New Testament is affected by differences of reading. In the New Testament manuscripts, we have insignificant variations of grammar and spelling between various documents.
3. Unlike the Old Testament, the New Testament documents we have were written with ink and pen. We have over 5,500 copies of the New Testament, with the New Testament substantially complete by the end of the first century.
4. Well known ancient secular figures have their less than 10 copies of their documents and the date to their writing has a huge gap between the events they proport to describe and their actual writing. The New Testament is in an entirely different category.
5. The Cannon of Scripture
6. Scripture means a fixed body of divinely inspired writings that are fully recognized as authoritative.
7. The church council of Jamnia held informal discussions about the canon of Scripture in 90 A.D, with a formal confirmation about the canon at the church council of Carthage in 397 A.D.
8. The Old Testament scriptures had no major controversy or contention between Jesus and the Jews on the authority of the Old Testament. The following criteria was used differentiating divinely inspired New Testament documents:
9. Was the book authored by an Apostle or someone close to the Apostles?
10. Was the book widely recognized by the early church as authoritative and divinely inspired?
11. Were the teachings presented in the book consistent with the sound doctrine that was being taught in the early church as a whole?
12. Dealing with contradictions in Scripture?
13. The Bible complements, not contradicts itself. Scripture must be taken in its totality to be able to effectively interpret.
14. ‘Progressive Revelation’ in Scripture with understanding who God is and His plan of salvation.
15. Concluding thoughts on the importance of Scripture

“The Word of God is like a lion. You do not have to defend a lion. All you have to do is let the lion loose and the lion will defend itself.” – Charles Spurgeon

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