



guidelines for living

a 5 minute message

November 29, 2017

CAN YOU BELIEVE THE BIBLE?

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, 2 Tim. 3:16

A college professor under whom I once studied spoke of a theologian with whom he disagreed, saying, "It isn't that he isn't a brilliant man--it's just that he knows so many things that aren't true." If truth is subjective, if it is only a matter of personal opinion, then good men can disagree and both be right. But if historical data is supported by corroborating evidence, and if the character of the men who wrote it is supportive, then ultimately we have to come face to face with facts. That is the situation when it comes to accepting or rejecting the credibility of the Bible.

Can you believe the Bible was really written by the men whose names the Book bears? Or were things added later by men who wanted a hearing, and added the authority of someone long since dead to what they wrote? Those are two reasonable questions. First, God never asks anyone to accept anything in blind acceptance, nor does He discourage honest investigation. Jesus said plainly, "If anyone is willing to know the doctrine of teaching, whether it be of man or of God, he shall know it." That phrase "is willing to know" is the key, because a tremendous amount of prejudice interferes with honestly searching at this point.

A lot of people reject the passages of the Bible dealing with prophecy without ever considering the evidence. They say simply, "Oh, that could not have been written before the event took place," but what they are actually saying is that "I do not believe in the supernatural; therefore, I am convinced that this one you call God could not have revealed to someone something that would take place before the event."

What is the evidence supporting the data for Biblical authorship? A big question to be answered, but briefly let me give it a try. First, does manuscript evidence support the authorship and its date? Have documents been found which are dated near the alleged date of authorship? Recently, carbon dating of the ink on manuscripts, along with the archaeological finds, have confirmed the dates long held by conservative scholars. Do the circumstances and the contents of the books corroborate with the authorship?



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Example--the number of medical terms and medical terminology found in the Books of Luke and the Acts confirm the authorship of a medical doctor whose name was Luke. Then, the testimony of the early church fathers comes into the picture. Did those who were alive in the first century of the church accept the Book as authored by the man who is said to have written it?

Then what of the contents of the Book itself? The Book of Hebrews is one of those New Testament Books that has occasioned much discussion down through the years in that it does not bear the signature of any particular individual; but the contents make it obvious that it was written before the temple was destroyed, and therefore we can conclude it had to be written before 70 A.D.

In the final analysis, the credibility of Scriptures has support, and a great deal of it, but in the end we are confronted with a choice--we have either to accept the evidence and believe it, or fabricate reasons as to why we reject it. Ultimately, it is a question of belief. Has God spoken or has He not? And if He has not, what options are there? I think I can speak with some authority at this point because I hold two graduate degrees in Biblical text, including a Ph.D. It is difficult to "prove anything conclusively," but if an honest man will accept the evidence and believe it, God will meet him. And He will meet you, too--for we must all come to Him by the same way, the path of faith.

Resource reading: 2 Timothy 3