

*How do you view the Bible? Do you open it believing it's a trustworthy revelation from God, unable to lead you astray, that it is inerrant and sufficient for your life? I hope so.*

*In this study we'll look at what God's Word says about itself. We'll find that is all of the above. To receive this Book with humility is wisdom.*

C.S. Lewis may have been the most popular Christian apologist of the twentieth century. He was a philosopher and lauded scholar, and yet, he never lost touch with the common person or even children. Lewis' faith wasn't blind acceptance but the product of years of asking questions. In fact, he urged his students at Oxford to "follow the argument wherever it led them."

You might disagree with Lewis in places, but he wasn't one to pass by life's hardest questions with an exasperated, "Oh, just believe!" He understood that Christian faith has reasonable answers. In fact, it's a reasonable faith.

We should ask questions about God and His Word, but there's a right way to inquire and a wrong one. Take a look at what Lewis writes in *God in the Dock*...

"The ancient man approached God (or even the gods) as the accused person approaches the judge. For the modern man the roles are reversed. He is the judge: God is in the dock. He is quite a kindly judge: if God should have a reasonable defense for being the God who permits war, poverty and disease, he is ready to listen to it. The trial may even end in God's acquittal. But the important thing is that man is on the bench and God in the dock."

This was written a few years after Lewis lost his wife. He had placed God in the dock for a time and shares some of that struggle in *A Grief Observed*. The change wasn't immediate, but Lewis eventually humbled himself and realized that God is God. Rather than stand in judgment of the Almighty for taking, he realized God's goodness. The Lord had been gracious to give him a wife and so much more throughout his life.

We can place ourselves above God, or we can humble ourselves before Him. Lewis could have lived the rest of his life finding fault, but instead he fell in worship. A fault-finder may open the Bible, but he studies to justify himself; a worshipper studies to know God.

Humble reverence (Prov 1:7). It's the prerequisite for studying God's Word. Many cast it aside as if God is in the dock, but it's impossible to rightly understand His Word without it. Why? Because God isn't in the dock—we are.

## THE HIGHEST STANDARD

You and I are dependent upon God in more ways than we know. We exist, and yet, we had nothing to do with it (Psa 100:3). We feed ourselves, and yet, our every morsel is given by God (Matt 6:11). We reason, and yet, we can't make much sense of this world or ourselves apart from the Lord (Rom 1:18-23; Eph 4:17).

### *Psalm 36:9—"In Your light do we see light."*

God has given a treasure trove of wisdom in His Word. In it, we understand where creation came from, what happened to it, how it can be solved, and to what end the world is heading. Any worldview should be able to answer questions like these, and Scripture certainly does. However, what God has given to man is much greater than a philosophy book. According to Jesus, it is truth (John 17:17).

Truth? Jesus didn't say that God's Word is true; He said it's truth. In other words, there's no higher standard than God's Word.

*But hasn't science disproven parts of the Bible?* Not once. Take Galileo, for example. When he disproved geocentrism in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century, he was met with stiff opposition. Church leaders said his view was contrary to Scripture, but interestingly enough, not a single verse of Scripture was ever quoted against him.

Galileo wasn't tried because the Bible stood against his discovery, but because it conflicted with traditional views of the earth. God's Word and our traditions aren't the same. One is the standard of truth; the other may be helpful, but it's manmade. Sometimes we confuse the two.

Many discoveries have actually affirmed Scripture. Archaeology, for instance, is a rich source of affirmation. Consider the Hittites. Prior to the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Bible contained the only record of these people. Sadly, they were considered a Jewish fabrication. This view was overturned when Hittite monuments and documents came to light. The capital city with more than 10,000 tablets was unearthed. Not only did the Hittites exist as the Bible records, they are now

# Truth and Scripture

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regarded alongside Assyria and Egypt. They were one of the great superpowers of the 15<sup>th</sup> century B.C.

The Tel Dan Stele is another intriguing example. It was discovered in 1993 in northern Israel and dates at least to the 8<sup>th</sup> century B.C. Prior to its discovery, many considered King David a Jewish King Arthur legend. This stele was the first non-biblical affirmation that Israel's "House of David" was historical.

Examples could go on and on. It's amazing after thousands of years anything recorded in the Bible would be unearthed. Much has been discovered and verified, and yet, fault-finders remain. It isn't an academic issue but a heart issue, because no amount of evidence will ever be enough.

For Christians, discoveries like these encourage us. It's exciting, even if they aren't necessary. *Not necessary?* No, because Christian faith doesn't rest upon the affirmation of archaeology. It rests upon God's revelation of Himself—Scripture. What is this book? Truth itself.

## AN INERRANT WORD

Rembrandt was a master of using light in his paintings. Some of his works vary the light intensity; others focus light on a single object. In *The Prophetess Anna*, Rembrandt painted a woman reading a book. Rather than paint an exterior light shining down, he painted light as shining out from the book. The Bible appears to have its own light, radiating outward that Anna might read.

*Psalm 119:105—“Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.”*

Many have become Christians with no other experience than reading Scripture. What makes the Bible unique is its Author. It wasn't produced by men and committees, neither by ancient Israel or by the church. It's a product of God as He moved different men to write (2 Tim 3:16; 2 Pet 1:20-21).

Some writings, such as the five books of Moses, were immediately recognized as inspired. With the New Testament, churches circulated letters written by the apostles. The number of books they united around became the 27 books we have today.

Titus 1:2 and Hebrews 6:17-18 remind us that God never lies. His words are truthful and accurate. When we say that the Bible is the Word of God, we're affirming that it's a truthful and accurate book. It's without error, and it must be, because its Author is without error.

It's often said that the Bible isn't a science or history textbook. That's true, but it makes statements that touch on these subjects. For instance, Genesis 1 tells us that God created the heavens and the earth *ex nihilo*. There was nothing, and then quite suddenly there was something. We also learn that man didn't arise from a lower order but was created in the image of God Himself.

If the Bible is wrong on these things, it isn't without error. If it makes statements about history that aren't true, that's a problem as well. Why believe a book about God that's wrong about man?

I'm thankful there's no reason to say the Bible is wrong. It stands against some theories, but theories often change as one gives way to another. Alchemy was once considered a scientific theory, as was phrenology, astrology, abiogenesis, maternal impression, phlogiston, and others. Each was once a respected and widely-accepted theory that ended up discredited.

The problem with Scripture isn't that it contradicts itself or contains error, but that it contradicts us. We're born wanting to do what's right in our own eyes (Rom 1:18). Rather than question if we might be wrong, our tendency is to assume the other party is wrong. God must be wrong.

No one likes to be corrected, but a believer will humble himself before the Lord. He approaches God's Word with a heart that desires to understand, and as he studies Scripture more and more, he sees many times over that this book is truth and worth trusting.