

"You Can Trust Scripture"

I've spent more than fifty years in serious study of Scripture, and I found it true in every respect. Hello, I'm Phil Sanders, and this is a Bible study "In Search of the Lord's Way." And today we are declaring, "You can trust the bible." Stay with us.

Welcome to In SEARCH of the Lord's Way! We're here to search the Scriptures for God's will. We search the Scriptures for the truth, because we're not interested in half-truths, falsehoods, or ideas that twist the scriptures to please people. We want to please God in every respect, and the only way to know the will of God is to follow His Word found in Scripture. Since the words of Scripture abide forever, the things that God said long ago are still true and still authoritative. We must listen to the Lord. We'd love to hear from you and want to be a part of your life each week.

The Bible clearly states that the source of Scripture is God Himself. 2 Timothy 3:16 to 17 says that, "All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work." All Scripture includes both the Old and the New Testament. Now the Old Testament repeats more than 2600 times such expressions as "The Lord says," or "thus says the Lord," or "the word of God came saying...." Well the New Testament also recognizes the inspiration of scripture. When Scripture speaks, God is truly speaking.

Many think everything must be verified by science, as if scientific truth was the only way to know something. But written records verified by many witnesses in history and archaeology can also reveal the truthful facts. There are many facts recorded not only in Scripture but also in secular history and literature that reveal the Bible is trustworthy. Gary Habermas in his book, *The Historical Jesus*, reveals 129 facts about the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus found in sources outside the New Testament. When historical records from many sources agree, we cannot take what is said lightly. Did you know the New Testament is the most attested book of all ancient literature?

Now we offer this study, *You Can Trust Scripture*, free! If you'd like a printed copy and live in the United States, mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to searchtv@searchtv.org. Or, you can call our toll-free telephone number. That number is 1-800-321-8633. We also have programs and free materials on our website, www.searchtv.org. You can also see us on YouTube.

We'll now worship in song, we'll read from 2 Peter 1:20 to 21, and see why we can trust the Scripture.

Our reading today comes from 2 Peter chapter 1 verses 20 and 21. It's a brief reading but one that's very important to Peter. As it makes it clear about the bible.

But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.

This is an important lesson for us to know. Whatever is in scripture came through the Holy Spirit. Let's pray together. Heavenly Father we're so thankful that in Your wisdom You allowed us to have this eternal word in scripture so that we might know Your will and be able to please You. And Father we're thankful for all that the scripture does in our lives. In Jesus name we pray, Amen.

God doesn't lie. The Bible doesn't state God is usually honest or mostly truthful. It says that lying is impossible for Him. Titus 1 and verse 2 calls Him "the God who cannot lie." Hebrews 6 and verse 18 says it is "impossible for God to lie." Numbers 23:19 hammers it home: "God is not a man, that He

should lie.” You see, God doesn’t even want to be around those who lie. Revelation 21 and verse 8 reminds us, “But for the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and sexually immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.”

When I think about, “Impossible for God to lie?” Think about that word impossible. You know it’s not that God chooses not to lie because He’s on His best behavior. You see lying is as foreign to God’s very nature, as drying off is to a fish. A holy God and a falsehood simply cannot coexist in the same place, any more than light and darkness can share the same space. Psalm 5 and verse 4 says about God, “For You are not a God who takes pleasure in wickedness; No evil dwells with You.” So when God speaks, whether from Moses or the prophets or the apostles, falsehood can’t sneak in. Because our God cannot lie, the Bible gave us what He gave to us, will never deceive us with false information.

Psalm 19 verses 7 to 9 says that, “The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul; the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple; the precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes; the fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever; the rules of the LORD are true, and righteous altogether.” When people fail to keep God’s word, they generally begin hurting themselves.

James 1 verses 22 to 25 reminds us, “But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like. But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing.”

It’s not enough that God refuses to lie. He must also know what He’s talking about. A sincere person can still be sincerely wrong. God, however, isn’t blind or naive. Psalm 147:5 says that His understanding “has no limit.” Romans 11:33 to 36 says, “Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways! ‘For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor?’ ‘Or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid?’” I tell you God knows all things completely and perfectly. He would have to have unlimited knowledge to create our universe and life.

God also has a perfect knowledge of our hearts and thoughts. John 2 and verse 25 says about Jesus that He “needed no one to bear witness about man, for he himself knew what was in man.” Ah, God knows our thoughts, our intents, and our desires. Hebrews 4:13 reminds us, “And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give an account.” We must give God the glory and the honor He deserves. If the all-knowing God is the ultimate Author behind every verse of scripture, then every historical detail, every doctrinal claim, every moral command is coming from the One who literally cannot be mistaken. Inerrancy isn’t a theory that we dreamed up; it’s what you get when omniscience puts its signature on a page.

A question we should ask is “How does the Lord Jesus view Scripture?” Well, Jesus treated the Bible as inerrant, that is without mistakes; and He knew the Scriptures better than anyone. I trust the One that God raised from the dead. The Lord Jesus said Scripture cannot be broken (John 10 verse 35). He silenced Satan three times with “It is written,” treating every Old Testament quote as final authority. On another occasion Jesus told the Pharisees, “You nullify the word of God by your tradition,” implying the written Word itself stands above human opinion and human tradition. On the road to Emmaus Jesus treated the entire Old Testament as a flawless roadmap pointing to Himself (Luke 24 and verse 27).

The Lord Jesus is God in human flesh. And if anyone ever had the right to say, “You know, Moses got a couple things wrong,” it was the Lord. But instead Jesus doubled down on the total trustworthiness of the Scriptures that people already had, even the parts that skeptics love to mock, like Jonah in the big fish or Adam and Eve as real people. If Jesus is who He claimed to be, His view of Scripture settles the issue. You either accept His authority on the Bible or you reject His authority altogether. There’s no neutral middle ground where you get to keep Jesus but reject inerrancy. When people sit in judgment of the truth of Scripture, they ignore the fact Scripture will be the criteria the Lord Jesus uses on Judgment Day!

Jesus quoted the Old Testament constantly and treated even the tense of a verb as decisive. You remember Jesus answered the Sadducees in Matthew 22:32, by quoting Exodus 3:6 where God identified Himself to Moses. God said, “I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob?” Well, Jesus made the point, “He is not God of the dead, but of the living.” By quoting God saying “I am” instead of “I was” revealed the Sadducees were wrong; there is a resurrection of the dead. There is an afterlife. He said in Matthew 5 and verse 18 that not one tiniest pen stroke would disappear from the Law until everything was fulfilled. That’s a staggering claim of precision if the manuscripts floating around first-century synagogues were riddled with serious mistakes. Yet Jesus staked His teaching on their accuracy. And how they were right.

God worked through real men—some educated like Paul, some fishermen like Peter, and some shepherds like Amos. He let their personalities and vocabularies show through. But all the while His Holy Spirit was superintending the process so that what they wrote was exactly what He wanted written. And it was down to the very words. Paul said in 1 Corinthians 2 verses 12 to 13, “Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God, which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words.”

Now this was in fulfillment of the promise of Jesus in John 16:12 to 13, “I have many more things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come.” Now God was behind everything that was to be written. Some folks say the word was corrupted by being passed down orally, but it was the Lord’s will that what He said would be written down. You remember Jesus promised in Matthew 23:34 to send forth “scribes.” Well Matthew, Mark, Luke and John were all scribes. Matthew and John were not only scribes, they were eyewitnesses.

Luke explained how there were written accounts in Luke 1:1 to 4, “Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile an account of the things accomplished among us, just as they were handed down to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word, (he said) it seemed fitting for me as well, having investigated everything carefully from the beginning, to write it out for you in consecutive order, most excellent Theophilus; so that you may know the exact truth about the things you have been taught.” Oh, God didn’t leave us in the dark, trying to guess what His truth is! He revealed it for all time through the written word.

And what has survived to us today was not simply notes that some person made up. God was behind what would be His authoritative will. Peter, of course as I mentioned explains in 2 Peter 1:20 to 21, “ But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one’s own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from

God.” The Spirit moved the men to write down what God willed. Many people want to make the Bible a human book, but the Spirit of God was behind all that was written.

Someone asks well, “Phil, what about all the contradictions in Scripture?” Well, a contradiction takes place when two opposing statements happen at the same time, about the same time about the same event. What many call contradictions are not really contradictions but a different emphasis on one point to the exclusion of another point of view? My friend, Eric Lyons of Apologetics Press has written three dynamic volumes of *The Anvil Rings* and he gives answers to alleged discrepancies in Scripture. And he does a good job. Gleason Archer in his *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* gives several reasons why people imagine a contradiction that is later shown not to be one. Yeah.

For instance, some see Jesus’ prophecy about his upcoming death and resurrection in Matthew 12 and verse 40 as a contradiction to the facts. Jesus said, “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.” Well how could this be if Jesus was buried on Friday afternoon and rose early on Sunday? That’s less than 40 hours not three full days and nights of 72 hours. For the Western mind, that’s a problem, but not for the Eastern mind who calculated time differently. The Jews counted any part of a day as if it were the whole day. Though only a few hours on Friday would be counted as if were 24 hours. And though Jesus was twelve hours in the tomb on the first day of the week, that is from sun down to sun up, the Jews would have counted that as if it were a whole day. Well what is a thought to be a contradiction to the Western mind was never one to the Jews.

Now while some things seem almost impossible to the modern reader, Jesus never questioned the creation of male and female, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, crossing the Red Sea, eating manna for forty years, the fall of the walls of Jericho, or Jonah’s three days in the belly of the great fish, and many other miraculous events recorded in Scripture. They aren’t simply Bible stories; they are true events. The New Testament records the resurrection of Jesus Christ and how that provides credible evidence. Yes that Jesus really did indeed rise bodily from the dead. The empty tomb, the grave clothes in the tomb, and the unwavering testimony of the eyewitness disciples are not easily dismissed. The God who raised Jesus can give us a Scripture that we can trust. We can trust it.

In day to day life, once you say the Bible has errors in some places, then it stops being a God-given authority and simply becomes one voice among many that people can manipulate to say whatever they wish. And when that happens, the average person doesn’t feel free; he feels confused and lost. The Bible ceases to be a rock that you can stand on and becomes a shifting sand dune. The Bible was never meant to change with the spirit of the age. No. Christianity is designed to transform every human culture to fit the will of God. Let’s follow Christ.

Let’s pray together. Heavenly Father we’re thankful that we have a word that we can trust. That You have been truthful to us and that You’ve given us Your will so that we might understand what You want from us and so that we may be able to please You. Help us Heavenly Father to always do Your will. In Jesus name, Amen.

Do you believe the God who raised Jesus from the dead is wise enough and honest enough to give His people a Book they can trust completely? If your answer is yes—and the resurrection itself is powerful evidence that the answer should be yes—then inerrancy isn’t a leap of blind faith. It’s the only conclusion that fits the character of the God of the bible. You see the Bible is God-breathed. And because it comes from a God who does not lie, cannot lie, and has no need to lie, we can read it with the same confidence that the apostles showed when they stood together and proclaimed in Acts 2:32, “This Jesus God raised up again, to which we are all witnesses.”

God is utterly trustworthy. He is able to deliver His Word free from error—all of it, right down to the last letter. If God has spoken to us clearly and truly, are you willing to trust and obey it? You know wise people hear the words of Jesus and do them. Hebrews 5 verses 8 to 9 says that, “Although He was a Son, He (Jesus) learned obedience from the things which He suffered. And having been made perfect, He became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation.” If we’re going to follow Jesus, then we must learn to trust and obey just as Jesus did.

To follow Jesus one must believe that He is the crucified Savior and the Lord who rose from the dead. They must believe His teaching and repent of their sins. They must be willing to confess the Lord Jesus before others and be baptized for the forgiveness of their sins. In baptism God washes away our sins (Acts 2 verse 38 and 22:16). And He does it through the blood of Jesus our Savior. We are clothed with Christ in baptism (Galatians 3:27). We are buried and raised with Christ to walk in newness of life (Romans 6 verses 3 to 7).

We hope that our study, *You Can Trust the Word of God*, the scripture, will lead you to a have deeper faith. If you live in the United States and want a free printed copy, send your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to searchtv@searchtv.org. Or, you can call the Search office toll-free at 1-800-321-8633. There’s a schedule of our programs and a map of churches in your area on www.searchtv.org. And many other wonderful materials that are free. We also offer free Bible Correspondence courses.

We do encourage you to find a church that you can attend and worship. As always we say to you, God bless you and we love you from all of us at In Search of the Lord’s Way.