

Have you ever done anything crazy? I mean just ridiculous – even ludicrous! Like jump from a perfectly good airplane or go bungee jumping. One of the craziest things I ever did (and lived to tell about it) was lean out over cliff that dropped some 2000 ft. to snap a picture of my feet...

In my defense, I was 22, single, and apparently stupid. In my stupidity, I had a 6'5" (15) yr. old wrap his arms around my waste while two other teenagers sat on him – not one of my finer moments – but the picture was really cool.

Truth is we all DO crazy things. We SAY crazy things – and we BELIEVE crazy things. Today, we're starting a series entitled, *Call Me Crazy* – to investigate and substantiate some of the beliefs we hold dear that other people consider us crazy b/c we believe them. According to the 1 Peter – we have a obligation to know why we believe what we believe.

But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have... 1 Peter 3:16

So over the next (4) week, we're going to discuss why we believe in the Bible, in God's existence, in creation, and in the resurrection. **Let's begin w/ the credibility of the Bible.**

I heard of a man on a plane who was reading his Bible when the man next to him remarked, “You don’t really believe the Bible do you?” The man replied, “As a matter of fact, I do!” “But it’s just a bunch of fairy tales. Like the guy who was swallowed by a whale. What’s his name?” “Jonah. And yes, I believe he was swallowed by a whale and survived to tell about it.” The man asked, “Can you tell me how a man can be swallowed by a whale and live to tell about it?” “I can’t, but I suppose when I get to heaven, I’ll ask him.” Smugly, the man said, “But, what if Jonah’s not in heaven?” W/out missing a beat, he said, “Then I guess you can ask him!”

Reality – we go to school, work, and we live next door to people who think b/c we believe the Bible we’re out of our minds! There are people driving by our church today who think we’ve lost it b/c we’re here worshipping the God of the Bible they’ve so willingly rejected. And some are on a rampage to get us to surrender our beliefs to fall in line w/ the status quo of PC and w/ social pressure.

TRUTH: While everyone might be entitled to their own opinion; no one is entitled to their own facts.

So before we give into their assaults – I think we owe it ourselves (and to others) to be reminded of why we believe what we believe so that we can stand for Truth in Christ. Today, I want to offer you (7) reasons why I believe the Bible – the **Seven Wonders of the Word** – *Psalm 19:7-11*.

The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul. The statutes of the Lord are trustworthy, making wise the simple. The precepts of the Lord are right, giving joy to the heart. The commands of the Lord are radiant, giving light to the eyes. The fear of the Lord is pure, enduring forever. The decrees of the Lord are sure and altogether righteous. They are more desirable than gold, than much pure gold; they are sweeter than honey, than honey from the comb. By them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward.

I God's Word is PERFECT

The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul.

perfect – complete; nothing lacking – able to accomplish its intended purpose.

A Perfect in POWER

So shall my Word be that goes forth from my mouth: It shall not return to me void, but shall complete that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it. Is. 55:11

God's Word is a complete scheme of grace revealing to us who God is – holy; who we are – sinners; and it presents God's plan to rescue His creation from their sinful condition. It can perfectly convert, restore, revive, and regenerate a sinful soul back into relationship w/ the Creator.

B Perfect in PURPOSE

66 books written over 1600 yrs. on 3 continent by over 40 authors including shepherds, kings, doctor, and statesmen – and yet the Bible is perfect in scope and purpose.

- The Bible isn't a book of **history** – yet it's historical
- The Bible isn't a book of **science** – yet it's scientific
- The Bible isn't a book of **facts** – yet it's factual

The Bible is a book of revelation/redemption. In it we discover who God is and how much He loves us. We discover who we are and how desperately we need Him. We discover that God sent His only Son to redeem us to bring us into a relationship w/ Him by a single act of grace.

God made, Adam bit, Noah arked, Abraham split, Joseph ruled, Jacob fooled, bush talked, Moses balked, Pharaoh plagued, Israel walked, sea divided, tablets guided, promise landed, Saul freaked, David peeked, prophets warned, Jesus born, God walked, love talked, anger crucified, hope died, Love arose, Spirit flamed, Word spread, God remained.

God's Word is perfect and complete – able to accomplish its intended purpose of redeeming the creation to the Creator.

II God's Word is TRUSTWORTHY

The statutes of the Lord are trustworthy, making wise the simple.

trustworthy – firm; reliable; can be authenticated.

Meaning... the Bible can handle scrutiny. It will stand the test of time. Its evidence will confound the educated and make wise those who believe in simple faith.

The Bible is either a worthless fraud or it is the breath of God – it's either the words of men or the Word of God.

A MANUSCRIPT Evidence

Have you ever heard of *Literary Criticism*? It's the critical review of ancient documents to determine their credibility. Scholars employ a couple of tests to authenticate the veracity of any ancient document. First, they ascertain how many copies of a manuscript exist; and then they determine how similar they are to one another? The higher the number of manuscripts w/ the greater the similarity b/w them, the more likely the copies are true to the original.

If you have a 500 yr. old text and a 100 yr. old text – you'd compare them to see if there were any changes b/w them. Historians always consider the older copy more reliable than the newer copy b/c it was copied closer to the original.

AUTHOR	WRITTEN	COPY	TIME	COPIES
Plato – Republic	400 B.C.	A.D. 900	1300 years	7
Caesar – Gallic Wars	100 B.C.	A.D. 900	1000 years	10
Homer – Illiad	1300 B.C.	A.D. 1100	2400 years	643
Tacitus – Annals	A.D. 100	A.D. 1100	1000 years	20
New Testament	A.D. 100	A.D. 200	100 years	25,000+

No other work from Greco-Roman antiquity is so well attested by manuscript tradition as the NT. There are more early manuscripts of the NT than there are of any classical author, and the oldest extensive remains of it date only about two centuries after their original composition. *Albright*

KICKER – of the 25,000+ manuscript copies of NT – all are consistent w/ the NT I hold in my hand today.

B HISTORY/ARCHEOLOGY Evidence

Archaeology is the science that investigates the ruins of ancient civilizations w/ a view to reconstructing their history and finding out the truth w/ regard to their customs and ways of living. *J. Jauncey*

So if the Bible says Nineveh existed, it better exists – and it did! If the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers are mentioned, they need to exist – and they do. To date, there are over 25k Biblical locations and dates that have been discovered and substantiated w/out contradiction.

Every time a spade goes in the dirt another critic gets buried!

I've been accused of teaching the verbal, plenary inspiration of the Scripture. I want it to be understood that I have never taught this. All I have ever said is that in all of my archeological investigation I've never found one artifact of antiquity that contradicts any statement of the Word of God.
Nelson Glueck, archeologist

E The PROPHETIC Evidence

One of the most unique and powerful proofs for the Bible's credibility is the prophetic evidence. **Prophecy is nothing more than history written in advance.**

We know the Bible contains all total some **1,817** individual predictions, concerning **737** separate subjects, found in **8,352** verses, that's **27%** of the **31,124** verses found in the Bible! All these prophecies can be broken down into (2) categories – General and Messianic Predictions and into (3) divisions – the **PAST** (*prophecy fulfilled*), the **PRESENT** (*prophecy being fulfilled*), and the **FUTURE** (*prophecy to be fulfilled*).

Law of Compound Probabilities? CP is a mathematical term relating to the likelihood of two autonomous events occurring. The CP is equal to the probability of the 1st event multiplied by the probability of the 2nd event. An example of CP is flipping a coin twice. If the probability of getting heads is 50%, then the chances of getting heads twice in a row would be 50% X 50% – or 25%.

If I were to predict an earthquake in Atlanta next year the chance would be 1 in 2 it'd occur. If I should add another prediction, that it'd be on July 4th, the chance decreases to 1 in 4. If I add another detail like it'd be in the daytime, the chance then becomes 1 in 8. If I added a 4th detail the odds would be 1 in 32. And if the details were 10 in number, then chance would be 1 in 1024.

There have been 100's of OT predictions fulfilled in the NT. 25 of them are specific predictions regarding the betrayal, trial, death, and burial of Jesus. These prophecies were uttered by OT prophets from B.C. 1000 to B.C. 500, yet they were all fulfilled in 24 hours in one person – Jesus.

According to the LCP there was 1 chance in 33,554,432 that these 25 predictions would be fulfilled as prophesied. Yet it is a fact there were 109 predictions fulfilled in Christ's 1st Advent. If we apply the LCP to this number, then the chance was only 1 in billions they'd be fulfilled in one person.

Ralph Muncaster, an engineer and former Atheist, set out to disprove the Bible to reveal it was a book of myths and superstitions. In his book, *A Skeptic's Search for God*, he developed a statistical test he applied to the Bible in regard to prophecy. He felt a perfect God should be able to make a perfect book so it made sense to him that if he could discredit the claims of prophecy then he could destroy the Bible's credibility.

I was somewhat surprised by the Bible's arrogant-seeming boast about its God being the God, and that there were no others. I was surprised by the law that prophecy be 100% perfect (according to Dt. 18:20 if a prophecy didn't come true, the prophet was killed). In probability testing only an acceptable degree of statistical significance is necessary to reach a conclusion – not perfection. But I reminded myself that a perfect God of the universe would be able to perfectly predict the future in any writing or person he inspired, just as the Bible had declared... I decided to examine each testament individually to see if either could clearly point to a God through 100% accurate historical prophecy. *Muncaster*

The statistical prophecy testing I was going through was hitting me like a ton of bricks. My rational mind told me it was impossible. After all, hadn't man written the Bible? Yet, something was quite amazing – almost frightening. How could books written centuries in advance predict the future – and w/ 100% accuracy? (146)

Just for the OT, Muncaster determined that for 118 prophecies to occur randomly would be 10^{118} . This would be like winning 17 state lotteries in a row buying just 1 ticket for each or like being struck by lightning 24x in a year.

**All this means that the Bible is so good that if it isn't true
– it ought to be!**

III God's Word is RIGHT

right – straight not crooked; a straight path to righteousness

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. 2 Timothy 3:16-17

God's Word gives us everything we need for life. It teaches us what is right, what is moral, and what is true for daily living. It puts us on the straight and narrow and continually provides us w/ the guidance needed to stay on track w/ God.

DOCTRINE – *Truth to Guide*

What is God saying to me to follow Him?

REPROOF – *Truth to Confront*

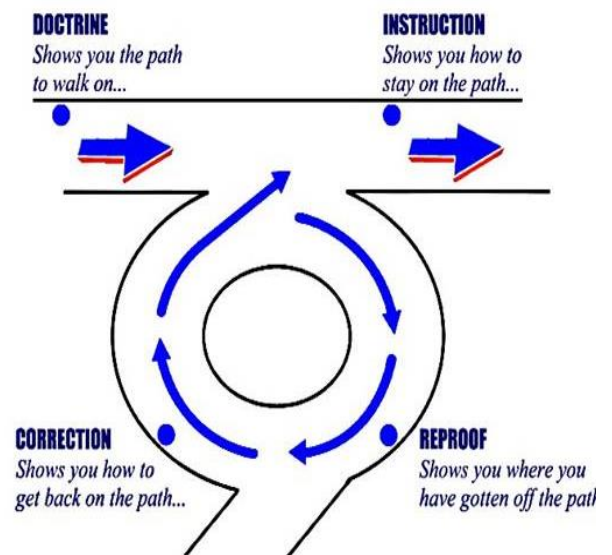
Where am I falling short?

CORRECTION – *Truth to Restore*

What do I need to get on track w/ God?

INSTRUCTION – *Truth to Empower*

What do I need to do to stay on track?



As a physician gives right medicine and as a counselor gives accurate advice, so too does God's Word provide us w/ the right influences to guide our lives.

IV God's Word is RADIANT

radiant – illuminating; revealing light – purging darkness.

Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path.

No other book can do what the Bible can do – shine a spotlight on truth, expose the darkness, and guide a man to life. The Bible penetrates the darkness of sin to allow us to see God and His ways w/ clarity. It places a spotlight on truth so that we can see it w/out distortion.

V God's Word is PURE

pure – free of harshness; containing no impurity

God's Word isn't just right, it is also pure and it'll never cause or allow a person to sin. There's no mixture of error to defile it. There is no stain to pollute it.

The grace of God in His abiding truth is an incorruptible principle which might be challenged and threatened, but it will never be thwarted or destroyed.

Throughout history there have been numerous men who have attempted to disprove the Bible. They either were converted when they honestly appreciated the evidence, or they passed into eternity being outlived by God's Word.

VI God's Word is SURE and RIGHTEOUS

sure – true in content and in scope. It is correct/accurate.

God's Word evaluates the hearts of men and always makes a correct assessment of the condition of a person's heart.

The Word of God is quick and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword, it pierces the dividing asunder of soul and spirit and of joints and marrow, and it discerns the thoughts and intents of the heart. Hebrews 4:12

God's Word establishes parameters for living and warns against untruth, temptation, and the practice/presence of evil.

VII God's Word is DESIRABLE

desirable – something to be craved

Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so by it you may grow up in your salvation, now that you have tasted the Lord is good. 1 Peter 2:1-2

The Word of God enriches and rewards those who pursue and apply it to their lives. It provides both length to life and fulfillment in life. It is priceless in what it can do for you inside and out.

The Bible isn't a solely book about God; it's a book from God to man. In it we find life and the principles/precepts to pursue life. We find light/truth, hope/dignity – we find God's love. It's more than a book; it's a love letter, a road map, a fountain, a breath of fresh air. And for the Christian, it is his food, his rest, his guide, his river and his foundation.

A clergyman on a train traveling along the Hudson River. Seated next to him was an atheist who couldn't contain himself and had to ask questions w/ the intention of stumping the pastor and leaving his faith in shambles. He asked, "I see you are a clergyman." "I suppose you believe the Bible." The clergyman replied, "Yes, I certainly believe the Bible." "But aren't there things in the Bible you can't explain?" "Yes there are places too difficult for me to grasp." W/ a sense of triumph, the atheist cornered the pastor, "then what do you do." Unruffled, the pastor continued to eat his dinner, which happened to be Hudson shad (a tasty but boney fish). He finally looked up and said, "Sir, I do just the same as when eating this shad. When I come to the bones, I put them to the side of the plate and go enjoying my meal. I leave the bones for some fool to choke on since he apparently prefers the bones over the meat.

The Christian can take the whole Bible in his hand and say w/out fear or hesitation that he holds in it the true word of God, handed down w/out essential loss from generation to generation throughout the centuries. F. Kenyon