

Staff Notes

It's All or Nothing

It's a matter of trust. When God says something hard to understand (e.g. how can water, bread and wine be a part of forgiveness?), we need to take him at his word and trust he would never ask us to believe something that would be harmful for us.

-Deuteronomy 4:2 You shall not add to the word which I am commanding you, nor take away from it, that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you.

-Deuteronomy 12:32 See that you do all I command you; do not add to it or take away from it.

-Proverbs 30:5-6 Every word of God is flawless; he is a shield to those who take refuge in him. Do not add to his words, or he will rebuke you and prove you a liar.

-Revelation 22:18-19 I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this scroll: If anyone adds anything to them, God will add to that person the plagues described in this scroll. And if anyone takes words away from this scroll of prophecy, God will take away from that person any share in the tree of life and in the Holy City, which are described in this scroll.

Note that from the first penman of the Bible (Moses in Deuteronomy) to the last (John in Revelation) the stern warning about adding to or subtracting from God's word is consistent.

Another very important lesson. Essentially those who choose to believe in certain parts of the Bible but not all parts are saying they are smarter than God (a very dangerous position to take). Either he is God of all of our life, or he is not God at all (reflect about that for a very humbling thought). We tend to compartmentalize God into certain areas of our life. But he wants to be our God, the only God in our life, who influences us at all times (not just when we pray or are in church). And our sinful nature doesn't want that at all.

Lord Jesus, we confess our sin of not wanting you to be Lord of all in our lives. We love our sins too much to let you be in charge at all times. Because of our weakness, we need your Spirit to strengthen us. "We do believe; help us overcome my unbelief!" (Mark 9:24). Fill us with an ever increasing devotion to you and your ways that we may walk more confidently in your love. Amen.

Discussion Starter

From the book "How Do We Know the Bible Is True" article by Roger Patterson. Published by Master Books

Though I have never eaten at one, there are sushi restaurants where the food moves past you on a conveyor belt. You snatch up the California rolls and let the slabs of raw tuna pass you by. The next guy love the tuna and thanks you for letting it pass. While we have preferences about the food we eat, I would suggest that we cannot take such liberties with the truths God has revealed in the Bible.

Like choosing our food from a conveyor belt, it is inconsistent to accept those parts of the Bible that are presented as historical narratives as true in some places and untrue in others. However, this is what must be done in order to embrace the evolutionary views of the big bang, the gradual formation of the planet, the development of life on earth, and the arrival of humans on this planet. If you hold to one, several, or all of these explanations, and call yourself a Christian, I ask you to carefully consider the question of the authority of Scripture in every area of your life: are you elevating your own thoughts to be greater than God's (humanism) on any of these points?

On what authority do those who say we can set aside Genesis as real history and yet believe in a literal resurrection and the virgin birth make this claim? If Paul was wrong about the connection between Adam and Christ, then why should we trust what Paul said about the sins of murder, lying, and homosexuality and our need for forgiveness through Christ alone?

Staff Notes

Promises Made, Promises Kept

No creature can keep all of his/her promises because there are always circumstances in the future we have no control over (e.g. “I’ll meet you at.....” but then get unavoidably stuck in traffic.)

God is trustworthy because every one of his promises has been kept (except for the promises relating to the end of the world because they’re in the future, and based on his history, every one of those promises will be kept, too). “Not one has failed,” is a pretty powerful statement.

All of God’s promises relate to our relationship with him, his plan of salvation for us.

As teachers of God’s lambs, this is a very important lesson to clearly get across to our children... God cannot lie - he has to keep his word - his very nature is truth and keeping his word (it has to do with living in the eternal present, there is no past or future for him, it’s all NOW). Encourage the children to think of and share some of the other promises/prophecies God made and subsequently kept.

Lord Jesus, we know that every one of the promises and prophecies you made in the Bible has come true. But how can we know your promises about us will come true? Like the one “I will never leave you or forsake you” (Hebrews 13:5)? At times, our lives can become very confused with the pressures of teaching, the interaction with parents and church members, and our own selfishness. Forgive our doubting your word to always love us and to keep us safe until you take us home to be with you forever. That’s a promise we truly want to believe. Amen

Discussion Starter

From the Book “How Do We Know that the Bible Is True” by Master Books.

Neutrality vs. Common Ground by Bodie Hodges

Have you ever had anyone ask you to “leave the Bible out of it” when you are discussing a subject? Perhaps they say something like, “Let’s discuss this, but since I don’t trust the Bible, you are going to have to use better sources, so we can meet on neutral ground.”

This is a subtle tact to try to get you to throw out the Bible and have a “civilized” discussion about a topic, without all that supposed “religious stuff”—in other words, to be supposedly “neutral.” But there is actually no neutral position. The Bible makes it clear than man’s heart is evil and we are either for Christ or against (Genesis 8:21, Jeremiah 17:9).

What they are subtly trying to do is to get you to give up the Bible as your ultimate authority (your starting point) and trust theirs (man becomes the authority or starting point on the subject at hand, not God). In other words, they are trying to get you to act like a secularist, and if you do so, you have already lost the debate.

Be on the lookout for those who propose that there is such a thing as neutrality in the debate. There is no such thing as neutrality: He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters abroad (Matthew 12:30). Because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so (Romans 8:7; NASB). Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God (James 4:4).

We don’t want to get caught “giving up the Bible” to meet on supposed neutral ground, otherwise the non-Christians, especially the many secularists today, win! This is because they are getting you to leave the Bible out of the debate and thus debate on the terms of man’s opinions being the ultimate authority (if the Bible is left out, then God is left out, which means man is the ultimate authority by default). In other words, they want you to give up your starting point of God’s Word, and replace it with their starting point of man’s word—so they win!