

RELIABILITY OF THE BIBLE

- 1) It is the best seller of all books
- 2) It displays such incredible unity despite such wide differences in inspired authors, cultures, times and forms of expression.
- 3) There was an extremely strict process for transcribing the Scriptures. Error rates in transmission were remarkably low as demonstrated in the Dead Sea Scrolls. (the "bibliographic" evidence for the inspiration of the Bible)
- 4) The "internal" evidence for the Scriptures demonstrates no discrepancies from one part of the Bible to another.
- 5) The "external" evidence for the Scriptures demonstrates no discrepancies with the Bible and sources outside of the Bible.
- 6) Bible "hermeneutics" has taught us how to accurately evaluate the scriptures and other comparative works.
- 7) The mere existence, persistence and proliferation of the Bible is evidence that it is a very unique work. Many have tried to eradicate it from the face of the Earth.

THE QUESTION OF EVIL AND SUFFERING

- 1) God loved us so much, He made us "in His image, with a "free will" to love Him or go our own way.
- 2) Realizing this, He made a way back to Him to "reconcile" with Him. He, being perfect, holy and just provided the perfect Sacrifice necessary for the "payment" or "atonement" required for reconciliation.
- 3) Balancing His "sovereignty" and love, he allows us to choose to accept this payment made on our behalf without forcing us to choose.
- 4) Sin, the result of our rebellion to Him, caused serious consequences to us. Some of these consequences are the "global" result of Sin (from one man, Adam) and also at times the result of sin from my personal choices. We are also in a fallen and broken world and may be the victims of others choices. We are "innocent" on a small scale but all are guilty on the bigger scale.
- 5) This global mess will continue till the "order" of things will change at Christ's return.
- 6) He joins us in our suffering and really assumes responsibility for our dilemma without making us choose His Solution.
- 7) The benefits of suffering are not limited to:
 - Creating a reason to consider an alternative (God) to a self focused life and rebellion to God.
 - Consequences for self centered choices and hurtful behavior.
 - Experience the mercy of God as He offers His love and comfort in our times of trials. Through

suffering, God reveals much of His character.

- Creating our own character, empathy, problem solving skills and compassion that we may otherwise not obtain if it weren't for the trials we face. We get "bitter" or "better".
- Through suffering and God's response to us we grow closer to Him. Our relationships follow the same patterns as we grow closer to one another while reaching out to those who are suffering.
- Humility. A process that takes our focus off ourselves and places it on others and God.

9) We become a light for Christ in our afflictions as we respond with faith and trust that God will be with us and demonstrate to a watching world that He is the calm in the eye of the storm.

WHAT ABOUT THOSE WHO HAVEN'T HEARD?

- 1) All have sinned and fall short (Rom 3); we are sinful at birth (Ps 51)
- 2) We are not condemned to Hell because we have not heard about Jesus. We are condemned to hell because we were sinners at birth! Thank you Adam and Eve! (Genesis chapter 3)
- 3) We willfully reject the truth because of the condition of our hearts.
- 4) There is no one with an excuse (Rom 1); we are all held accountable.
- 5) It is by God's grace that we seek Him at all (Eph 2)
- 6) God directly and indirectly intervenes in human affairs but does not show favoritism with respect to salvation (Rom 2); and wants us all to be saved (2Pet 3); but gives us a choice and does not force us.
- 7) There are still strong indications that hearing and preaching the Gospel are very important apart from "natural revelation". NOTE: (Rom 10:1315) for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." {14} How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? {15} And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!"
- 8) Could God have foreseen who would come to Him and who not before the beginning of time and set everything in motion for the very start? (Acts 17)
- 9) Many questions remain. The questions themselves reveal that we are not programmed and indeed have a curiosity that reflects that we are more than just an accident.

However we understand this issue or not, the Biblical truth remains; it is only through believing in our hearts that Jesus is who He said He was and by confessing that He is the Lord of our lives we are saved (Rom 10).