



Why do we believe the Bible?

One of our sessions in confirmation instruction is dedicated to having the students ask questions. (It seems like almost every topic we cover brings up questions, but we have one class devoted to just questions they have.) To get them started, I give them some prompts like "What do we believe about....., Why do we, and Why did Jesus....." The above question came after the "Why do we believe...." prompt.

The question actually has a bit of clarification. "Why do we believe the Bible ... and not the books other religions are based on?"

It's a great question. It gets at the heart of our faith. And faith is at the heart of the answer. The message of the Bible really comes down to faith. And the Bible is clear that we don't come by that faith naturally. For example we are told, *"No one can say, 'Jesus is Lord' except by the Holy Spirit."* (1 Corinthians 12:3) When we have faith that the Bible is the true and accurate revelation of God, the Holy Spirit gets the credit for bringing us to that conviction.

But the fact that we "take it on faith" doesn't mean that we have a "blind faith" - or that there is no evidence for what we believe. In fact, just the opposite is true. There is evidence for the truth of the message in the Bible.

For starters, in a court of law a point can be taken as fact on the agreement of as little as two witnesses. God used no less than 40 different authors to record his revelation. 40 different witnesses to the same truth. Compare that with the sacred writings of most other religions which are typically penned by only one person. One person whose writings are basically ideas and thoughts. Whereas the message of the Bible is grounded in events that took place in verifiable history. For example, the exodus in the Old Testament and the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus in the New Testament.

It's one thing to believe what one person says "because what they say makes sense." (All sorts of things that don't work in reality seem to make sense "on paper.") It's a whole different thing to believe writings that are grounded in historical fact.

The apostle Paul goes so far as to say that the entire Christian message stands or falls on the historical event we call the Resurrection of Jesus. Paul says (in 1 Corinthians 15) that if this event didn't really happen, then we are fools and liars. But that if Jesus really did rise from the grave, then we can be sure that our faith in Jesus is placed in the right place.

At the time of the Resurrection even the enemies of Jesus admitted that the tomb He was placed in on Friday was empty on Sunday. All they had to do was produce the body of Jesus in order to prove the Christian religion to be false. They were not able to produce His body, because He had indeed risen from the grave and was no longer dead. We have further evidence of the truth of the Resurrection in the ten disciples who were put to death for their conviction that Jesus had risen from the grave. It has been correctly said that those disciples would not have been willing to die for a lie or "pie in the sky." They were willing to die for their belief in Jesus' resurrection because they had seen Him alive again.

In short, we trust in the message of the Bible because the Holy Spirit has brought us to faith in it, and because there is evidence to back it up.

Thanks for asking,
Pastor David

Send your questions to pastor@livingwordlutheran.net