

The next stop in the journey takes Matt and Tiffany to a traveling Bible exhibit held in Paducah, KY.



Discussion Leader: Dr. Stan Hudson was a geology major at the University of California at Riverside before becoming a Christian. He then shifted his studies to theology, eventually earning a Doctor of Ministry degree at Fuller Theological Seminary. Today he combines both interests, co-hosting the weekly radio program "Sink the Beagle," a light-hearted approach to creationism and evolution issues. He currently pastors two churches in the university towns of Moscow, Idaho and Pullman, Washington.



A theistic worldview, one that believes in God, allows for another source of information than naturalism does: revelation. That is, if there is a God, it is possible (even likely) that He would try to communicate with us. He would share with us a reliable source of information answering the great questions of life: Who are we? Why are we here? Where do we come from? Where are we going? And what does God want from us? This is logical. For Christians and Jews, that revelation is the Bible.

1 QUESTION:

Randy Younkers, an archaeologist, pointed out how God has provided, even preserved, the Bible. He illustrated how critics of the Bible have sometimes been silenced by new discoveries supporting the Biblical stories (he mentioned the existence of King David as a recent example). But then he said that archaeology can't "prove" the Bible. Why not? Do you agree?

ANSWER:

The Bible records many examples of people rejecting compelling evidence for the existence of God (like when miracles happened); it seems there is a capacity in mankind to doubt, as well as to believe. And even though evidence is part of the decision-making process, there are other factors at work. Interestingly, God always seems to leave room for those who wish to doubt; for instance, He doesn't physically stand on the earth and say, "OK, here I am! See?" His methods are more subtle.

DEFINITION:

BIBLE—A collection of ancient books considered sacred by Christians and Jews today. The Hebrew Bible (what Christians call the "Old Testament") contains 39 books, whereas the New Testament (written in Greek) contains 27 books. The Bible for Christians generally has both Old and New Testaments. The traditional view of Scripture, which is held by many today, is that it is a revelation of God. That is, it contains truth that is meant to instruct on moral issues, as well as meant to recall accurately God's encounters with man. Jesus had a high view of Scripture; He considered them as having come "from the mouth of God." Matthew 4:4.

2 QUESTION:

Did you find Dr. Younkers' personal testimony that he starts with a belief that the Bible is true and goes from there refreshing? Puzzling for a scholar?

ANSWER:

Since everyone has a personal bias, a worldview (see the first program), it's kind of nice to see such honesty!

3 QUESTION:

The Old Testament was written (mostly) in the Hebrew language, whereas the New Testament was written in Greek. Prior to the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls the oldest Hebrew Scriptures we had was about one thousand years old. Can you remember the name of this most famous Hebrew text? Where is it currently?

ANSWER:

The Masoretic text. It's in Jerusalem today.

4 QUESTION:

Critics had challenged the Hebrew Scriptures' accuracy. However, the Dead Sea Scrolls discovery in 1947 ended up verifying an incredibly high degree of accuracy, going back to about 200 BC. Why is this so important?

ANSWER:

It supports the belief that what we have today is exactly what the original writers wrote. It's compelling evidence that God has preserved the Bible's accuracy (and even its existence). It gives us confidence in the divine origin of the Bible.

5 QUESTION:

The Dead Sea Scrolls museum guide explained how it took as much as three years to make a copy of a Biblical book. A large book might require quite a few goat skins to make. And only Levites could copy Biblical books. They would count letters on lines and check the middle letter on that line with the original, all with the intent of accuracy. If a mistake was made, what did they do with the scroll?

ANSWER:

They destroyed it and started over!

6 QUESTION:

Over 19,000 pieces from 800 scrolls were found. Most were written in Aramaic, the spoken language of the day (the language that Jesus spoke). The Essene community at Qumran was somewhat monastic, and it is believed they had great expectations of a soon-coming Messiah. It is thought that what great New Testament figure might have been influenced by them?

ANSWER:

John the Baptist. He lived in the desert and predicted the soon-coming Messiah, too. However, despite the similarities, there's no proof of a direct connection. More probable is the thought that all of Israel was in an expectant attitude at the time, aware of the prophecies in Daniel and so on.

7 QUESTION:

What is the most famous of the Dead Sea Scrolls found?

ANSWER:

The Isaiah scroll.

8 QUESTION:

The Qumran community had scribes who carefully copied old manuscripts. The caves nearby were their storage libraries. But when the Romans came to end a Jewish rebellion, the community's scrolls were left behind. Why do you think that happened?

ANSWER:

As the program implied, the last survivors probably committed suicide at Masada in AD 73. No one was left alive who knew the scrolls' whereabouts.

DEFINITION:

MOSES—The traditional author of the Biblical book of Genesis. The rest of the Bible, as well as the words of Jesus, support this position.

9 QUESTION:

Could God have used this tragedy to help answer skeptics living in the 20th Century? How?

ANSWER:

God has often displayed the unique ability to bring good things out of tragedy and suffering. And He sees the big picture. Looking forward nearly twenty centuries to a skeptical time like ours, one in which people despair for lack of hope, He provided additional evidence of the trustworthiness of His Word in preserving these scrolls.



10 QUESTION:

Dr. Hasel listed the four ways Christians have related to Scripture: (1) Through tradition (which has the final say in interpretation), (2) through experience (placing personal experience above Scripture), (3) through reason (which will not allow for miracles, because they are “unreasonable”) and (4) “Sola Scriptura.” This latter way, the center of historic Protestantism, makes “God’s Word” the final authority in interpreting itself. Are these differences important? Why or why not?

ANSWER:

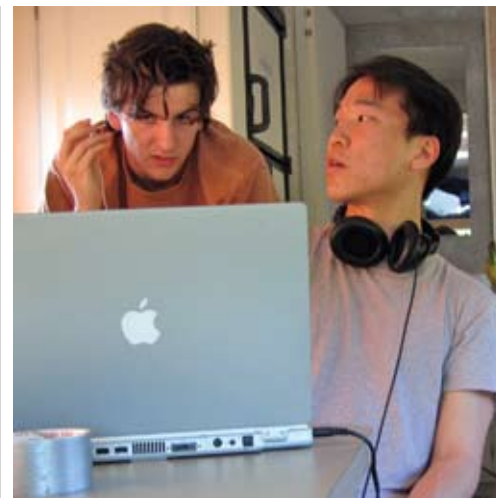
The first three make man the final authority in some way. The fourth way places the authority in Scripture, with the object of making God the determiner of truth. This latter view is based on a healthy skepticism of man’s abilities of getting things right.

11 QUESTION:

Finding the Dead Sea Scrolls is considered by many to be the most important archaeological discovery of all time. An accurate Bible has ramifications for Judaism, Christianity and even Islam. But how does it impact the debate on origins?

ANSWER:

If archaeological discoveries continue to verify the historical accounts found in the Bible, this would support the idea that the oldest stories are reliable, too.



12 QUESTION:

The Bible has a very high view of itself: “All scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine....” II Timothy 3:16. Matt said he now believed in the fidelity of the Bible. If you believe that it contains God’s carefully preserved personal messages to you, how can it answer those big questions we listed at the beginning of this lesson?

ANSWER:

How can it not? It carefully records an image of God lovingly molding man from dust, breathing into his nostrils life and immediately setting aside a day to just enjoy fellowship with each other. A garden was prepared as a home. When man sinned God sought him out. He provided a cure for the pains of sin. He came in the form of man to die for him, and departed to prepare yet another home for him (in heaven)... with the stirring promise that He would come again, so that “where I am, you can be also.” A past, a present, a future; these are the things that mankind seeks answers for, and they are found in God’s Word.