

So What About...? 2026

Part 3: Can You Trust the Bible?

1 Corinthians 15:3-8; Psalm 3:7; Colossians 3:22; Hebrews 8:13; John 20:31

Summary: Some of the biggest doubts about the Bible can be answered when we explore what the Bible actually is.

Main Ideas:

What if your view of the Bible... isn't actually based on what it is?

What if the problem isn't the Bible... but how we've been reading it?

If you misunderstand what the Bible is... you will misunderstand what it says.

The Bible is brutally honest about humanity. And humanity is often brutal.

Understanding the Bible isn't about picking what you like... it's about understanding what actually applies.

The Bible is accurate in what its authors intended to communicate to the people they were writing to.

The Bible isn't the starting point of faith. Jesus is.

If you don't know what to do with the Bible... start with Jesus.

Invitation:

Read the Book of John

As you read, watch for one word: Believe.

Ask yourself: "If this is true, what would it actually mean for me?"

Transcript:

IN: Let's start with a question: When you hear the word "Bible"... what's your immediate reaction?

- Not the answer you think you're supposed to give.
- The honest one.

For some of you, it's meaningful. It's God's Word. It's your guide.

For others, it's confusing. It feels like a rule book... or even problematic.

So why are the reactions so different?

- And most importantly, where did yours come from?

And honestly... most of us didn't carefully choose what we believe about the Bible.

- We absorbed it. Inherited it.

Maybe your experience has been life-giving... Or maybe it hasn't.

- Maybe it was handed to you with, "This is true... just do what it says."
- Maybe it's been used to win arguments.
- Maybe your view comes from podcasts and social media.
- Or maybe you tried reading it... and got stuck.

So here's the real question: **What if your view of the Bible... isn't actually based on what it is?**

- What if it's been shaped by misunderstandings... someone else's filter... or even past hurt?

And what if not examining it... is keeping you from something deeper than you realize?

So... Why do we actually trust the Bible?

Because there are real objections:

- "It's been changed."
- "It was written too late."
- "It promotes evil."
- "Christians pick and choose."
- "It's hard to understand."

Those aren't dumb questions. They're honest ones.

- So let's not just ignore them.
- Let's talk about them... together.
- Not to win an argument, but to follow the evidence wherever it leads.

So here's the tension: **What if the problem isn't the Bible... but how we've been reading it?**

BODY:

Basics: Before we tackle those questions, we need to clear something up.

The Bible isn't a single book... It's a collection.

- More like a library than a novel.
- No one sat down and said, "I'm going to write the Bible."

It's written by different authors, in different times, in different styles, to different people.

That's why you don't hear me say, "The Bible says..." as if it's one voice.

- Instead, I'll say, "Paul wrote..." or "James said..." or "According to the biblical writings..."
- It's vitally important to acknowledge each author's context and voice.

And this collection has two main sections.

The Old Testament tells the story of ancient Israel

- written over hundreds of years,
- with history, poetry, prophecy, and law.

The New Testament centers on Jesus

- His life, His teaching, and the movement that followed Him.
- It includes eyewitness accounts and letters to early churches, figuring out what it means to follow Him.

And this changes how you read it.

Because if you treat the Bible like one flat rule book... you're going to misunderstand it.

- But when you see it as a collection, you start reading each part the way it was meant to be read.

If you misunderstand what the Bible is... you will misunderstand what it says.

Now, with that in mind, let's go straight at the biggest problems people have.

And if you're honest... you've probably thought some of these too.

Problem #1 It's not trustworthy.

Here's probably the biggest thing people say: "You can't trust the Bible."

- "It was written way after the events... and it's been changed over time."

That sounds reasonable...

But here's what most people don't realize... that's not how history works.

When historians ask whether any ancient document is reliable, they use two simple questions:

- How many early copies do we have?
 - The more copies you have, the easier it is to catch mistakes.
- How close are they to the original events?
 - And the closer they are to the events, the less time there is for legend to grow.

So how does the New Testament stack up to other ancient writings? It's not even close.

- Some of our earliest copies show up within decades of the originals... not hundreds of years later.

And it gets even stronger.

- One of the earliest summaries of Jesus' death and resurrection shows up within about 20 years.
- And it wasn't new... Paul says he received it.

1 Corinthians 15:3-8 NLT *I passed on to you what was most important and what had also been passed on to me. Christ died for our sins, just as the Scriptures said. He was buried, and he was raised from the dead on the third day, just as the Scriptures said. He was seen by Peter and then by the Twelve. After that, he was seen by more than 500 of his followers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have died. Then he was seen by James and later by all the apostles. Last of all, as though I had been born at the wrong time, I also saw him.*

This is important... this wasn't a legend that grew over time.

- This was being talked about immediately.
- While eyewitnesses were still alive.

So here's the thing...

- The New Testament wasn't written centuries later.

- And it hasn't been hopelessly corrupted.
- The evidence points the other way.

But let's be honest, even if that's true... that doesn't answer everything.

- Because for a lot of people, the real issue isn't history... It's morality.

Problem #2 The Bible promotes and condones evil.

Here's another major objection: "The Bible promotes evil."

- "Violence. Slavery. Things we would never accept today."

Take violence, for example. There are prayers like this:

Psalm 3:7 NLT *Arise, O Lord! Rescue me, my God! Slap all my enemies in the face! Shatter the teeth of the wicked!*

- That doesn't sound like, "Love your enemies," it sounds like rage.

And then there's slavery.

- Not theoretical... real.
- People in American history used the Bible to justify owning other human beings.
- That should bother you.

Colossians 3:22 NLT *Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything you do. Try to please them all the time, not just when they are watching you. Serve them sincerely because of your reverent fear of the Lord.*

So... How could this (and worse) be in the Bible?

Before we try to answer that... don't rush past how heavy that question is.

- Because it is.

But this is where many people misunderstand what's actually going on...

The biblical writings record a lot of things... that God doesn't approve of.

- Not everything in the Bible is meant to be copied.
- Describing something is not the same as endorsing it.
- If you expect an ancient text to reflect modern values perfectly... you're not reading it honestly.

The Bible is brutally honest about humanity. And humanity is often brutal.

Even the "heroes", Abraham, Moses, David... are deeply flawed.

But the story doesn't stay there. There's a direction to it.

- Not backward... but forward.
- Moving, over time, toward dignity... justice... restoration.

Then Jesus shows up... and He doesn't reinforce the system... He confronts it.

- He constantly elevated the outcast, confronted injustice, and redefined what love looks like.
- He shows us what God is actually like.

And here's the twist: The reason those passages bother us... is because of Jesus.

- He raised the standard.
- He showed us a better way to be human.

So those disturbing parts... don't show us a broken God.

- They show us a broken world and how badly we need something better.
- That's where Jesus comes in.

But that leads right into another big issue for people...

Problem #3 Christians pick and choose what to follow.

And honestly? They do... Christians pick and choose.

- Sometimes it's selfishness... people want the Bible to say what they want it to say.
- Other times, it's confusion... people don't actually understand how the Bible works.

And this is where understanding the Bible actually matters... The Bible isn't one flat list of rules.

- It tells the story of two major ways God related to people.
- The biblical writers call them covenants... agreements between God and people.

The first was with ancient Israel.

- God gave them specific laws for a specific people, in a specific time and culture.
- Think: dietary rules, sacrifices, Sabbath rules.

But then Jesus shows up... and everything changes.

- He doesn't add more rules.
- He fulfills the old system and starts something new.

The author of Hebrews put very clearly... **Hebrews 8:13 NLT** *When God speaks of a "new" covenant, it means he has made the first one obsolete. It is now out of date and will soon disappear.*

So not every command in the Bible applies to you in the same way.

You can even see this in the New Testament

- Letters like Galatians, Ephesians, Thessalonians... were written to real churches in real cities, facing real/specific issues.

A lot of harm has come from taking things meant for one time... and forcing them onto people in another.

If we don't understand where we are in the story, we will keep getting the Bible wrong.

- And we will keep hurting people.

Understanding the Bible isn't about picking what you like... it's about understanding what actually applies.

And that brings us to one last honest problem... maybe the most common one of all:

Problem #4 The Bible is hard to understand

For a lot of people, the real issue is... it's just hard to understand.

- You try to read it... and you get stuck.

You read a bit and think...

- "What does that even mean?"
- "Am I supposed to take this literally?"
- "Why do smart people disagree?"

That's a fair question!

It was written:

- thousands of years ago
- in different cultures
- in different languages
- to specific people

So, of course, there are moments where you think: "I don't know what to do with that."

Here's where a lot of confusion comes from... We expect the Bible to be something it's not.

Some people assume: "If this is true, shouldn't it be obvious to everyone?"

But that's not how communication works.

If someone 2,000 years from now read your texts... with no context... they'd misunderstand you too.

- Not because your writing was false, but because they weren't your intended audience.

So here's a better way to understand it: **The Bible is accurate in what its authors intended to communicate to the people they were writing to.**

- That's what we mean when we say it's trustworthy... or inerrant.

Not that every line is a technical manual for all people at all times

- But that each part is true in the way it was meant to be read.
- Poetry speaks like poetry.
- History speaks like history.
- Letters speak like letters.

You have to read it the way it was written.

Most disagreements come down to this: What kind of writing is this, and how should we read it?

But here's what's important... Christianity didn't start with a book... It started with an event.

- A man claimed to be God. Said He would die and rise again. And people said they saw Him alive.

That's the foundation.

We don't trust Jesus because of the Bible. We trust the Bible because of Jesus.

- That's the core. The reason we even care about these writings is because a risen Jesus changed everything.
- People encountered Him, and wrote about what they saw.

And Christians don't just believe these writings are reliable... we believe they're inspired.

- That God was actually working through these authors to communicate something to us.
- Not dictating every word... but guiding what they wanted to say.

The Bible isn't the starting point of faith. Jesus is.

YOU: So maybe the real question isn't, "Do I believe the Bible?"

- Maybe it's, "Am I willing to explore it for myself?"

Not filtered through podcasts, social media, church traditions, or even my own assumptions.

- But just me... and the text.

So here's the invitation: Don't overcomplicate this.

- Start with one eyewitness account of Jesus' life: the Gospel of John.
- Just read it straight through like you would any story. 2hrs. That's it.
- **Read the Book of John**

And here's why, John tells you exactly why he wrote it...

John 20:31 NLT *But these are written so that you may continue to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing in him you will have life by the power of his name.*

As you read, watch for one word: Believe.

- It shows up over and over

And **ask yourself: "If this is true, what would it actually mean for me?"**

Don't just evaluate a book... give Jesus a real hearing.

Just explore it, honestly, and see where it leads.

WE: So what if we actually did this?

- Not argued about it.
- Not dismissed it.
- Not just nodded along and moved on.

What if we actually explored it? Two hours.

- Not to prove anything.
- Not to force belief.

Just to ask one honest question: "What if this is true?"

- Because if it is... this isn't just an old book.

This is a story about a God who sees you, knows you, and came for you.

And if there's even a chance that's real... don't you owe it to yourself to find out?

So if you don't know what to do with the Bible... start with Jesus.

And be honest enough... to follow the truth wherever it leads.