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“unBelievable Bible”

1. Is the Bible reliable?

- a. What is at stake is **authority**.

2 Timothy 3:17 (NIV) “All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.”

- b. It's not just a **head** issue; it's also a **heart** issue.

Isaiah 66:2 (NIV) “These are the ones I look on with favor: those who are humble and contrite in spirit, and who tremble at my word.”

2. The Claim: Real Life's Doctrinal Statement

- a. “We believe the Bible is God's Word to us. It was written by human authors, under the supernatural guidance of the Holy Spirit. Because it is inspired by God, the Bible is **infallible**, **inerrant**, and **absolute truth**. It is the ultimate and final authority for Christian beliefs and living” (emphasis mine).

3. How to Respond: (You need to know that good answers exist)

- a. **You may need time:** “I don't know. Let me get back to you.”
- b. **Ask them to be specific:** “What [contradiction] are you referring to?”
- c. **Remember:** “With gentleness and respect” (1 Peter 3:15)

4. M.A.P.S.: Manuscripts - What We Have is What They Wrote

- a. Question: How can we know that what we have is what the originals said?
 - i. **Quantity Test:**
 1. New Testament: ~5,700 copies (325 complete NT's)
 - ii. **Time Span Test:**
 1. New Testament: 10-15 fragments within 100 years - some sizeable
 - iii. **Dead Sea Scrolls (1947)**
 1. Predated the oldest complete Hebrew text - Codex Leningradensis (AD 1008) - by about 1,000 years.

5. M.A.P.S.: Archeology - Where It Can Be Tested It Proves Reliable

- a. Biblical skeptic Sir William Ramsay
- b. Accusations
 - i. David Inscription (1993 - Tel Dan)
 - ii. Nazareth House (2008)
- c. There will always be accusations, but the more time = the more evidence.

6. M.A.P.S.: Prophecy - God Gives Prophecy to Prove the Trustworthiness of His Words

- a. Skeptics said that prophecies were added later to make the Bible look predictive.
 - i. But the Dead Sea Scrolls proved that Jesus came after the prophecies.

- b. Someone could say, “Maybe Jesus deliberately conspired to fulfill them.”
 - i. Christ to be born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2)
 - ii. Christ to be betrayed by a friend (Psalm 41:9)
 - iii. Christ crucified (Psalm 22:16)

7. M.A.P.S.: Statistics

- a. The above is ridiculous, so what is the probability that it happened by chance.
- b. What is the probability of one man fulfilling all eight prophecies?
 - i. 1×10^{28} or 1 in 10,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000.

8. Where Does M.A.P.S. Lead Us To?

- a. The Bible is God’s Word (**Authority**). And He has preserved it for us today.

Matthew 5:18 (ESV) “For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished.”

- b. But it’s not just a **head** issue; it’s a **heart** issue.
 - i. At some point, you can have all the evidence and still choose disbelief.

Small Group Discussion Questions:

Ice Breaker: When is the last time that something was said to you where you questioned its reliability?

Head:

1. Talk about the acronym M.A.P.S. What does it stand for and how can this help you know and defend the reliability of the Bible?
2. When it comes to the reliability of scripture, what questions have you wrestled with OR are you wrestling with?

Heart:

1. Read Isaiah 66:2. Does your knowledge of the Bible being God’s Word cause you to tremble? Why is this a fitting response?
2. What evidence from the sermon helped strengthen your faith in the Bible’s authenticity?

Hands:

1. Read 1 Peter 3:15. Why does God want us to give a reason for the hope within us with **gentleness and respect**? How would this look in your life?
2. How is what we’ve talked about going to change the way you live your life?



Sample Small Group Questions
<https://bit.ly/GroupDiscussionQuestions>



The Overtime Podcast
bit.ly/ROvertime



Series Resources
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