



Hard Evidence from the Ancient World

Jeremiah 6:1a, 16

Dear friends in Christ,

We give thanks to God that we have been given His word in the written form, the Bible. And through the written Word we get to know God's love for us through Jesus Christ, our Saviour.

We also give thanks to God because in the written Word we are shown God's concern and care for all of us. We also see how He comforts and encourages us. And through the written Word we are also told how to live in peace and harmony with one another.

And most importantly receive His forgiveness and the promise of eternal life in heaven with Him forever.

That's the Good News, but... what if, what if all we have believed all this time, all our lives and why not all these two thousand years about Christ, the Bible, Church and faith is not what it should be? What if we have been deceived? What if there is more to the Bible? What if what other say is true, that the Bible is just a manmade book? Or what if the Bible is not complete as others argue?

Here are some examples among many...

Islam for example believes that the Bible is held to reflect the true unfolding revelation from God; but that revelation has been corrupted or distorted; which needed the giving of the Qur'an to the Islamic prophet, Muhammad, to correct this deviation.

The Mormons, they too have their own version of the Bible, the JST, or the so called Joseph Smith Translation. This is an expanded version of the King James Bible, which Joseph Smith did because: he wanted "to restore many important points touching the salvation of men, [that] had been taken from the Bible, or lost before it was compiled."

So as you see, the "what if" dear friends, is not just a "what if?" question, because many are buying and believing what the world through science, through philosophies of this era and religion as it is the case of Islam, are saying regarding the Bible. That the Bible is not a reliable book, and not God's word, or at least well it is a religious book that contains God's Word for sure, but... and yes there are many who say the Bible is a manmade book only.

I would like to show you this short vide and see what you think.... (video)

Let comment about it for a moment... your thoughts?

There are disagreements also when it comes to the interpretation of God's Word, in our community, in our congregation and even in our own families we do have our own positions as well. The problem is that when we do have our own interpretations it can lead us to have our own God as well, even if we argue that we are following and worshiping the God of the Bible.

That's the reality. But this reality is actually not new, it's been for centuries. God's Word has been despised all over and throughout history as well. But because of

the increase of communications media, and the availability of it, the rejection of the Bible is one of the big reasons, I think, for the decline of the church all over. And it's happening rather faster than we would like it to.

Especially with the course our society is taking. Some say the Bible is not the Word of God because the Word is static and doesn't change, but society has changed and we have developed and people argue if the Bible was God's Word then it should change too to be compatible with today's society. Therefore some say the Bible actually binds us to the Iron Age, or does it?

So, what if? What if the Bible is not what we have been taught it is?

Let's comment on this saying: "The inspiration of the Bible depends on the ignorance of the gentleman who reads it." R.G. Ingersoll.....

How true that is! But it can go both ways. As we have seen in the video, reading the Bible just to refute it, will find no inspiration of course, and in the end will be ignorant of what God wants to convey. The problem is that that kind of ignorance can reproduce itself if we don't read the Bible and if we do not subject ourselves to God's authority. And when it comes to the salvation of my soul, I'd rather be considered an ignorant in the view of the world but knowledgeable of God's grace and mercy, through the forgiveness of sins, through the sacrificial work of Christ on the cross of Calvary. That we must know, experience and gladly receive.

That's why through the prophet Jeremiah God calls His people to do something. But what is it? I would like somebody please to read Jeremiah 6:1a, 16 (wait until somebody has read the text then bring up the next slide)

"To whom shall I speak and give warning, that they may hear?.... ¹⁶ Thus says the Lord: "Stand by the roads, and look, and ask for the ancient paths, where the good way is; and walk in it, and find rest for your souls." Jeremiah 6:1a, 16

And that's what we are doing today, digging and looking for external evidences that will help us to override the "what if" and with more confidence than ever cling to God's word no matter what, not that we need confidence in the external sources but that will certainly override the "what if".

But so that forgiveness abound and so that praise, honor and worship be given to our God, Lord and Saviour, and so that faith will stay strong, the Lord helps us to see that His Word stands for ages, and is the same in the past, present, and even for the remaining time until His second coming, He does so by allowing us to see historical evidences from literature to archeology and historical writings.

Today in the Bible study you will be hearing some more about the Dead Sea scrolls which will help us to verify the veracity and the truth of the literary text of the Bible as we know it today, and from there decide which version of the Bible to read, and more. But read it and get to know it.

"The Bible is like a telescope." Somebody said, "If a man looks through his telescope he sees worlds beyond; but if he looks at his telescope, he does not see anything but that. The Bible is a thing to be looked through to see that which is beyond; but most people only look at it and so they see only the dead letter." Phillip Brooks.

Friends when you read the Scriptures as the Scriptures tell us to do and explains how, then it will be a telescope which will bring insight to God's presence and His truth. That's what Paul says: "All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching,

for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work.” 2 Timothy 3:16-17

And Jeremiah says we will find rest for our souls, here on earth and for eternity.

And this is not a wishful thinking but a reality that is confirmed by the Holy Spirit in each one of our lives. Reading the Bible without the intervention of the Holy Spirit will bring us nothing, but if in prayer and through prayer we ask that the Holy Spirit is ready to help us understand God’s word.

As somebody else wrote:

“The Lord I love went on ahead to make a home for me He said.

He would come back again, and

He Oh, Gracious Love He wrote to me!

He knew I was so weak and blind

And foolish, that I could not find the road alone.

He wrote me things that all earth's wise men and its kings

Have never guessed but I foreknow.

For I read His letter and oh the depths of love on every sheet

My soul is trembling at His feet.

What would He have thought of me when I saw Him

if should say I was too busy every day

To read the letter You wrote to me, really hadn't time for Thee?” (Author unknown)

Martin Luther said: “God is everywhere. However, He does not want you to reach out for Him everywhere but only in the Word. Reach out for it and you will grasp Him aright. Otherwise you are tempting God and setting up idolatry. That is why He has established a certain method for us. This teaches us how and where we are to look for Him and find Him, namely, in the Word.” Martin Luther.

Friends, there is so much confusion as to the veracity of the Scriptures. But thanks be to God for He allows ways, external sources to tell us, that witness and assure us that God’s word is not an empty letter but His life giving Word.

Even when the so called new discoveries of the present age that deny, change or change God’s purpose, especially His plan of salvation, God is faithful and will accomplish everything He said.

And as we grow in His word, may the words Paul wrote the Corinthians apply to us as well:

“I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that was given you in Christ Jesus, ⁵ that in every way you were enriched in him in all speech and all knowledge— ⁶ even as the testimony about Christ was confirmed among you— ⁷ so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift, as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ, ⁸ who will sustain you to the end, guiltless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹ God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.” (1 Cor.4-9)

In His name, amen.