

Truth: The Foundation Of Our Unity

“...for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood... speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love (4:13,15–16).”

“You were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you formerly lived...but God...made us alive together with Christ. It is my grace you have been saved. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God (2:1,4,8).”

“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 complete, equipped for every good work (II Tim. 3:16–17).”

Proposition: We can trust the bible historically, culturally and personally.

I. You can trust the Scriptures Historically

A. The NT accounts of Jesus were written too early to be legends.

“...that you may have certainty concerning the things you have been taught (Lk. 1:4).”

“Dan Brown says when the emperor Constantine declared Jesus divine Christianity won the religious competition in the roman empire by an exercise of power rather than by any attraction it exerted. In actual historical fact, the church had won that competition long before it had any power when it was still under sporadic persecution. If a historian were cynical he would say Constantine chose Christianity because it had already won and he wanted to back a winner.”

B. The documents are too counterproductive in their content to be legends.

“Now it was Mary Magdalene and Joanna and Mary the mother of James and the other women with them who told these things to the apostles, but these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them. But Peter rose and ran to the tomb; stooping and looking in, he saw the linen cloths by themselves; and he went home marveling at what had happened (Lk. 24:10–12).”

C. They are too detailed in their form to be legends.

“I have been reading poems, romances, vision literature, legends and myths all my life, I know what they are like. I know none of them are like this. Of the gospel texts, there are only two possible views. Either this is historical reportage, or else some unknown ancient writer without known predecessors or successors suddenly anticipated the whole technique of modern novelistic realistic narrative. The reader who doesn't see this simply has not learned how to read.” CS Lewis

II. You can trust the Scriptures culturally.

A. Consider that the text doesn't teach what you think it is teaching.

“There are two institutions that you see in Genesis that were universal in the culture: polygamy, and primogeniture. However, when you actually read the text of Genesis you see two things. First, in every generation polygamy reaps havoc. In every generation having multiple wives is an absolute disaster: culturally, socially, relationally, familiarly, spiritually, psychologically, in every way. Secondly, when it comes to primogeniture, in every single generation God always favors the youngest son over the older. It's always Abel, not Cain, Isaac not Ishmael, Jacob not Esau. If you realize what Genesis is

doing you will notice that it is subverting, not supporting those ancient patriarchal institutions at very spot. If you don't realize that you do not know how to read." Robert Alter

B. Please consider the possibility that you are misunderstanding what the bible is teaching because of your own cultural blinders.

"Bondservants, obey your earthly masters with fear and trembling, with a sincere heart, as you would Christ, not by the way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, rendering service with a good will as to the Lord and not to man, knowing that whatever good anyone does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether he is a bondservant or is free. Masters, do the same to them... (Eph. 6:5-9)."

Murry Harris:

1. Slaves were not distinguishable from anyone else by race, speech or clothing. They looked and lived like everyone else and were never segregated off from society in any way.
2. Slaves were more educated than their owners in many cases and many times held high managerial positions.
3. From a financial standpoint, slaves made the same wages as free laborers and were themselves not poor and often accrued enough personal capital to buy themselves out.
4. Very few persons were slaves for life in the first century. Most expected to be freed after about 10 years or by their late 30's at the latest.

C. You may be getting offended by certain texts because of the un-examined assumption of the superiority of your cultural moment.

III. You can trust the Scriptures personally.

"They said to each other, 'Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the Scriptures (32)?'"

"And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself (27)."