



MT. ROSE REFORMED
ORTHODOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

How Can I Know the Bible is True?

Reverend Scott Johnson | August 2, 2026 | 2 Timothy 3:14-17

Old Testament Reading

Our Old Testament reading this morning is Psalm 119, verses 105 through 112. Psalm 119, verses 105 through 112, and this is God's infallible and inerrant word. Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path. I have sworn an oath and confirmed it to keep your righteous rules. I am severely afflicted. Give me life, O Lord, according to your word. Accept my freewill offerings of praise, O Lord, and teach me your rules. I hold my life in my hand continually, but I do not forget your law. The wicked have laid a snare for me, but I do not stray from your precepts. Your testimonies are my heritage forever, for they are the joy of my heart. I incline my heart to perform your statutes forever to the end.

New Testament Reading

And now let's turn to the New Testament, 2 Timothy 3. This is our New Testament reading and our sermon text for this morning. 2 Timothy 3, verses 14 through 17. 2 Timothy 3, verses 14 through 17.

But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it, and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. 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.

The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever.

Introduction to the Sermon Series

This morning, we are beginning a series of sermons through the month of August, a series that I have entitled, Questions People Ask Christians. And my hope is that these sermons will be helpful for those who may hear them who are not believers in Christ, who have yet to come to faith in Christ, but have questions about the Christian faith. But I also hope and pray that these sermons will be helpful for those who are already committed Christians.

These are questions that we will ask that all of us as Christians, we should be able to answer for ourselves. And Lord willing, we should be able to grow in our confidence to answer these questions when those who do not know Christ, who are outside the Christian faith, when they put these questions to us. And one of the wonderful things about our faith in Christ is that we don't have to be afraid of hard questions. Of course, the Lord does not give us answers to all the questions that we may ask of him, but because he is truth and because his word is truth and he has revealed himself and his will to us in his word, we can be confident that there are good answers to the tough questions that we might hear from others or the questions that might even arise in our own hearts and minds.

The Foundation and Stakes of the Question

This morning, the question we are addressing is this, how can I know the Bible is true? And in many ways, this is the most important question of all when it comes to any question that we might ask about Christianity. First of all, all of the answers to all of the other questions that we might ask about the Christian faith, they're ultimately rooted in the scriptures. The answers come from the word of God.

For example, just one question that we will consider this month, that question will be, how can a good God allow evil? Well, we will never arrive, we will never come to a satisfactory answer to that question until we accept the truth about who God is, his character, his nature, and until we accept the truth about his rule over the universe as these truths are revealed to us in the scriptures. Only from the standpoint of the scriptures and of what God reveals to us there can

we begin to answer a question such as, how can a good God allow evil? And many other questions that are asked of the Christian faith. And so this question about the truthfulness of the scriptures, this is foundational for answering every other question that may be raised concerning our faith in Christ.

Secondly, and most significantly, this question of how can I know the Bible is true is of first importance, is preeminently important, because there is so much at stake for you and me personally in the way in which we answer this question. If the Bible is true, and of course I believe it is true, but if the Bible is true, this is what it means for you. It means that you have been created by God, and you have been created by God to know Him, to serve Him, to love Him, and to worship Him. But because of your failure to know Him, serve Him, love Him and worship Him, you are guilty of sin against a righteous God. And unless your sin is forgiven by God, you will be eternally condemned. You will be cast out forever from the presence of God and you will endure the torments of His just and righteous wrath forever. That is what the Bible teaches.

And so if the Bible is true and we are apart from Christ, that is what is going to be true for you and me. But if you come to faith in the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ, according to the word of God, then your sins will be forgiven. You will receive the gift of eternal life and the promise of eternal blessedness and glory will be yours.

And so with this question, is the Bible the true word of God? There is so much at stake for us. There's so much at stake for us personally, nothing less than heaven or hell. And so we are not asking a merely intellectual question to satisfy our curiosity when we ask the question, is the Bible true? Is it trustworthy? It's not as though we are concerned with asking other kinds of questions like, whether or not there are really black holes in the universe, or how did the dinosaurs become extinct? Those may be interesting questions and interesting things to ponder, but your life really isn't affected by whatever the answer to those questions may be.

But the question that we're asking this morning has everything to do not only with your life here and now in this world, but with your life in all eternity. And so if the Bible is in fact true, which of course I believe it is with all my heart, then what's at stake for you personally is your eternal destiny. And so this question is of preeminent importance. There is no more urgent and important question for you and me to ask than this, is the Bible true?

Now, if you don't already believe that the Bible is true, I want you to believe that it is true. I want you to come to see the truth that the Bible is the word of God. But more importantly, far more importantly than that, God wants you to believe that the Bible is true. And so this morning I'm going to give you two main reasons why you should accept the truth of the scriptures.

Reason One: Believing the Bible Is Reasonable

The first reason is this, you should believe the Bible because it is reasonable to do so. You should believe the Bible because it is reasonable to do so.

Before we go any further, we should be clear about what we mean when we say, I believe the Bible, or I believe the Bible is true. First of all, what is the Bible? What Bible are we talking about? We're talking about the 66 individual books that make up the Old and the New Testament. 39 books in the Old Testament, 27 books in the New Testament. We don't have time to get into this issue here, but the Bible does not include the books that are called the Apocrypha. The Bible is just those 66 books that contained in the Bible that you are holding, most of you are holding in your hands now.

And to say that I believe the Bible, to say that I believe that the Bible is true means this, it is to say that I accept as true what the Bible claims about itself. I accept that the Bible is speaking the truth when it says of itself that the Scriptures are the Word of God. In other words, to believe the Bible is true is to believe that everything that it says, everything that is given in the scriptures is true, trustworthy, without error, and authoritative, and it is to believe that because God himself, the author of the scriptures, is true, trustworthy, without error, and authoritative.

And this is a truth that is given to us in our passage this morning from our New Testament or from the New Testament reading. The apostle Paul, of course, he wrote this letter to Timothy. Timothy was his younger coworker in the gospel ministry. Paul was like a father to him, a mentor to him. And in verses 14 and 15 of chapter 3, Paul encourages Timothy to continue to devote himself to learning and to living by what he calls the sacred writings. And the sacred writings are the scriptures, the scriptures that Paul and Timothy had at that time, that the church had at that time, what we call today the Old Testament. The New Testament was not yet written.

And Paul grounds this exhortation to Timothy. He bases this encouragement to Timothy to continue in the scriptures in the strongest possible way by telling him or perhaps reminding him of what the scriptures truly are, the nature of the scriptures. And that is what Paul says in verses

16 and 17. So let me read those verses to you again, verses 16 and 17. All scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

In verse 16, Paul uses a compound word in Greek that combines two different words. It combines the word for God and the word for breathe. And that is literally God breathed. And that's how the English Standard Version translates that compound Greek word breathed out by God. And so what that means is, is that though each book of the Bible was written by a human being, that there was a human author in each book of the Bible. Nevertheless, the true author, the ultimate author, the originator of all the words of scripture is God himself. These words came from God. They are breathed out by God.

And notice that Paul says that all Scripture is breathed out by God. This means that every book, every chapter, every passage, every sentence, every word in both the Old and the New Testaments comes from the mind of God. This breathed out by God covers all of Scripture. And so it's not just passages like Psalm 23 or John 3:16, these passages that we memorize and love and hold dear to our hearts that are breathed out by God, but every passages, even those that are hard to understand, every passage that condemns our sin, every passage that speaks a truth that is unpopular in our world today, these are all equally the authoritative, the infallible, the trustworthy word of God.

And so this is the Christian view of the Bible. And this is the Christian view of the Bible because this is the Bible's view of the Bible. That all the scripture is breathed out by God.

Now, at this point, someone might say, OK, I'm convinced that the Bible says that it is from God. It is the word of God. But is it truly reasonable for me to believe that? Because after all, the Bible was written so many ages ago. It was written in a pre-scientific, a pre-modern age when people believed in all kinds of myths and fables and all kinds of gods. Not only that, but the Bible was written in ancient languages that we don't even speak anymore. And all we have in our Bibles today are copies of copies of copies of the original manuscripts. Those have been lost to history. And so how can I know really that the English Bible that I have is truly the Word of God?

Well, first of all, to begin to answer those kinds of questions, the Bible testifies to a faith that was absolutely unique and extraordinary in the ancient world. It is true that people back then believed in all kinds of myths and fables and different gods. It's not so much different today. But unlike all the other religions of the ancient world, the scriptures taught that there is just one God.

There is one God, the creator and the sovereign Lord of heaven and earth. And so the teaching of the Bible about God is as different as it can possibly be from all of the myths and the religions of all of the peoples of the ancient world. It is extraordinary. It was extraordinary then, it still is today in many ways.

Secondly, we can have perfect confidence that the English Bible that we read today is a faithful and reliable translation and transmission of the original manuscripts that were written in Hebrew and Greek. Now, it is true, of course, that we don't have the original writings of the Bible. We don't have anywhere the Psalms that David wrote in Hebrew. We don't have the very first, the original copy of the letter that the Apostle Paul wrote to the Romans in Greek. Those have been lost to history. But the books of the Bible have always and had always been copied and transmitted with the utmost care to preserve the exact words that were being copied. I mean, after all, the scribes who copied the scriptures from one manuscript to the next, they believed that they were handling the very words of God and so they were very meticulous, very careful.

And when you look into it and look how manuscripts that are thousands of years apart are so exactly matched up together. You can see the care with which people copied the scriptures, but of course, ultimately, the sovereign rule of God over this whole endeavor to keep his word pure and to keep the integrity of his word. There are variants among manuscripts, scribal variants, that do exist. However, most of them, virtually all of them, are inconsequential in terms of affecting the meaning of Scripture. And, this is very important, there are no differences among the various manuscripts of the Bible that would change any fundamental doctrine of the Christian faith. So none of these differences affect anything that we consider to be absolutely fundamental and true and important for the Christian faith, for knowing God and worshiping God.

And what's more, when we compare the biblical manuscripts that we have, when we compare this to all other kinds of literature, when it comes to the number of manuscripts, when it comes to the antiquity of the manuscripts that we have of the scriptures, we have an embarrassment of riches. There are literally thousands and thousands of biblical manuscripts that are centuries old. Some of those manuscripts of the New Testament goes far back to the second century AD, virtually just decades after the original manuscripts were written. As far as the Old Testament, we have manuscripts that go as far back. These are the Dead Sea Scrolls. They go back as far as 250 BC.

And so all of this is to say that it is perfectly reasonable to believe that the English Bibles that we possess today, that we read today, that they are true and faithful transmissions of the words of the original biblical books that were directly breathed out by God. In other words, it is eminently reasonable for a Christian holding his English Bible today to say with perfect confidence, this is the word of God. This is God's word. He's given it to us and he's preserved it in his marvelous providence so that we have the true and trustworthy word of God.

And not only that, it is perfectly reasonable for a Christian to believe that the Bible that she reads has not been contradicted by history or archaeology or science. Now, we need to be honest. We need to say that there are some difficult questions about how what the Bible says harmonizes with what we know or what we think we know about the findings of science or archeology or history. But even with those questions, there was nothing in any of those fields of knowledge which categorically refutes any of the teaching of scripture, anything that the scripture tells us. And that will always be the case. Because the same God who gave us his infallible word is the God who created the universe, the God who rules over all things by his sovereign will, his sovereign power. And so what we learn that is true from nature or from history will never contradict the truth that God has revealed in the scriptures. So there may be some questions about this or that, but we know that ultimately there is harmony, that they harmonize together.

Someone may yet say, well, it's not reasonable for me to believe in the miracles of the Bible. Let's be honest. People just don't rise from the dead. But we might say to that person, well, how do you know that? Have you personally examined the corpse of every single person who has ever died to confirm that they, in fact, are still dead? Of course not. No one could ever do that. It's just an assumption that someone makes based on their own very, very limited experience.

But if anyone is willing to accept the truth about God, as God has revealed to us in the scriptures, that God is almighty, He is infinite in power, that He is the sovereign creator of all things, including life itself, that He is the author of life, and there is nothing at all unreasonable about believing that this God can rise or can raise someone from death to life. There is nothing unreasonable about believing that God can do any of the miracles that are recorded for us in the scriptures. And so you should believe the Bible because it is reasonable to do so.

Reason Two: The Bible Evidences Itself to Be God's Word

However, that is not the greatest reason why you should believe the Bible. The greatest reason why you should believe the Bible, the reason why you must believe the Bible is because the Bible shows itself to be the word of God. And this is our second point. You should believe the Bible because it evidences itself or shows itself to be the true word of God.

A few weeks ago, I received an email that supposedly came from Adam Gustafson. Adam's our ruling elder here, one of our ruling elders here. And let me read to you the exact words of this email. Hi, I am experiencing difficulty accessing the church directory. Please send me a PDF copy. Thank you for your assistance. Blessings, Adam Gustafson, elder.

Now, if I had been in a hurry, I might've just hit reply and sent him a copy of the church directory. But thankfully, I looked over the email a little more closely, and the more I looked at it, the more obvious it became to me that this was a fake, it was a scam, this wasn't truly coming from Adam. Over the years, I've gotten a lot of texts and emails from Adam, and so I recognize the style of his communication with me. He wouldn't start off an email by saying, hi. He'd probably say something like, pastor, or hey, brother. And even though Adam is always grateful when I send him something by email or text when he asks for it, he has never ever said in an email, thank you for your assistance. It just did not sound like Adam. And he would not need to, nor has he ever identified himself to me in a text or email by saying elder. I know that he is an elder. And not only that, but I know he already has a copy of the church directory. And of course, when I looked at the email that this message came from, it was not Adam's email, so it was obviously fake.

And I knew it was fake because it completely lacked all of the marks that would have shown it to be genuinely coming from the true Adam. And when it comes to the Bible, the ultimate reason why we should accept it as the Word of God is because, unlike a fake email, the Bible bears all the marks of being truly from its author. It bears all the marks of being truly from the one whom it claims it comes from, and that is God himself. In other words, if we read the Bible with an open mind, we cannot but see that the words and the teaching in it and the scriptures in their entirety cannot have come from man, but they must be these words that are here in the scripture. They must come from the mind of God.

Let me read to you from our larger catechism, the Westminster larger catechism, question and answer number four. Question, how doth it appear, how does it appear, that the scriptures are the word of God? Answer, the scriptures manifest themselves to be the word of God by their majesty and purity, by the consent of all the parts, and the scope of the whole, which is to give all glory to God, by their light and power to convince and convert sinners, to comfort and build up believers unto salvation.

If you read the Bible, and if you read it paying attention to what the Bible is saying, what it's communicating, you will be struck with the majesty of all that it speaks of. Because it speaks of the majesty, the greatness, the glory of Almighty God. It speaks of his wonderful works of creation, of providence, of redemption. The scriptures speak of a God who is infinitely pure and holy and righteous. And it urges us to imitate God, to be like God in righteousness, purity, holiness. And so the word of God is pure and is holy. And from beginning to end, the Bible tells us a story of God's sovereign work of creation, of redemption, of one day bringing all things so that all things will bring glory to him. It speaks of the sovereign work of salvation in Jesus Christ. And in this way, all the scriptures magnify the glory of God.

And in all of these ways, the scriptures bear marks of its divine author. But not only that, there is power in the Bible, power to transform lives, to change sinners into saints, to bring comfort and hope to believers, to bring lasting transformation even to entire nations. And this too is testimony to the truth that the Bible does come from God himself. He is the author of it.

The reformer John Calvin said this. He said, indeed, scripture exhibits fully as clear evidence of its own truth as white and black things do of their color or sweet or bitter things do of their taste. Well, how do you know that sugar is sweet? How do you know that coffee is bitter? It's not because you read about it in a book. It's not because someone explained that to you, but you have tasted sugar and you know that it is sweet. You have tasted coffee. You know that it is bitter. They prove themselves, they evidence themselves to be what they are.

And so you do not come to believe the Bible, you don't come to believe it and accept it as the word of God because the preacher says you should, or because the church says you should, or because the experts say you should, but you come to believe the Bible because you see for yourself that every word in it comes from the mind of God. It is truly God's word.

Overcoming Spiritual Blindness and Coming to Christ

Now, somebody might say to that, well, that sounds great, but I'm sorry, I just don't see that at all. All I see is just another religious book alongside all of the other books of all the other religions in the world. The true reason why anybody would say that and the reason why so many people fail to see the truth about the Word of God is because they are blind to that truth. We were born with spiritual blindness. We cannot see what is obviously true until God takes away that blindness.

A man who is physically blind cannot see anything but darkness. You can take him outside on a clear day at high noon, and the sun is shining brightly in the sky, and all he sees is darkness. He'll say, I don't see the sun. Well, that does not mean that the sun does not exist. It just means that his eyes have not been opened. He cannot see it. And for you and me to truly see the truth that the Bible is the word of God, we must have our spiritual blindness removed. We need our eyes open. We need the spirit to illumine our hearts that we might acknowledge and receive what is true, that the Bible is the word of God.

And that's what the larger catechism goes on to say. The Spirit of God, bearing witness by and with the Scriptures in the heart of man, is alone able to fully persuade it that they are the very Word of God. Only the Spirit of God can open our eyes. Only the Spirit of God can enable us to see the light of God's truth radiating from the pages of the Scripture.

And part of that truth about the Scripture is that the Spirit, by His power and grace, enables us to see is that to put it in the language of the catechism. The scope of the whole Bible is to give all glory to God. That is the entire, where the Bible is leading us to see God in all of his glory. And the Bible gives all glory to God in one magnificent way above all others. And that is it reveals to us the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ, According to the Bible, Jesus Christ, he is the one who preeminently, above all else, reveals the glory of God to us.

Listen to 2 Corinthians 4:6. For God who said, let light shine out of darkness, has shown in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. The face of Jesus Christ reveals God's glory. And so as the Bible reveals to us the glory of God, it does so as it reveals to us the person of Jesus Christ, because he is the incarnate son of God. He is God in the flesh. And through his word, through his word in the scriptures, Christ calls all people to come to him in faith.

And what this means for you is this, what this means for you and me, for all of us is this, that you cannot ask the question, how can I know the Bible is true? You cannot ask that question without asking at the very same time this question, am I ready to accept the claims of Jesus Christ upon my life? In other words, you're coming to believe that the Bible is God's word, and you're coming to faith in Jesus Christ as your savior from sin and death. These are two sides of the same coin that go hand in hand.

In fact, you see that connection, that inseparable bond between the word of God and between Christ, who reveals the glory of God through the scriptures, You see that in our passage in 2 Timothy, in verse 15, Paul says to Timothy, you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. In other words, as the sacred writings reveal Christ, you come to salvation. They make you wise for salvation.

And so the real question is not, how can I believe the Bible is true? But the real question is, Why would you not believe the Bible is true? The scriptures speak the truth, the truth about your sin, your guilt before a holy God. The scriptures proclaim the glorious good news that Jesus Christ came into the world to save us from sin and death by his offering himself a sacrifice upon the cross to atone for our sins and by his resurrection from the dead.

If you are sincerely and genuinely asking the question, how can I know the Bible is true? The answer is, come to the Jesus of the Bible. Come to faith in the one to whom the Bible testifies. Repent of your sin, believe in him as your savior, submit to him as your Lord. And then, and only then, can you truly see that the Bible is the word of God. And then you will be able to say with the apostle Peter, of those words that he spoke to Jesus, you will say as well, Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.

Let's pray.