

Midtown Messenger

Volume 1

November 11, 2018

Issue 35

YOU CAN TRUST YOUR BIBLE (PART 1)

Ronnie Scherffius

Stephen sat spellbound as his professor lectured on the historical life of Jesus. “It is possible, even likely, that the gospel of John was written in the late second or even into the mid-third century.” Questions exploded in Stephen’s mind: Wasn’t John written in late first century? How could John have been written any time in the second or third centuries? Wouldn’t that make John 200–300 years old?! Cautiously Mark raised his hand and inquired, “Could you please explain your reasoning?”

His professor quickly and with an air of superiority stated, “It has to do with the “high Christology” of John’s writing; since John portrays Jesus as Deity in the flesh and since the “legend” of Jesus as Deity in the flesh took generations to evolve among Christian people, the book of John must have been written much later than most Christians believe?”

Parents, if you have a child attending a state or even private university, this may very well be the type of instruction they are receiving. Such reasoning brings into serious doubt the inspiration and historical accuracy of the Scriptures. Are your children prepared to defend the truth? Are you children convinced of the inspiration and accuracy of the Bible? Have you given them reasons to believe?!

Of the New Testament writers, none have been more scrutinized and charged with historical inaccuracies than Luke. Yet, there is no writer of antiquity proven to be as historically accurate! One reason Luke is continually justified—the abundance of incidental and background information he provides. For instance, in the book of Acts, Luke mentions

32 countries, 54 cities, 9 Mediterranean islands, and 95 different people (62 of whom are mentioned by no other New Testament writer). A writer who gives such detail, *if he is writing a false history*, may easily be exposed as a fraud! To demonstrate, note the words of J.B. Lightfoot:

No ancient work affords so many tests of veracity; for no other has such numerous points of contact in all directions with contemporary history, politics, and topography, whether Jewish, Greek, or Roman. (*Essays of the Work Entitled Supernatural Religion*; pp. 19-20)

While the historicity of a biblical account does not *prove* inspiration of the Bible, the ability to confirm the accuracy of the account in question does *corroborate* the inspired record in the minds of the skeptic and strengthens the faith of the believer. Let’s note the beginning of Luke’s account of the birth of Jesus and two attacks often made against the historical accuracy of Luke.

“And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed. (And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.) And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city” (Lk. 2:1-3).

A Roman Census?

Attacking the record of Luke, Nicholas F. Gier wrote,

There is no record of Caesar Augustus' decree that "all the world should be enrolled" (Lk. 2:1). The Romans kept extremely detailed records of such events. Not only is Luke's census not in these records, it goes against all that we know of Roman economic history.

Biblical critics might explain Luke's historical "inaccuracy" as follows: The *historical* Jesus was born in Nazareth and as the legend of *the Christ* grew, the Bethlehem journey and birth was added to link the "so-called" Messianic prophecy of Micah (Micah 5:2). The Bethlehem birth was not mentioned by *Mark* (written earlier than Luke and used as a source for Luke) because it was unknown to him (because the Jesus myth had not yet reached a high degree). Thus, Luke **invents an imperial census to occasion Joseph's taking his wife to Bethlehem** at which time and place Jesus was born.

To demonstrate the historical accuracy of Luke's account, we **do not** need to produce a record of that census but only demonstrate **a pattern of a census-system** in the Roman Empire. According to *Associates For Biblical Research*, a large Egyptian papyrus, telling of an enrollment in 174-175 A.D., refers to two previous enrollments (160-161 A.D. and 146-147 A.D.). An earlier papyrus, dated to the reign of Tiberius (14-37 A.D.) reporting a man's wife and dependents for enrollment has an apparent reference to a tax roll compiled in 20-21 A.D., and still another shows an enrollment under Nero 62-63 A.D. [biblearchaeology.org/post/2008/10/16/A-Brief-Comment-on-the-Census-in-Luke-2.aspx]

Next week we will continue our study by considering no less than five other evidences corroborating the historical accuracy of the inspired record of Luke.

Commitment

By: Tom Moore

Fifty-six men signed the Declaration of Independence. Their conviction resulted in untold sufferings for themselves and their families. Of the 56 men, five were captured by the British and tortured before they died. Twelve had their homes ran-sacked and burned. Two lost their sons in the Revolutionary Army. Another had two sons captured. Nine of the fifty-six fought and died from wounds or hardships of the war. Carter Braxton of Virginia, a wealthy planter and trader, saw his ships sunk by the British navy. He sold his home and properties to pay his debts and died in poverty. At the battle of Yorktown, the British General Cornwallis had taken over Thomas Nelson's home for his headquarters. Nelson quietly ordered General George Washington to open fire on his own home. The home was destroyed and Nelson died bankrupt. John Hart was driven from his wife's bedside as she was dying. Their thirteen children fled for their lives. His fields and mill were destroyed. For over a year, he lived in forest and caves, returning home only to find his wife dead and his children vanished. A few weeks later, he died from exhaustion. This is the story of the 56 men who signed the Declaration of Independence. It is a story of the high price of commitment. History informs us that all of the Apostles (except John) died as martyrs. They paid the ultimate price of commitment. Are we willing to pay the high price of commitment to our Lord? Hopefully, we will not have to make the ultimate payment, but with commitment there will be a price to be paid. The commitment we are to have is seen in these words of our Lord, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Mt. 6:33). Are you willing to be this committed to the Lord?

The Defender, Mt. Vernon Church of Christ Weekly Bulletin, June 11, 2017.

PRIVILEGED TO SERVE

Week of November 11, 2018

Sunday Morning:

Announcements: Jeff Harris
Scripture Reading: Sammy Scherffius

Lord's Supper & Offering

Bread: Lupe Escojido
Fruit of the Vine: Doug Jobs
Offering: Don Lynn
Assist: Scott DeDear, Isaac Jobs, Brant Jacobs

Sunday Evening: Lupe Escojido, Doug Jobs

Prayer

A.M. Closing: Ron White
P.M. Closing: Wayne Martin

Ushers: Don Lynn
Allen Clifton

Wednesday Devotional: Lupe Escojido

Open/Close Building: Steve Randle

Sound System: Bryant Siegel

Greeters:

Allen Clifton
Don Lynn

Prepare Communion: Melissa Cannady

We are planning ahead for our Southwest Lectureship that the MidTown congregation will be hosting in February 2019. If you would like to host a student, please see Ronnie Scherffius.

TODAY: There will be a men's business meeting at 3:30pm at the building.

Les and Sandy Daltry would like to thank everyone for their prayers, cards, and calls during Les' recovery. Please keep them in your prayers.

IN NEED OF PRAYERS:

RICHARD HILL FAMILY, in the passing of their brother last week; BESSIE CARROLL, Tamyra Carroll's grandmother, who was admitted to ICU last week.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Nov. 11: Men's business meeting @ 3:30pm
Nov. 13: Men's and Ladies' Bible Class @ 10am
Nov. 20: Men's and Ladies' Bible Class @ 10am
Nov. 27: Men's and Ladies' Bible Class @ 10am
Dec. 7: Ladies Christmas Ornament exchange @ 6:30pm at the home of Mary Jo White.

AREA EVENTS

Schertz Lectureship Nov. 11-14, 2018
Portland church of Christ gospel meeting Nov. 11-14

BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES:

Happy Birthday: Amy Harris (11); Melissa Cannady (14); Ashley Barton (15); Darryl Lynch (16)

Happy Anniversary: Dan & June Fielder (10); Ben & Millie Jamison (11)

KEEP IN PRAYER

MIDTOWN MEMBERS

Jeff Cannady Della Rampley
Dee Gilpatrick Clark Withers
Ann Pantel

SHUT-INS

Faye Henderson Sandy Malone

FRIENDS & FAMILY

Victor Benitez Vikram Gottam
(brother of Virginia Escojido) (brother-in-law of Archana Verma)
Kim Neel-Farthing Antonio Benitez
(daughter of Joyce) (brother of Virginia Escojido)

If you would like to add or remove a name on the "Keep in Prayer" List, please see Nina Siegel.

MIDTOWN CHURCH OF CHRIST

Minister: Ronnie Scherffius
Secretary: Nina Siegel

TIMES OF SERVICES

Sunday Bible Class: 9:00AM
Sunday Morning Worship: 10:00AM
Sunday Evening Worship: 5:00PM
Wednesday Bible Class: 7:00PM

RECORD OF ATTENDANCE

Week of November 4, 2018

Bible Class.....119
A.M. Worship.....142
P.M. Worship.....104
Wednesday Bible Study.....100

Offering \$5,124

QUICK REFERENCE

Use this quick reference to help you grow in knowledge:

Jesus Christ

True Son of God.....Mat. 16:13-16
Isa. 9:6, John 1:1-3; 3:2; Luke 19:10



SUPPORTED WORKS

India - Mani Pagidipalli
New Zealand - James & Emily Cammock
Bible Land Passages - John & Carla Moore
Southwest School of Bible Studies - Cody Kilgore

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