

Lesson Notes:

Bible Under Siege

1 Peter 3:15 commands us to be prepared to give reasons for our faith. As Christianity is attacked by more and more non-believer's we need to be prepared to contend for our faith. Recently two atheists have intensified their attacks on the Bible. Actor Bill Maher and Professor Bart Erhman have gained notoriety for their attack on the Holy word and for their claims that the Bible contradicts itself. Following is a discussion of several of their claims and reasons for holding fast to our faith:

Bill Maher Example – In **Deuteronomy 5:9** God is a Jealous God. Maher's argument is that Jealousy is a childish trait which lowers God to the mentality of human kind. Our God is a jealous God because he wants us sanctified and to protect us from sinful acts associated with the "other Gods" we commonly place before our relationship with him.

Bart Ehrman Example – Bart Ehrman points out that in the Olivet Discourse Jesus predicts that in the future no stone of the Temple would be left in place. Bart continues to say that this is contrary to the fact that the Western Wall still stands ¹. The Western Wall was a portion of the wall that protected the temple mount. It was never a portion of the temple that Christ was referring to in his Olivet Discourse. A second "contradiction" that Ehrman points too in the Bible is the death of Judas Iscariot. **Matthew 27:5** tells us that Judas hanged himself. **Acts 1:18** tells us that Judas fell off a cliff and burst open as he struck the rocks below. Ehrman points to these passages as contradictions in the Bible that helps prove internal errors within the Bible ². **2 Timothy 3:16** tells us that the Bible is the inspired word of God as is suitable for teaching without reproach. Judas hanged himself as indicated in **Matthew 27:5**. Eventually, the branch supporting Judas' body gave way leading to the body falling against the rocks below and the subsequent results described in **Acts 1:18**.

Unless one is willing to recognize they are a sinner and that Jesus is the way to salvation and eternal life with Jesus and our loved ones (**John 14:6**) we are without hope. Following are Scriptural passages related to the truth of the Bible and Jesus Christ and the foundation of my faith in Jesus Christ:

Scriptural Principles

1) The Holy Spirit has spoken to my heart.

Romans 5:3-5 – Paul tells the Romans in **Romans 5: 3-5** that the Holy Spirit has given us hope. Paul goes on to tell us in **Romans 10:14-17** about the importance of sharing our faith with others. Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God.

2) His Wonderful Promise

John 3:14-18; John 14:1-3 - Christ paid the price for my Sin and he prepares a place for us. In **John 3:14-18** and **John 14: 1-3** we are told that God loves us so much that he is willing to give up his son so that we may have eternal life and that Christ prepares a place for us in heaven.

3) Christ is the Only Way

John 14:6. – In **John 14:6** Christ tells us that he is the Way, the Truth and the Life and that no one comes to his father except through him. No other religion offers atonement for our sins. God tells us in the Bible that atonement must be made for man's sin (**Hebrews 10:11-14**). Christ's wonderful sacrifice on the cross is that atonement. No other religion offers human kind the hope of this salvation.

4) He is the Risen Savior and resurrected many after his own death and resurrection.

Matthew 28:1-10; Matthew 27: 52-53 – Without Christ's resurrection we have no hope (**Matthew 28:1-10**). Christ's resurrection shows us his power over death which brings hope to all of humanity. After Christ's atoning death on the cross many of the old testament saints arose as we will in the resurrection (**Matthew 27:52-53**).

5) He appeared to many and ascended into Heaven

John 20:24 -31; Luke 24:50-53 – The fact that we have so many eye witness testimonies to Christ's resurrection proves his victory over death.

6) Lives of the Disciples - They go from hiding out (**John 20: 19-20**) after Christ's death to spreading the Holy Gospel with no regard or concern for their own lives (**Matthew 24:52-53**). People don't die for things they don't believe in. Look at the disciples. Except for John, they were afraid to be present at Christ's crucifixion for fear that the Jewish leaders would turn their wrath upon them. They were in hiding for fear for their own lives. After Christ's appearance they had no concern for their own lives or their own comforts. They went from hiding in fear to fearlessly spreading the "good news". Eventually all (except John), were martyred for their faith and refusing to stop preaching the gospel. What else but Christ's miraculous resurrection would lead to such a transformation in their lives?

7) Christ's fulfillment of Messianic Prophecy – Christ fulfilled 17 the old testament prophecies concerning the messiah. Below are just 5 of the 17 prophecies that Christ fulfilled regarding the truths of the messiah:

- a) **The Christ was to die by crucifixion - Psalm 22:14-17 (Old Testament prophecy); Matthew 27:31 (Christ's fulfillment).**
- b) **The messiah was to be given sour wine – Psalm 69:21 (Old Testament prophecy); Matthew 27:34 (Christ's fulfillment).**
- c) **Others were to throw dice for his garments Psalm 22:18 (Old Testament prophecy); Matthew 27:35 (Christ's fulfillment).**

- d) The Messiah was to be a sin offering – Isaiah 53:5-12 (Old Testament prophecy); John 1:29 (Christ’s fulfillment).**
- e) The Messiah was to rise from the dead – Psalm 16:10-11 (Old Testament prophecy); Matthew 28:1-10 (Christ’s fulfillment).**

1 Jesus: Apocalyptic Prophet of the New Millennium. Oxford University Press, USA. 1999.

2 Jesus Interrupted: Revealing the Hidden Contradictions in the Bible (And Why We Don't Know About Them). HarperCollins, USA. 2009.