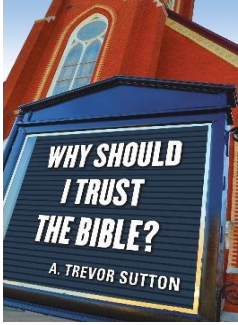


Christ the King Lutheran Church 2025 Summer Book study



Why Should I Trust the Bible?

A. Trevor Sutton

Session One – *Claim: The Bible is Merely a Mythological Story, Like Homer’s Odyssey*

Head Elder, Rob Balancia, presenting with Pastor Rob Morris

But first...

Introduction:

Trust is built. It rises from a foundation of truth. It grows slowly and painstakingly over years of steadfast honesty, reliability, and dependability. It holds together with the mortar of integrity. Trust is formed not all at once but over the course of many small interactions...Although trust is built slowly, it is destroyed instantly. (13)

Today – as in every previous generation – people try to break trust in the Bible by questioning everything from the physical manuscripts and text to the formation of the biblical canon and how it is interpreted. The effort to deconstruct trust in the Bible is going on right now as you read this sentence. Yet it is still standing... It is still historically accurate, textually reliable, and culturally relevant.... And it is still God’s Word for all eternity. (15)

Chapter One: *All true... helpful in this context?*

Chapter Two:

[Four different creation accounts on p.29] This is exactly the problem: conflicting accounts about the origin of the universe cannot all be trustworthy. (30)

Claim: The Bible is Merely a Mythological Story Similar to Homer’s *Odyssey*

Ignorance abounds in this claim. Any person making this argument proves only one point: he or she knows nothing about the study of mythology, the Bible, or Homer’s *Odyssey*. Rather than breaking trust in the Bible, this argument breaks trust in the one making the claim. (31)

The simple response is that the Bible is not a mythological story. It may share certain similarities to mythological texts; however, that does not mean the Bible is a mythological text. Jesus did not approach the Bible as mythology... Jesus spoke of Adam, Eve, Moses, Jonah, and David as historic people. The disciples and those in the Early Church knew that it was not mythology; nobody dies the horrific death of a martyr for a myth... (31)

A more complex response... you need to know something about the study of mythology. People often assume that a myth is nothing more than a fabricated story. They reduce all mythology down to one determining factor: is it true? If an account is true, then it is not a myth. If an account is not true, then it is a myth.

This is an antiquated and oversimplified understanding of mythology... Modern scholars of mythology are far less interested in determining the text true or false. Rather, they study how the text worked to



shape the culture...

There is no denying that the Bible has some similarities with mythical texts... History books on the British monarchy share certain similarities to Shakespeare's *King Richard III*, yet this does not mean that these history books ought to be classified as drama. Scripture can share similarities with mythological texts yet not be a myth. (31-32)

The Bible is not a mythological text. There is no justification for placing Scripture in the same category as Virgil's *Aeneid*, Homer's *Odyssey* or the *Epic of Gilgamesh*. Unlike these texts, the Bible is historically accurate, confirmed by extrabiblical accounts, and verified by archaeologists... No reputable historian would argue for the existence of Atlas just as no reputable historian would argue against the existence of Jesus of Nazareth. (32-33)

- Many myths, such as The Aeneid and the Odyssey were never believed to be factual and historical accounts

The Bible is greater than mythology. It is the Word of God. It is holy, eternal, powerful, authoritative, and life-giving...

"The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever." (Isaiah 40:8)... "For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart." (Hebrews 4:12) (33)

This does not mean that the Bible descended from heaven pre-bound, untouched by human hands, and ready for the church to read. Despite being the very Word of God, human authors composed it. And nobody is trying to hide that fact... (2 Thess. 3:17 and I Cor 16:19-21) (34)

Human authorship does not exclude divine authorship. God composed the books of the Bible through human authors. Moses, David, Paul, John, and all the others were used by God to compose his Holy Word. Just as it is accurate to discuss Moses' word in Deuteronomy, David's word in the Psalms, or Paul's word in Corinthians, it is also accurate to discuss God's Word in Deuteronomy, God's Word in the Psalms, and God's Word in Corinthians. Both are correct depictions of Scripture... God put words in Moses' and Aaron's mouths in order to confront Pharaoh (Exodus 4:10-17). God spoke through the human mouths of the prophets... God spoke eternal life through Peter's proclamation of the Gospel at Pentecost (Acts 2:14-41). The Holy Spirit uses human mouths to proclaim the Word of God. This is not scandalous. This is the wonderful mystery of God's work in creation. (34)

This means that the Bible is both eternal and historic. It is timeless, boundless, permanent, and transcendent. And it was written in a particular language using particular expressions, idioms, and sayings... And it was written to a specific people in a specific location. These tensions are unique to Scripture. Since the Bible is unlike any other text in human history, it is not at all surprising that it has its own unique tensions, challenges, and idiosyncrasies. (35)

