

Being Prepared to Answer (Part 1) Pastor Joel McPherson 7.24.21

This message is adapted from "The Mystery Unveiled" & "Defend Your Faith" by Delwin Sargent & Daniel Abbatiello.

Introduction (for believers)

¹ Peter 3:15-16- "But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. **Always be prepared to give an answer** to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander."

There are many people that are without hope because they are without God.

So many things about God are a mystery to them.

- Some are outright opposed to people who believe in God because they are opposed to God.
- Some pity believers as naive.
- Some see something different in us that they admire but they are not sure about God.
- Some think that they are believers but are not. They don't know what they don't know.

All these people need answers.

I need to be PREPARED to give ANSWERS for the HOPE I have, and that is what I am trying to do right now with you.

What is my hope?

John 14:1-6 "Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. ² My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, **I will come back and take you to be with me** that you also may be where I am. ⁴ You know the way to the place where I am going." ⁵ Thomas said to him, "Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?" ⁶ Jesus answered, "I am the **WAY** and the **TRUTH** and the **LIFE**. No one comes to the Father except through me."

My hope is to spend eternity with Jesus in Heaven.

What or Who do I base my hope/faith in? Jesus

- He is my way in. (*the Way*)
- He does not lie. (*the Truth*)
- He is my answer to the obstacle of death. (*the Life*)

What is my plan B?

- I don't have one because there is no other way to eternity in Heaven besides Jesus.
 - (No one comes to the Father except through me.)
- I have "married into" the family of God by believing Jesus' promise, accepting His proposal & keeping myself as His alone.

Example:

- You don't get to move into the guy's house unless you accept his marriage proposal.
- It would be foolish to think that you could reject someone's marriage proposal, be involved with other people & still think you would get to live in his house.
- The privilege to move into his house, become family and live with him comes when you accept his proposal and commit to him.

I have put my hope & my faith in Jesus & I have committed my life to Him, but I cannot make that decision for anyone else.

- My intellect can't convince someone into loving & committing their life to Jesus.
- Knowing who Jesus is & what He has done for You can come only by...
 - **Revelation** (God opening your eyes & heart to see & know the truth)

Matthew 16:13-17 "...Jesus...asked his disciples, "Who do people say the Son of Man is?"¹⁴ They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets."¹⁵ "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?"¹⁶ Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God."¹⁷ Jesus replied, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was **not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven.**"

- **Faith/Belief** (There are some things that you will never know until you take that first step of faith and say "I believe and want to follow You, with all that that entails." You don't know the joys of being married until you are married. Up to that point, it is just head knowledge.)

Until the truth of Jesus & what He has done for you is revealed to you, many things of God will be a mystery to you.

I am going to reveal 10 things that might be a mystery to you that serve as the foundation for my faith/hope found in Jesus. Along the way, we will answer questions that show the need for these mysteries to be revealed. (You deserve answers and I want to give you clear reasons for the hope/faith I have in Jesus.)

We are going to ask God to reveal (help us understand) these mysteries, but it will be up to you whether to believe Jesus, receive His proposal & commit your life to follow Him or not.

What is the foundation for what you believe? Is it consistent & strong or always changing & weak?

I. The Mystery of the BIBLE Revealed

Matthew 7:24-27 “Therefore everyone who hears these **words of mine** and **puts them into practice** is like a wise man who built his **house on the rock**. 25 The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its **foundation on the rock**. 26 But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. 27 The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash.”

A. The Bible (God’s Word) is the solid foundation for

1. Our hope/faith in eternity with Jesus in Heaven.
2. All knowledge & how to live to please God.

2 Timothy 3:15-17 “...You have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you **wise for salvation** through faith in Christ Jesus. 16 All Scripture is God-breathed and is **useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness**, 17 so that the servant of God may be **thoroughly equipped for every good work**.”

B. The Bible is one of kind and unique because of

1. Its Arrangement- It is a library of many books (66 total)
 - a. 39 in the Old Testament
 - b. 27 in the New Testament
2. Its Continuity
 - a. Written over a period of about 1500 years
 - b. Written by 40 different authors
 - c. Written on 3 different continents
 - d. Written in 3 different languages
 - e. With all this diversity, it never contradicts itself, proving one Author- God.
3. Its Accuracy
 - a. It has never been proven wrong.
 - b. Example- People assumed Pontius Pilate was just a made up name because he was not listed in any known writings other than the Bible, casting doubt on the Bible. Later, however, archeologist uncovered a stone from Caesarea with an inscription dated to the first century confirming Pilate’s existence.
4. Its Survival
 - a. It has been attacked more than any other writing & has survived.
 - b. From Roman emperors to communist regimes, the Bible has survived being banned, burned, & outlawed.
5. Its Prophetic Content Foretelling the Future Fulfilled
 - a. There were about 300 specific prophecies in the Old Testament about Jesus made at least 700 years before his birth that were fulfilled when He came.

- 1) The time, place, manner & uniqueness of His birth
 - 2) His family ancestry, details of His life, the kind of life he would lead
 - 3) The manner and place of His death
 - 4) His burial & resurrection
 - 5) Example: Psalm 22 foretold that Jesus would be executed by crucifixion.
 - a) 1,000 years before Jesus was born
 - b) Before Romans ever invented the form of torturous death called crucifixion
 - 6) In his book, "The Science of God," Peter Stoner calculates the odds of one man fulfilling just 8 of the 300 prophecies to be 1 in 100,000,000,000,000 (1 Quadrillion).
- b. Fulfilled prophecy shows the reliability of the Bible.

6. Its Purpose

- a. It is God's love letter to mankind.
- b. Every book points to Jesus, the only way to eternity in Heaven with God.

John 20:31 "These are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name."

7. Its Power to Change Lives

Hebrews 4:12 "For the word of God is **alive** and **active**. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it **judges** the **thoughts** and **attitudes of the heart**."

- a. It is living, speaking in new & fresh ways.
- b. It reveals & judges the thoughts & attitudes of the heart.
- c. It teaches, rebukes, corrects, trains and changing us to be more like Jesus.
- d. It is powerful.
- e. It builds up your faith.

Romans 10:17 "Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God"

C. The Power of the Bible is Unlocked by the Key of Faith.

Hebrews 11:6 "And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him."

1. You have to believe God's Word & live it to truly understand & benefit from it.
2. Example of Tightrope walker and the wheelbarrow.

The Word of God will unlock the answers to the questions you have, but you have got to want the answers it provides. You have to have enough faith to get in the wheel barrow. Are you willing to pray a simple prayer with me? "Dear God, please open my heart and mind to hear and receive Your Word. Amen!"