

**“Preparing to Defend the Faith:
The Sword of the Spirit”
1 Peter 3:15**

We are indeed at War! The Bible, the Sword of the Spirit, has been under vicious and continuous attack for the past two centuries. It is vital that followers of Jesus understand this and be prepared to defend the accuracy, reliability, and authenticity, of both the Old and New Testaments. This morning we will consider how we can speak to an unbelieving world about why the Bible is pure, true, and accurate.

**1. THE BIBLE IS RELIABLE BECAUSE IT IS _____
TO MAN**

- A. All scripture is God-breathed (2 Tim. 3:16-17)
- B. Double-edged sword (Heb. 4:12)
- C. God’s word does not return void (Isa. 55:11)

2. THE BIBLE IS RELIABLE BECAUSE IT IS _____

- A. Dating of the New Testament, especially the Gospels
- B. Historical reliability
 - bibliographical tests
 - internal tests
 - external tests
- C. Archeological discoveries

3. THE BIBLE IS RELIABLE BECAUSE IT CONTAINS _____

- A. Gospel of Matthew and Gospel of John
- B. Recorder of Peter (Gospel of Mark), recorder of Paul (Gospel of Luke)
- C. Cephas, the twelve, 500 hundred brothers, James and all the apostles (1 Cor. 15: 5-8)

**4. THE BIBLE IS RELIABLE BECAUSE IT IS RELEVANT
TO _____**

- A. Outmoded and regressive teaching
- B. Ignoring cultural and historical distance between 1st and 21st centuries
- C. Superiority of one’s own historical moment vs. all others

5. THE BIBLE IS RELIABLE BECAUSE OF _____

- A. Purpose of prophesy (Isaiah 46: 9-10 and 48: 3,5)
- B. Witness to the truth of Scriptures (2 Peter 1:19)
- C. Accurate prediction, who could do this (Isaiah 44:28, 45:1; Exodus 12:46, Numbers 9:12, Psalm 34:20, and Zechariah 12: 10-11)

**6. THE BIBLE IS RELIABLE BECAUSE IT _____
TO JESUS**

- A. Jesus was the Son of God who lived among us, and He was a great teacher
- B. Jesus was crucified, dead, buried, and raised again on the third day (1 Cor. 15: 3-4)
- C. He is the way, the truth, and the life (John 14:6)
- D. Believe in Him (John 3:16; Romans 10:9)

NOTES:

Elder Paul Milton, PhD, January 28, 2024

ANSWERS: God’s Word, Historically Accurate, Eyewitness Testimony, All Cultures, Fulfilled Prophecy, Directs People.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why is it important that followers of Jesus be able to defend the Bible?
2. Why is it important to us that the original New Testament books were written in less than a generation after the crucifixion of Jesus?
3. What would you say to your neighbor if they said the Bible was written down centuries after the events purportedly occurred, therefore, most, if not all of the information is based on legend and myth, it's basically pure fantasy?
4. What sources exist, other than the Bible itself, that substantiate the accuracy, reliability, and authenticity of the Bible?
5. How does knowledge of the writing of the Bible and its value as a historical document influence/enhance your ability to share the Jesus story?
6. Of what value are eyewitnesses in the determining the authenticity of the Bible, of any historical document?
7. What would you say to a co-worker who made this statement: the Bible is a thing of the past and has no relevance in today's culture?
8. How does the Bible as a historical document compare to other histories and information of antiquity?
9. What role does the fulfillment of prophesy have in supporting the reliability of the Bible.
10. What is your takeaway from this teaching?

Welcome To Hillcrest Church

Love, Acceptance & Forgiveness

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

1 Peter 3:15

*January 28, 2024
Pastor Bruce Guckelberg, PhD*

ANNOUNCEMENTS

TODAY

We welcome Paul Milton to the pulpit, who will deliver an inspiring message about the reliability of the Bible.

NEXT WEEK

Pastor Bruce will continue his series “Spiritual Warfare.” We will also gather at the Lord’s table for communion.

TUESDAY BIBLE STUDY IN ZOOMLAND – 7PM

Pastors Bruce and Tim will be leading a Bible study based on the previous week’s sermon, followed by a time of prayer.

LIFE GROUPS

One objective for 2024 is to develop a thriving small group ministry, which we are now calling Life groups. Sign up at the SPOT. The start date is Thursday, February 1st running for 8 weeks. The format is:

- Dinner at 5:45
- Bible Study & Prayer 6:30 – 7:30

There are 2 groups to choose from:

Tim Brooks & Keith Hallsten will be going through selected passages in the gospel of John.

Pastor Bruce & Paul Milton will be discussing practical aspects of relationships.

Childcare is available

NEIGHBORHOOD WALK - SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 3, 1PM

Meet at church then venture out into the neighborhood inviting people to Hillcrest. As opportunity arises you can share the Jesus story.

THE SPOT

From now on the table in the back of the sanctuary is designated THE SPOT.

GUEST SPEAKER RICK MANN – FEBRUARY 11

We are blessed to have Rick Mann, who works in the district as the Leadership Development Coach. Rick will be speaking on aspects of developing leaders and church health.

WORSHIP WITH TWO CHURCHES – FEBRUARY 18

Hillcrest Church and Roseville City Church will be worshipping together at 10:30. Pastor Todd will bring the message. The service will be followed by a big feast. This will be a great experience for all of us to worship together and have the sanctuary packed.

WE WELCOME OUR NEW BOARD MEMBERS SERVING IN 2024

- Keith Hallsten – Facilities coordinator
- Don Koenes – Treasurer
- Kathy Brooks – Children’s Director
- Paul Milton – Outreach and missions coordinator / elder
- Jeff McAuliffe – Elder over worship & media
- Pastor Bruce – Secretary & chair

We thank those who served in 2023 and have come off the board: Vinod & Nalini Singh, Melissa Olsen.

STEWARDSHIP

We appreciate your financial support of Hillcrest church. You can place your donations (tithes & offerings) at the SPOT. We will be providing you with monthly reports on our giving throughout 2024.

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

To share the gospel with our community and beyond

OUR VISION STATEMENT

To pursue a transformative relationship with Jesus Christ by:

- Exalting God’s name in worship
- Encouraging God’s people in fellowship
- Equipping God’s people in discipleship
- Edifying God’s people in ministry
- Extending God’s word in mission