**Discovery Lecture Series - Topics & Content:**

**Week 1: Tuesday Oct 11, 2016**

*Welcome – glad you are here!*

**Discovery Session 1A:**

*(Discovering why people still read the Bible)*

**Intro to Session 1 A:**

* **The Bible** stands apart from all other ancient religious (& secular) documents.

-It still features in the best-selling book lists worldwide.

-It is still used by people of all languages and cultures worldwide.

-It has survived severe ‘attacks from science & reason, especially in the last century and a half.

* Bible manuscripts were written first on **papyrus** (reed ‘paper’), then on **leather parchments** and later copied in ‘modern’ book form.

-These **original manuscripts** were meticulously **copied** over and over again, and later translated into various languages.

-The **oldest known copy** of the Bible (complete Bible) in the world is the Codex Sinaiticus, dating from the **3rd or 4th century A.D**.

-When the Bible came to be printed in full on paper in 1455 AD, there were over **2000 manuscripts** to work from. Today, there are over **5300** known Greek manuscripts of the New Testament to compare for accuracy. Interestingly most **secular scholars** will accept **10-20** manuscripts as the basis for authenticity, so the Bible quite easily passes that test.

* In comparison, stats about other old docs that people revere:

-Homer’s Iliad & Odyssey: scores of copies.

-Quran: Since 7th. Century – 100’s of early copies

* Dead Sea Scrolls & 20th & 21st. Century Archaeology: (application of modern scientific verification).

-Verified earlier copies transcribed over a time period of 900 years.

-Verified Geographical sites & names:

Eg. Synagogues around Jesus time even fishing boats.

* **The Bible is** a collection or library of 66 books

-Written over a period of about 1400 years (1300BC to 100AD).

-Written by approx. 37 different authors from a variety of backgrounds: statesmen / shepherds / warriors / prophets / fisherman / intellectuals.

-Written in 3 languages: Hebrew, Aramaic & Greek.

* So what?

-Provides checks & balances against spiritual cooks.

-Relates to people of all walks of life in all cultures: universal appeal.

**Historically God has initiated revelation about Himself through:**

1. **Three general and common means to all mankind:**
2. **Nature.**

Creation points to God, the creator. An unbiased examination of nature all around us points to the creator Himself and not some random process of chance and circumstance. (**At least** intelligent design!). (**Psalm 19:1)**

1. **Inner conscience or self-awareness: even if it is flawed. (Rom 2:14-15)**
2. **History.**

Nations (people groups) were created to seek and find Him. They each have a destiny that God intended from the time of their creation**. (Acts 17:26-30)**

1. **The next five are first *specifically revealed* to persons and / or groups:**

* Then by extension through the Biblical record to all mankind as God’s people serve them as witness to His person, nature and power:

**4. Miracles.**

For example, Moses’ miracles: plagues in Egypt / splitting the Red Sea; Jesus miracles, the apostle’s miracles…  **(John 20:30-31)**

**5. Prophecy.** *(Over 300 prophecies fulfilled by Christ alone)*

The New Testament records a key prophecy of the Coming of Christ as foretold in Isaiah 7:14 by the prophet Isaiah (over 700 yrs. before). **(Matthew 1:20-21)**

**6. In Christ.**

Jesus perfectly reveals the Father to us (better than any other person in the Bible – the prophets included). Jesus said so about Himself: ‘See me you’ve seen Father) **(Hebrews 1:1-3)**

**7. Scripture.**

Jesus used Scripture to reveal Himself to two disciples. He thus highlights the validity and importance of scripture as a foundation for faith. **(Luke 24:25-27)**

**8. Personal experience and testimony.**

EG. Enoch, Noah, Paul and many others personally knew and ‘walked’ with God.

**Genesis 5:22**

**Conclusion to this session 1 A:**

*The Bible and its relevance to life Itself*

* It addresses life’s central questions in a **comprehensive** and **coherent** fashion:

Origin - Where do I come from?

Identity – who am I?

Meaning - Why am I here?

Morality – How should I live?

Destiny - Where am I going after I die?

**Research Links:**

1. ‘I don’t have enough faith to be an Atheist’ – Geisler & Turek, Crossway, 2004
2. Americans Love God and the Bible, Are Fuzzy on the Details

<http://lifewayresearch.com/2016/09/27/americans-love-god-and-the-bible-are-fuzzy-on-the-details/>

1. Top 20 Christian Apologists:
2. Norm Geisler:  [normangeisler.net.](http://normangeisler.net/)
3. William Lane Craig:  [Reasonable Faith.org](http://www.reasonablefaith.org/)
4. Ravi Zacharias:  [RZIM.org](http://www.rzim.org/)
5. John Lennox: [John Lennox.org](http://www.johnlennox.org/)
6. Greg Koukl: [STR.org](http://www.str.org/)
7. J. Warner Wallace: [ColdCaseChristianity.com](http://www.coldcasechristianity.com/)
8. Paul Copan: [PaulCopan.com](http://www.paulcopan.com/)
9. Ed Feser: [http://edwardfeser.blogspot.com](http://edwardfeser.blogspot.com/)/
10. Lee Strobel:  [Lee Strobel.com](http://www.leestrobel.com/)
11. Josh McDowell:  [Josh.org](http://www.josh.org/)
12. Discovery Institute  (Dembski, Meyer, Richards, Luskin, Wells): [www.Discovery.org](http://www.discovery.org/)
13. C.S. Lewis: [CSLewis.org](http://www.cslewis.org/)
14. Gary Habermas:  [GaryHabermas.com](http://www.garyhabermas.com/)
15. Timothy McGrew:  <http://historicalapologetics.org/>
16. Dr. Michael Brown:  [AskDrBRown.org](http://www.askdrbrown.org/)
17. Richard Howe: [Richardghowe.com](http://www.richardghowe.com/)
18. Tim Keller:  [TimothyKeller.com](http://www.timothykeller.com/)
19. J. Budziszewski:  [Undergroundthomist.org](http://www.undergroundthomist.org/)
20. Hank Hanegraaff:  [Equip.org](http://www.equip.org/)
21. Hugh Ross: [Reasons.org](http://www.reasons.org/)

**Discovery Session 1 B:**

*(Discovering who Jesus really was & still is)*

**‘Reason’ & ‘Revelation’**

*(Our own input) vs (God’s input)*

* Reason is tied to the 5 senses: the ‘mind’.

-Natural realm: science.

* Revelation is tied to the spirit: the ‘heart’.

-Supernatural realm: spirit.

**The EG. of Jesus’ own disciples needing some help in revelation:**

**Luke 24:13-37**

Vs 13-15:Their own independent **reasoning** took them away from their destiny.

Jesus comes to them to ‘reason’ with them.

Vs 19-21Their hopes & expectations were shallow

Vs 25-27 Jesus focuses on heart matters and the scriptures

Vs 28- 32 Jesus will not force / they constrained Him / Intimacy & revelation & scrip...

**The Gospels present 4 Portraits of Messiah Jesus**

*(Different strokes for different folks)*

‘Jesus relates to all sorts of people at different stages of their spiritual need’.

* **Written to** reach 4 main categories of people: each with a different mindset.

- Matthew: Jews with a more personal experiential heart covenant relationship.

- Mark: Gentiles who wanted to see practical proof of God’s reality.

- Luke: Greeks who were strong into the mind: philosophy & concepts.

- John: Believers whose faith was strengthened through knowing Jesus better.

* **Power of Four:**

If you have two or three witnesses testifying to the veracity or truth of a matter, then to most that is usually sufficient. However, if you have four witnesses you settle any matter without any doubt whatsoever.

-Four winds / 4 seasons / 4 compass points / 4 personality types

-Four speaks of all-encompassing stability and completeness.

(Like a table with 4 legs)

**EG. Old Testament: Ezekiel 1:10-11**

**EG. New Testament: Revelation 4:7-8**

**Matthew** - The King (Lion) - Jews looked for kingdom / covenant fulfillment.

**Mark** - The Untiring Servant (Ox) - Roman / Gentiles mindset: practical get job done.

**Luke** - The Perfect Man (Man) - Greek intellectual mindset; great human e.g. to follow.

**John** - The Heavenly Being (Eagle) - Believing audience looking for heavenly / eternal.

* Like our bodies crave certain nutrients at different times, so our inner spirit man needs to **feed** on different parts of the Word (as led by the Holy Spirit).

**Connecting the dots:**

*The big picture and Jesus as the focal point of the Bible*

* God chose to use fallible man to bring to us infallible truth about His plan to seek and save mankind from itself (sin) through the Jewish Messiah Jesus.
* He chose the Jewish people to be the carriers of His revelation not for their numerical size or inherent moral qualities, but rather to show the greatness of His unmerited grace and mercy to an undeserving people.
* Most of the Old Testament deals with the history of the Jewish people whom He called to be a witness to the world at that time. The Old Testament may be divided up into:
* Law – as recorded by Moses
* History – of primarily the Jewish nation
* Relational Poetry & Wisdom Literature – Psalms, Proverbs & Ecclesiastes
* Major and Minor Prophets – spoke God’s plan for His people and the coming Kingdom and Messiah.
* The New Testament focuses on the church and its relationship with God, one another and a world in need of Jesus. It is divided up into:
* Gospels – accounts of Jesus life and ministry
* Acts – a history of the early church
* Letters - written to Christ followers to teach / guide
* Revelation – prophetic insights into the future
* The Old Testament **prepares** us for Christ; the Gospels **present** Him to us; and the letters and Revelation **praise** Him for what He has accomplished.

**Focus on the face for a moment:**

**2 Corinthians 4:5-6**

* More than any other part of your body your face communicates who you are.

-We don’t say about people, ‘Oh what interesting elbows they have’. No, we focus on describing their face!

* Faces speak volumes about what is going on in people’s hearts:

-Cain’s ‘countenance fell’ when he sinned, Moses’ face shone when he came from the presence of the Lord and …

-Jesus’ face shone ‘brighter than the sun’ when He was transfigured on the mountain.

* However, at the cross, the onlookers were greatly astonished at the gross deformation of Jesus’ face when He suffered for us as He was pinned to the cross.

-Just as our faces are visibly twisted by physical pain and even emotional anguish, Jesus’ face was grossly deformed when the sin of the world was laid on Him. It affected Him spirit, soul and body.

**Isaiah 52:14**

* Here we get a glimpse of how deep God went to to bring us up to great heights.

**Honestly, when we look into Jesus’ face we are changed: 2 Corinthians 3:18**

**Conclusion to this session 1 B:**

*Some of what we’ll look into in the rest of the series:*

-Jesus: the one who fulfilled ancient prophecy.

-Jesus in His humanity.

-Christ in His deity.

-Jesus: unique among other religious leaders.

**Discovery - Topics & Content:**

**Week 2: Tuesday Oct 18, 2016**

**Session 1:** Discovering why people still read the Bible:

**Intro to this session:**

**Getting personal: ‘taste & see’.**

* Like the school mate who would not swim no matter what, choices will have to be made to either ‘taste & see’ or not at all, at least for now…although there’s not much time left.
* **The Personal God of the Bible** is to be experienced, not dissected (as in a laboratory).

-He is ‘tangible’ to our spiritual senses, sometimes to our physical senses.

**Psalm 34:8**

*Oh,* ***taste******and******see*** *that the Lord is good; Blessed is the man who trusts in Him!*

-The ancient Hebrew mindset is personal heart encounter based, whereas the ‘modern’ Greek mindset tends towards the conceptual, more cerebral (mental).

**Week 2: Tuesday Oct 18, 2016**

**Session 2:** Discovering who Jesus really was (& is)