

## Questions about God, Science and the Bible in Project Timothy

### 1. Can we trust the Bible?

Yes.

The Bible is the single most important source of information about God that is available to everyone because experiences are personal and cannot be verified. Christians trust the Bible not only because others say so, but also because they test it against real life experiences of people other than themselves.

The question is not whether the Bible is inerrant (no typos) or is historical and scientific (a modern textbook of history and science). In the long history of transmission and translation, there have been scribal errors, as well as deliberate additions and omissions by copyists to make more sense as language use changes. As we improve our understanding of time, movement and cosmology, we have changed the way we understand what the ancient witnesses reported.

What we really want to know is whether, as 'the Word of God' the Bible can be trusted to tell us about God and our relationship to our creator. The primary purpose (the message) of the Bible is absolutely trustworthy. The way we come to that understanding (the tool) is ever improving as the collective science (knowledge) of human cognition increases over time.

**We take a high view of the scriptures. Both the Old and New Testaments are the inspired word of the Lord.**

### 2. Does science trump the Bible?

No.

The Bible is God's revelation handed down to us first in oral and later in written form. Its interpretation has always been aided by the latest methods of human understanding. Modern science is the current method by which we affirm knowledge of the measureable world. Although not everything that exists is measureable, we praise God for the benefits of the sciences.

The technology that comes from science allows us to keep healthy (medicine), travel to evangelize faraway places (transportation), publish the Bible to reduce copying errors (computerized printing), affirm many historical elements of the Biblical accounts (archaeology) and understand that, for e.g., not every earthquake is the direct result of God punishing

specific peoples (geology).

**Our interest in the sciences rest on their value in helping us better understand God's creation and therefore, in God.**

### **3. What is the point of Critical Interpretation of the Bible in Project Timothy (PT)?**

In order to get a responsible understanding of the Bible.

A 'critical' study of the Bible is not to criticize it or undermine its authority. The starting point for PT is ...

(i) the Bible is the inspired Word of God with the unsurpassed authority for the Christian life handed down by faithful men and women from the past, ...

(ii) however the expressions of their encounter with Jesus, the prophets and the disciples were subject to the categories of thought and historical circumstances of each generation, so that ...

(iii) in interpreting the Bible, the task is not to discover what happened (we have less of an idea than they) but to figure out what the original readers would have understood by the text. There is a difference between what was intended for the original hearers and how we apply that understanding to a vastly different context like ours.

This is not to say that God cannot speak to us directly through its application to us. But to the extent we do not understand what the original hearers understood, we subject the text to endless subjective abuse as well as miss a broader application potential as a result of an anachronistic reading.

**The word critical here refers to being open to admit our natural bias to read any text as if it was written directly for us and no one else. This is a hubris that is unworthy of the Christian view of the Bible.**