

"How Can We Believe The Bible is True?" (Selected Scriptures + Q&A;)

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[0 : 00] good afternoon everyone it's great to join you here and uh at this point in the service usually our practice at this point is to open up the bible isn't it uh and uh this year we've been working our way through lots of different books uh different topics uh we for example we listened to the love letter of phesians uh we were challenged to sit with uh job and his friends as we went deeper into to suffering um perhaps we're using some of those lessons even now uh during lockdown and we've been walking uh with jesus right following his footsteps through matthew's eyewitness account but have you ever wondered why why do christians do this each sunday why is the central part of of gathering together each week um to hear from the bible why can't we just you know sing more um with rachel or just chat more you know uh just get on the zoom chat and just keep chatting you know actually actually when we we sing why do we sing words that come from the bible and when we chat why are we as christians why are we talking about the bible and so this is the first topic in our new series all right uh in this series we're going to go deep into life's questions and and today i'd like to invite us to consider the first question um that often we have how can we believe the bible is true um and if you're joining us uh right now and you're not a christian or perhaps you're not sure where you sit with god um and this may might even sound a bit perplexing to you for you maybe perhaps the bible just seems like i don't know it's an old book it's got lots of lots of words in it maybe it's full of fanciful fairy tales maybe the times in you here by one fort share when um so-called christians throw them at you maybe to end a conversation rather than to to start one um i hope you'll see though that there's more to it than that and for those of us who are christians right pcbc english there is a kind of christianity out there that says here are the answers now go and fight them out there but i want to encourage us not to take that route friends we go deeper into life's questions not so we can just win arguments with our friends we go deeper because we have questions because our friends and family have questions and because god and his wisdom and love has something to say to our questions whether it's about the bible whether it's about science and faith or or our sexuality or about even life issues today about covet about other things in this world we go deeper because we want to hear from god how we do it matters one of the earliest christians um a guy named peter i think outlines the perfect and a wise approach to take he says this right first peter 3 15 says in your hearts set apart 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 so friends we want to be prepared and we want to come across with gentleness and respect and we do this because jesus if he's lord of our hearts then both matter i want you to imagine now um a friend of yours calls you up you haven't seen them since lockdown long time no see right um where have you been and imagine your friend says i've been living on an island where dinosaurs are still alive on this island they've built cities and they've invented their own footprint alphabet they even live alongside humans like me in fact i was there because i was washed ashore from a shipwreck let me tell you about it let me let me show you this world

this is the world of a place called dinotopia okay uh written by an author and if you're like my kids who love this book and during lockdown been devouring it this is a familiar and exciting world whether your world that you've been immersed in you know as in with dinosaurs or with other fantastic creatures and people and places there's a part of you that knows that those worlds aren't real right as as rich and beautiful as as dinotopia is our kids know it's not real even when flights resume there's no way we could book a ticket to get to this island and while some people think we should view uh the bible right the same way we should view dinotopia or pokemon or jurassic park as a beautiful fairy tale i mean after all this is what the bible actually says when you when you consider it all right the world of the bible that says god made the entire universe it says that he sends his son jesus into our world this jesus performs miracles by the way he's 100 god 100 human at the same time he dies on a cross claims to have risen from the dead if you believe all this he'll take away all your sins and forgive you and right now he lives in all his followers by god's spirit one day he'll come back to set up a kingdom on earth and be judge and king these are incredible claims aren't they that come from this incredible book i wonder if you can sympathize um with how it's easy for our friends and family for maybe for you even to be skeptical of this book i mean what makes the story of christianity any different to the cleverly written plots of maybe squid game or of how's moving castle how can we believe the bible is true and we're not going to answer all the questions obviously uh today but we want to try and answer some i want to at least suggest three things that are worth considering when we approach this question how can we believe the bible is true let me suggest three things to consider first let's consider what the bible says about jesus and what the bible says about jesus that at the heart of the bible is a real historically verifiable person because it's actually a brave person whether religious or not religious who actually would deny that jesus ever existed all serious historians agree that he did exist he did walk on this earth because there's actually plenty of evidence not just inside the bible but outside the bible and other writings about jesus and his world for example i want you to listen to a flavius josephus okay who was not a christian and this is what he says and he wrote this in the first century and he said about this time they lived jesus a wise man he was one who performed surprising deeds he was a teacher of such people as accept the truth gladly he won over many jews and many of the greeks and when upon the accusation of the principal men among us he's writing received from the point of view of someone who doesn't believe jesus pilot had him condemned to a cross and those who had first come to love him did not cease and the tribe of the christians so called after him and still to this day not disappeared and jesus was a real person in a real space and time in israel you can still see the western wall of the temple in jerusalem that jesus would have walked past if you head to the town of capernaum today you can still find the remains of the ancient synagogue where where jesus taught a few streets down under the remains of a church building actually are the remains of what archaeologists just believed to be simon peter's house right where jesus lived some of us heard about this back in matthew chapter 8 you see unlike dinotopia even historians who don't believe in god believe what the bible claims that

jesus was a real person who lived and died in a real time and place okay all right so but how can we know they weren't just made up stories on a base of truth maybe that's something you're asking weren't these eyewitness accounts maybe were they written too late too long after jesus died to be trusted well let me share with you that actually four of the most important books in the bible they're called the gospels matthew mark luke and john and these were eyewitness accounts all right these were written down uh from the point of view of people who walked into talked ate and drank of jesus and most experts believe that mark's gospel is the shortest one was written about 35 to 45 years after jesus's death and so the question is is that isn't that too long ago though right 35 years 45 years on well let me ask you this question did steve jobs start the apple company was i really born on a tuesday that's the kind of time difference that we're talking about 35 to 45 years and if you and i weren't there well at least we know people who could tell us um a guy called dr richard borkman he's a new testament scholar he points out that time and time again what the gospel writers actually do is they mention names of people that they talk to and on the screen you see an example this is in mark's gospel right and it seems like a small detail at first certain man from cyrene simon the father of alexander and rufus was passing by on his way and from the country and they forced him to carry the cross now some of you uni students uh and and high school students you're knee deep in assignments and essays to hand in and you and i know the worst thing you have yet to do is tidy up your footnotes and references all right and if you're lucky you can just do it all last minute and your your your teacher won't read them when they mark them well what mark is leaving here in his gospel account are footnotes you see if you were a first century jewish person reading mark's gospel to see the names alexander and rufus was basically an invitation to to go ask them you see don't believe me go ask alexander go ask rufus and so in a similar way when paul says right christ died for our sins in first corinthians 15 according to the scriptures that he was buried that he was raised on the third day and then later on he says after that he appeared to to more than 500 other brothers and sisters at the same time most of whom are still living what is paul doing here but inviting us to go ask them that's how these earlier scriptures worked and so if we were a detective trying to build a case there'd be enough circumstantial evidence to show that the bible is true about what it claims and and you could ask people about it because at the heart of the bible is a real historically verifiable person jesus and i want to submit that what we have in front of us when we read our bibles is a trustworthy account of him but friends it's more than just what the bible says about jesus right i think we need to also consider what the bible says about itself you see at the core of the bible is is a divine author who speaks one unified story from his own heart i'll say that again at the core of the bible it claims to be a collection of words from a divine author who speaks one consistent story from his own heart meet the talking god begins one of my favorite books about the christian life it's a guy called gary miller and in it he explains that right from the beginning of the bible i wonder if you notice that right at the beginning of the bible god speaks right he says let there be light he says let the earth bring forth living creatures and it does and so no surprise that when people would write songs about um about who god is and what he's like for example psalm 33 verse 6 says by the word of the lord

for the heavens made the starry host by the breath of his mouth for he spoke and it came to be in the world of the bible when when god speaks it is powerful it is creative and sometimes he speaks directly right sometimes we see in the bible account he speaks directly to people and sometimes he speaks through prophets and sometimes most importantly for our questions some of these words from god have been written down and preserved in this book the bible whether it's engraved directly right for someone like moses in exodus 31 whether moses writes these words down himself and it's preserved as god's law whether it's joshua writing up moses whether it's jeremiah some of the other prophets whether it ends up being jesus disciples writing an accurate account of who god is and what he's done through jesus these are god's words um peter again i think says it best and second peter 1 21 he says there's no prophecy of scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation but prophecy never had its origin in the will of man but men spoke from god as they were carried along by the holy spirit i want you to for a moment imagine though how incredible this is the god of the universe wants to speak with you now here today and through this word god has not revealed himself indirectly but directly not just for a little while but in a permanent way and because our bibles have been translated faithfully they've brought it out from the hebrew and aramaic and greek into english right into languages that we speak today we have the privilege of hearing god speak just as clearly as he did thousands of years ago but friends it's not just that the bible can be tested and tried the bible can also be tasted and tried let me tell you what i mean let me read to you what one of the psalms says psalm 19 says this about god's word itself and if you listen with me it says from verse 7 of psalm 19 the law of the lord is perfect refreshing the soul the statutes of the lord are trustworthy making wise the simple the precepts of the lord are right giving joy to the heart the command of the lord are radiant giving light to the eyes the fear of the lord is pure enduring forever the ordinances of the lord are sure and altogether righteous they are more precious than gold they're much pure gold they are sweeter than honey than honey than honey from the comb by them as your servant worn and keeping them there is great reward this is god's word you see early in this song the writer admires the heavens and skies and how they point to to god's glory but here he says the law the statutes has written words are even better what we have here is sweeter than honey more precious than gold so so if you ever have a different impression of the bible and you've not understood the bible as the bible claims you should but look you might be objecting surely this is a little bit circular right you're trying to tell me at this point that we should believe the bible is true because it says that it's true and it's from god what if i'm not sure there's a god you might ask what about the miracles in the bible or impossibilities how can fire fall from the sky or how can a dead man come alive again can i ask you though how did you arrive at those conclusions how certain are you that everything in this world is always visible and explainable only by natural cause and effect if there is an all-powerful author of this universe can we really put limits on what he can and can't do

so friends i want to invite you for a moment to try and park that that secular view of the world aside and actually to consider tasting the bible for yourself like some of us have i mean you could start with one of the gospels or go cover to cover however you do it don't just test the bible i think tasted when i was first exploring christianity as a 16 year old right a friend said that i should check out the book of ester so i did some of you actually know that this is what the one book of the bible where it doesn't even mention god's name at all and yet as i read it what became clear was that here in this story even was a god preserving a people for himself right so to work out even in the smallest details of real people's lives something a plan giving courage saving a people for himself and i wanted more and so i kept on on reading and what keeps me and millions of others around the world reading and and listening and keeping these words is that we can see right god's hand over it we see a unified story of promises given and then promises kept in jesus has love and compassion flowing out through the work of christ we see the clearest picture of of god's own heart for his people through the most remarkable person who as one person said seemed to just walk off the pages into my life so if you're here and you have longed for god to show himself only the christian god claims that the word became flesh and dwelt among us only the christian faith teaches of a grace and truth that we can see observe and taste through the person of jesus christ starting a movement that is more global than covid more transformational transformational than the internet and all this is possible because god speaks and so if you want to know how we can believe the bible is true yes check out what it says about jesus see that it stacks up but also consider what it says about itself and before we pause right and and take some questions i want to also just briefly share what others have said about the bible i think it's always worthwhile right to consider what others say about the bible because sometimes you might feel a little bit a little bit stupid you know why is it that all the all those people out there are enjoying the rest of their sunday while we sit here listening to the bible i want to twist it around though rebecca mclaughlin uh an author challenges us believing the bible is not just for stupid people some of the smartest people in the world believe the bible uh they include professors of science and history philosophy and theology in fact like the first disciples who shared the message of jesus these people would stake their lives on it and let me share with you two examples uh this is rosaria now rosaria described herself as a as a leftist lesbian professor she was tenured at syracuse university in new york she wanted to research the religious rights okay she wanted to point out how bigoted and mean christians were and yet when a christian couple reached out with kindness and hospitality she just started to read the bible at first she said i'm going to read it for my research right and so she said i read the way a glutton devours i read it many times that first year in multiple translations and for years she said i continued reading the bible all the while fighting the idea that i was inspired but the bible got to be bigger inside me than i it overflowed into my will i fought against it with all my might then one sunday morning i rose from the bed of my lover and an hour

[20 : 14] later sat in the pew at the reformed presbyterian church another person who testifies that the the power of the bible is a guy called andrew all right andrew van der beel after returning from war as an injured soldier andrew was a mess uh he was part of a dutch regiment trying to to fight in southeast asia he committed war crimes he'd murdered women and children and eventually he turned to drinking alcohol to numb the horrors of his experience after leaving the army he felt speechless or purposeless who am i why am i here on this earth so he began to to read his mother's bible he began to attend church and bible studies to start to look for answers that he'd been searching for i share all these testimonies because let's be honest even if you and i acknowledge right in our heads that the bible is true often what's not always that's not always what we struggle with right whether the bible is true or not often it's not atheism that we struggle with but it's actually apatheism right because so what if jesus was real so what if the bible's plausible i've got different questions i've got questions about who i can date and marry how to get through this life and so on but remember many many people thousands of people have tasted the bible and have seen that they bring answers to life's questions so do consider what others have discovered through the bible that it was precisely by reading it tasting it that it became possible to see the whole world for what it truly was and in fact to to live with meaning satisfaction freedom identity justice and hope because at the heart of the bible is a person jesus and knowing him gives you all those things and so that's what we'll do what we'll get to do in the next few weeks is to see how from the bible we get answers to many of our life's questions and more because how could we not if the bible is sweeter than honey if it's more precious than gold if it's trustworthy about jesus and about itself what else could it show us when the bible says remember jesus christ offspring of david as preached in my gospel how will we respond when jesus says follow me what will you do and will you be bold enough to find out let me pray for us father we thank you that your word brings a light to the eyes that it is more delightful than than the foods we've been eating this week that this is more precious than all the things we own in our houses right now father help us to see this reality as we dive deeper into your word we thank you for the many people who have sacrificed so much to bring this word into our language today and we hope that as you speak to us through it that you will answer some of our life's deep questions but more importantly that you will show us the word who became flesh jesus who lived and dwelt among us who died on the cross for our sins father we pray all these things in jesus name amen now we're gonna move in our q a time um if you guys have got more questions post it on um the zoom chat or the jam board we have got a few but if we can't answer all of them i'm sure we can um find a way to um answer them later or maybe even next time um so yeah don't think that oh there's heaps of

questions already don't post them don't think yeah that is okay so um cool might get cracking on with some because there's quite a few and hopefully i won't get too confused as well okay so i'll give all the hard ones to uh dr ellen i'll say the same thing give all the hard ones to will um so maybe i'll just say the question and you guys might decide um who's better to answer because i think they're all kind of non-specific um i'm just going to start off with maybe just the the um more basic kind of formation of how the bible came together so a little bit about um yeah what alan was answering initially um so someone asked how was it decided which books um and especially in the new testament made the cut for the bible we have today so i guess that's also um you know what about other books that might not be in the new testament or like are there new books that might be added to the bible um yeah how how how is that decided yeah that's a good question that um you know does come up uh from time to time i think the you know what will was saying before that the bible centers around who jesus is and the him as a real historical person that that's really the the heart of the bible of course and and so that's the same um uh with the the books of the new testament most of them are related to people who were um what you know what the new testament calls apostles that is people who were lived with jesus um you know spent time with him throughout his you know uh ministry on earth um and saw him rise from the dead and uh and then told everyone about about him and his resurrection even despite being persecuted some of them and being put to death they they were convicted about the reality of jesus's resurrection so then in terms of uh which books were included in this new testament uh one of the big questions was was this person an apostle one of those people that lived with jesus and saw him and and told about what he did um or if they weren't an apostle were they a close associate of an apostle someone who you know who spent a lot of time uh with an apostle or was associated with one with one so our gospels matthew and john were both apostles both spent their lives with jesus were you know saw everything and so uh part of the process then of including their writings was because of that reason because they were with jesus and and saw him um others then luke and and mark for example uh weren't one of the 12 the 12 sort of apostles uh but they were closely associated with with the apostles and so the early church writings not in the new testament but some of the early church writings talks about mark's close relationship with peter an apostle and that mark was in rome and and put his gospel together on the basis of peter's preaching about who jesus was so that's the that's the gist of it i guess and and paul who wrote a lot of the new testament um was not one of the 12 but he also saw the risen lord jesus and was um commissioned by him and so that that's where he gets his i guess authority from not not because he said hey everybody listen to me because i'm telling you to um but because they were he was associated with jesus and and commissioned personally by jesus so so then you know a bunch of other ones i guess um that came along later don't have that connection that they they were not written by one of the apostles or they were clearly it was clearly not talking about jesus or didn't didn't um what wasn't coherent with the with the gospel message about jesus that those who knew him best um proclaimed so anyways that uh hopefully that's enough of a answer about that

yeah that's that's a that's a great answer and i hope that um answers the other question about um how do we know that there aren't any new books added to the bible i think you probably alluded to quite a lot of that as well thank you good um and then it looks like there's quite a few questions about um how how to read the bible um so i personally am quite interested in this question are we so are we supposed to read every part of the bible literally so you know there's rules about you know women's hair to be like covered and things like that so um yeah is that something we should be following um yeah that's a great question um i think uh what there's one author christy anebule she put it we should read it literarily okay because um uh so we want to actually read the bible because there's 66 books in here right they actually come and actually we want to actually recognize that there's when there's states facts we want to recognize the facts at face value when it uses metaphor we actually want to recognize and respect that they're using metaphor right uh john 15 5 says i'm the vine you are the branches okay how do we respond to that and depends on how we read the bible right we we don't read that literally do we we actually read it literarily we go ah this is a metaphor of how we're to to remain in him right and so actually that's why um you know especially when i preach and when others and i'm sure when alan teaches and we want to recognize the the genre of each book of the bible right and in our bibles there's historical narrative okay there's going to be stuff where it's trying to tell what the history of god's people what actually happened in the bible there's poetry okay and when you read poetry we actually want to read it a slightly different way uh there's legal text uh there's parables that jesus tell you know uh there's prophecies okay using very figurative language to try and make a point to cut uh god's people to the heart and then there's even this um so the book of revelation is the prime example where you're writing about real things and in symbolic ways okay to to to make a point uh to god's people it's actually um i think last year we talked about the book of jonah and how there's actually a lot of satire woven through that bible so how we read it uh matters so i always encourage people um read it literally not just literally um so uh i think on the on facts like um the the resurrection of jesus um i think it's clear when when the gospel writers write they're meant to be taken at face value this is something that eyewitnesses saw this is something that actually makes a difference to to who god is and what he's done through jesus yeah so that that would be my thoughts i don't know if alan if you want to add anything uh no that's that's that's really that's great that's a nice answer and i i think uh a lot of it comes down to seeking to um understand what the authors are saying and so reading it in the context of what they're saying so that helps us to look for clues even in the immediate setting of what's of what's being said is this a is this a metaphor is it you know um you know that you know rather than just so it depends what we mean by literal i guess so we don't there's as william exactly pointed out there literarily meaning uh not not just reading it at at face value but being careful thoughtful about what it's saying and reading it in the context of what the author's trying to emphasize um so i might just tag this question on i think you've answered a lot of it but maybe in a more practical way um someone asked can we believe the bible in a rational way without depending on emotions i think that probably leads to how we interpret the bible and and yeah how we can interpret it in a logical way as it's meant to be instead of our emotions so yeah maybe a more more practical way how can we do this well do you want to start that one uh yeah i think all of us have different personalities right so some of us come to the

bible and we we just want to know you know can i prove everything that's in here but i think that the reason why i censored you know my talk on psalm 19 is that actually what the bible says about itself one of the key things that you need to actually feel it and and respond to it um there's actually i think one of you know one of the saddest things and i think a lot of people who remain unconvinced of the bible is they come to it okay as something that they want to pull apart they want to scientifically analyze and on the one hand yes the bible stands up to scrutiny there's there's evidence in archaeology and in the sciences that what the bible claims you know uh about itself or about the world um uh doesn't contradict with you know the sciences and so on but that's not the purpose the ultimate purpose of the bible the bible is god's revelation to us is saying god trying to tell us who he is and what he's done through jesus and so that demands a response and so that actually means we need to engage not just our heads but our hearts okay uh with the bible yeah and so that would be my encouragement uh don't just test it right um try and taste it as well yeah yeah yeah i was just thinking i was i was trying to understand the question i guess uh and we'll answer exactly right i think um uh and just it depends i guess on what the person means by without depending on our emotions i suppose um you could read something and find that that is objectionable to you emotionally it feels like that can't be right so how do you read the bible without depending on on that initial sense of unease or something like that and so i guess part of it is um again coming back to what we were talking about before interpreting it in the context and seeing how it fits into the big picture and seeking to understand you know where it where it fits in relation to everything else so ultimately um we build up a picture of who god is and his goodness and his um comprehensive knowledge of things and uh and we also grow in some ways if this is the right way to say it in our humility and our and our recognition that there's more that we don't that we don't know that we didn't realize uh and uh and and god is our creator and he knows what's best and so that helps us as well to come to grips with um he's a wise and good and loving god and and as he's our creator he knows what what's best for us i don't know if that i'm not sure so it sort of depends i guess on part of what the question is getting at there cool um so the next question which might lead to um so someone has written um so why is the bible uh intentionally unconvincing god could have included reference to dna electricity atoms or any verifiable scientific concept which would make the bible irrefutable but he chose not to so maybe a little bit relevant to next week as well but um yes relevant today so yeah i mean that's a really yeah thank you for asking that question and uh again we will dive into science and faith next week so we can address that in more detail um just reading you know without knowing you whoever wrote that um you know i'd say it differently if we were just having a coffee um when someone tells me that the bible is unintentionally unconvincing um to me that does seem to say that you've made some judgments about it already um which is fine um i think the question to ask is what do you need you know what kind of irrefutable proof do you need to take the bible seriously right the bible was written 2000 years ago um it was written in a time and place where god deliberately chose a time when uh we wouldn't have you know a social media to be able to spread it in the same way at the same time um god used it in

a time and place where um it was verifiable or not i think that's one of the things that i tried to share it wasn't as if you know you know the bible just dropped out of thin air right okay um like joseph smith and and his golden plates that started mormonism no one could verify that what he wrote was true it was just him and an angel uh here i think we have some verifiability okay it is definitely something that did not come out of thin air yeah the bible has come to us in a real place about a real person in a real space in time history so um yes could uh if it had come today would it have been much easier you know we wouldn't have to chase down old manuscripts and try and copy them we wouldn't have to you know we could just you know scan it and send it around the world sure um but in god's wisdom you know he revealed it in a way that i think gives us um yeah gives us great confidence that this is god's word and what he says about is reliable about jesus i don't know if you want to add anything to that yeah and and um i mean yeah it's a great question isn't it comes down to as well as what you were saying is the intention of the bible as well so uh it's not that it's not a like a textbook um designed to um list a whole bunch of proofs as to um here's how it relates to these sort of scientific issues um it it's designed it was written you know as william said in the context of um history and for people about their lives and how they are to you know live in this in this world and uh what what it means to know god and you know who jesus is it's sort of designed around those sorts of those sorts of questions assuming of course the existence of god so it's not there to you know sort of prove uh everything that it talks about it's assuming that god is real because it's being written for people who are seeking to live um for him but having said that as william said because of that because of that because it's in the middle of history it's got all these uh unintentional ways of being checked even though it wasn't designed um to do that and so in some ways that counts in its favor it wasn't written as a sort of a um an argument to prove its truthfulness but at the same time even though it wasn't written in that way it it can be checked in all these other ways um as well and someone's talked about in the gospels uh little things called undesigned coincidences so uh information in one gospel that only makes sense because of a passing comment in another gospel about uh someone who lived at at a certain time or was a member of herod's household that kind of thing we can go into details but just those are what people call undesigned coincidences which there it's not it's not sort of putting them all together in one place as a as a set of um sort of knockdown arguments but they're there just because it's it's talking about real people in in history um anyway so that that's part of my my approach to it as well it's just what it's designed to do and yet it still can be checked even though um that's what it is great thank you great answer um i hope some of that also answers um the question that's written on the blue post-it note but if it doesn't um feel free to you know type a little bit more about the question or the context and that you're asking that in um two more questions i want to ask and might be a little bit over time sorry um so one of them going to combine two so um so why does the bible not have clear answer to controversial topics um but on the other hand people can quote the bible to support their opposing view so i guess that's kind of like reading the bible with an intention to answer a question um and i wonder if you could maybe touch a little bit on you know how we get an answer from god or from god's will through the bible so yep um yeah and obviously right now the vaccine debate is live

[40 : 31] you know uh do do we go to the bible and say we should listen to the government or do we go to the bible and say we should gather and then people fight about it and have free you know there's a freedom or is it obeying authorities um yeah uh we'll talk more in that um a couple of weeks when we talk about living in harmony um because i think this is a hot topic and especially we need to address as well as christians right and we haven't always done it in the past i think the you know the bible remember the main message of the bible is who god is and what he's done in christ right so this is you know on that topic it is uncontroversial it is true you know and it is just primary on what it talks about and the bible does talk about a lot of other things right and i think um some people call that secondary uh issues or topics and on these things um on these things right the bible doesn't claim to give you slam dunk answers on every single issue in life you know and stuff um but the bible does claim when we talk about the bible being clear right it is clear about god's plan for salvation right for his people it's clear about god's redemption plan yeah so just because the bible you know doesn't have a clear answer to um you know what a particular bioethical question today doesn't mean we also can't grab principles of how do we love our god and love our neighbor how do we um how do we worship god like there are lots of other principles that relate and we can guide into answering some of those questions yeah but the bible's primary aim and we don't want to you know try and over promise what the bible is meant to do is to reveal to us who god is and what he's done for us uh and jesus yeah i don't know if you want to add more to that alan yeah and and um some of it depends on the issue and as william was saying as well there are we we can have a we can have a uh like a variety of of responses depending on the topic what i mean by that is let me clarify what i mean by that is we can have a different levels of confidence about what the bible is saying about a particular topic so we can say obviously as william said it's clear and it's message about how we know god through jesus but then it talks about other things uh some of which are um come up more often than the bible than others and so uh so it's not um either we know everything about a topic or we know nothing about a topic it can be that we can gather a bit more of confidence about what the bible says about some things and then other things we we have to derive sort of principles and differing levels of of convictions about those things and so um working out those sorts of things are where christians sometimes disagree aren't they you know they're where they come to a conviction on some things that are different to other christians uh but often as we said as william said i think that's sort of secondary we might say or um the bible speaks less often about some things and so we we have a a lower degree of certainty about um you know some particular topics and a greater degree of certainty about other topics i don't know if i'm talking in general terms but that you know that sort of idea of um um that i'm thinking of the question does not have clear answer to controversial topics so some things we can be more confident about or or it speaks more clearly about and other things it leaves room for wisdom and for us to um apply those principles to the different settings that we're in i don't know is that we might want to come back and clarify my waffle but that's sort of what i was trying to talk about degrees of certainty i guess about some topics i think it matters how certain we are on something if the bible is not that certain on it how we how we share it actually matters right and i think sometimes you know sadly we see people um give a very strong opinion about an issue that the bible may only have one or two verses about you know and so how we communicate matters yeah i think as christians let's be people who major on the major things that the bible does you

know who god is who jesus is how he loves us and wants us to know him right uh through the gospel uh let's be less dogmatic about um yeah uh which view of the end times is correct or you know which denomination is slam dunk the winner of the universe yeah those are things that you know they're important but they're not essential so let's yeah so we should talk accordingly with humility and yeah gentleness yeah yeah um sorry venus can i just i don't want to cut you off but um i wondered if we wanted to just come back to that blue post-it note because that's that's a good question i don't know if i covered it or not earlier but um but i think that you know that sounds like you know someone is finding the bible objectionable and and why is it what is it i'm just trying to read it now the most potent force for atheism i think that you know that's a good question too and i it comes back to what we've said already i just wanted to maybe tie some of those threads together with response to that blue one um in that oh there you go thank you um it comes back to what we were saying before about interpreting the bible as well so it takes a little bit of thought and um careful reading of the bible to understand what the authors are intending in their context and what they're saying and and the bible is a what um people call a progressive unfolding of god's purposes as well and so some people can pluck something out of the middle of somewhere in the middle of the old testament and make it sound weird but it needs to be understood in its setting and in the context of the flow of the plan of god and it it fits together as a part of a whole package if you like so i don't know i guess what i'm trying to say is it can be a powerful tool if things are plucked out and and emphasized out of context or out of whack with the rest of um of what the bible is saying i don't know if that well you might want to come back and fill that out the way you summed it up for us once uh in class was you know um that the answer is often always jesus and context right so when especially when there's a hairy question so i don't know so i've tried to live by that as well when people ask me tricky questions but yeah um definitely when you don't read the bible the way it asks you to read it it can be a very powerful tool against it just like you know if you get a sore and you use it the wrong way around it can hurt rather than heal yeah so yeah thank you thank you so much there were some great answers there and i hope yeah people's questions are answered um again you know feel free to keep asking questions in your group and we can answer them you know later or next week even