

Prayer Updates

HOSPITALIZATIONS & SURGERIES THIS PAST WEEK

Alex Tabag—RCU
Andrew Carlton—eye surgery in Michigan (coming home soon)
Carl Cutshaw—ICU, had a fall
Chris Sanborn—surgery 4/26
Janet Godfrey—wrist surgery, 5/8
MariAnn Wilson—returned to Stanford for a day surgery complications
Nancy Kronander—learning to walk again, at RCU, home soon!
Robert Walters—lower back pain, unable to walk, at RCU
Virginia Fair—RCU
Virginia Rowe—broken hip & arm

RECENT HOSPITALIZATIONS & SURGERIES:

Bob Kenyon, Don Coldwell, Robert Walters, Gwen Johnson, Matthew Brunetti, Ron Berry

JOY & BLESSING

Steve & Karen McDowell welcome son, Eaen, into their hearts and home, born April 18.

HAPPY 60TH ANNIVERSARY

Gene & Mary Gilliam, former TLC members for years and years, celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary on April 27th. Gene sang in “Harbor Masters” and Mary was a deaconess among many other ministries to our church family.
You may send a greeting to: 1352 Oak View Circle #302, Rohnert Park, CA 94928

VAYA CON DIOS— “GO WITH GOD”

We're really sorry to say “good bye” to Jerry & Dellene Harris, who are moving along with their extended family to Texas! For more than 25 years they served faithfully in the Children's, Worship Choir and Library Ministries—God Bless You Jerry & Dellene!

Do you or someone you know need a STEPHEN MINISTER?

Stephen Ministers are now available to encourage individuals who have experienced a crisis or loss in their lives. If you know someone who could benefit from this ministry, please call our Pastor of Care, Gary Williams (465-3395). Stephen Ministers receive 50 hours of training.

We want to provide pastoral support...

Please call 465-3395 when someone is hospitalized, scheduled for surgery, becomes a shut-in, or in special need. Prayer support is available through our pastors and numerous prayer groups — call 689-9400. Please pick up a Prayer Update at the Information Desk or Welcome Center.

Decoding the TRUTH

“Is the Bible Reliable?”

Message by René Schlaepfer, April 29 & 30, 2006

The immense popularity of books like “The Da Vinci Code” has prompted many to ask questions about the formation and reliability of the Bible. What's fact and what's fiction?

Q: Is The Da Vinci Code good history?

CLAIM “All descriptions of artwork, architecture, documents, and secret rituals in this novel are accurate.” (*The Da Vinci Code*, p. 1)

FACT Numerous inaccuracies dot the text of the book

CLAIM “The Bible as we know it today was collated by the pagan Roman Emperor Constantine the Great at the Council of Nicea in 325 A.D.” (p. 231)

FACT “Constantine had nothing whatsoever to do with which books were in the New Testament. And the Council of Nicea did not decide which books should go into the canon. None of that is true.”
—Paul Maier, professor of ancient history, Western Michigan University, best-selling author of *Pontius Pilate*

CLAIM “Fortunately for historians, some of the gospels Constantine attempted to eradicate managed to survive. The Dead Sea Scrolls were found in the 1950s hidden in a cave near Qumran in the Judean desert.” (234)

FACT “Constantine was not in the business of eradicating any gospels. The dead sea scrolls were discovered in 1947, not the 1950s. And they did not contain any gospels or references to Jesus.” —Paul Maier

Q: How did the New Testament get put together?

CLAIM “More than eighty gospels were considered for the New Testament, and yet only a relative few were chosen for inclusion... collated by Constantine in 325 AD...” (p. 231)

FACTS

- First century: Oral culture. Literacy rate about _____ %.
- Within a few years, letters from the apostles and stories of eyewitnesses were circulated.
- By the end of the first century, all 27 books in our present New Testament had been written and received by the churches.
- One generation after the deaths of the apostles, every book of our New Testament had been cited as authoritative by some church father.
- In the second and third centuries, new “gospels” circulated. Christians had to decide whether to accept such new writings as authentic.

This was the beginning of the “Canon”: “_____”

Three criteria were agreed on to evaluate documents about Jesus:

1. Does this document have roots to one of the Apostles?
2. Is this document consistent with the teaching of Jesus?
3. Has this had widespread influence and continuous acceptance by Christians?

"The four gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, are the only undisputed ones in the whole church of God throughout the whole world." —Origen (c. 200 AD)

Q: What are the gnostic gospels, like the Gospel of Judas?

CLAIM The gnostic gospels are "the unaltered gospels" (p. 248); "the earliest Christian records" (p. 245)

FACT "The oldest and best sources we have for knowing about the life of Jesus — despite what The Da Vinci Code intimates — are the four Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. This is not simply the view of Christians; it is the view of all serious historians of every kind, from committed evangelical Christians to hard-core atheists...."

—Bart Ehrman, Chairman, Department of Religious Studies,
University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill

Q: How do I know my Bible accurately reflects the original?

CLAIM "...the Bible has evolved through countless translations, additions, and revisions. History has never had a definitive version of the book." - p. 231

FACTS

E V I D E N C E	50-90 AD	The originals ("autographs")
	90-300 AD	Papyrus manuscripts (early copies)
	300-800 AD	Uncial manuscripts (Written in large caps on thick material. Also called "Codex")
	800-1400 AD	Miniscule manuscripts (Written quickly in cursive)
	1456-PRESENT	Printed Bibles

- Manuscript discoveries in the thousands helped establish Bible's reliability
- The Bible has better manuscript evidence than _____ ancient book.
- Only about ____% of the text is in doubt. _____ doctrinal teaching is affected.

"The interval between the dates of original composition and the earliest extant evidence becomes so small as in fact to be negligible. The last foundation for any doubt that the Scriptures have come down to us substantially as they were written has now been removed."

—Sir Frederick Kenyon, Director and Principal Librarian, British Museum

Q: Why does any of this matter?

"From the very first day, we were there taking it all in. We heard it with our own ears, saw it with our own eyes and verified it with our own hands-- we saw it, we heard it, now we're telling you so that you can experience it along with us-- the experience of communion with the Father and his son Jesus Christ."

1 John 1: 1-3 Msg

"We did not follow cleverly invented stories when we told you about the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty." 2 Pet. 1:16

"Many will ...bring the way of truth into disrepute. In their greed they will exploit you with stories they have made up" 2 Peter 2:3

Next Weekend:

Decoding the Truth Part 3: Who Is Jesus?

For further research:

Twin Lakes Church has started a new web site for this series. Check it out for audio, video, and PDF files of these messages, and for links to other articles: www.DaVinciExplained.com

Paul Barnett, *Is The New Testament Reliable? A Look at the Historical Evidence*

Craig Blomberg, *The Historical Reliability of the Gospels*

F.F. Bruce, *The New Testament Documents: Are They Reliable?*

Philip Jenkins, *Hidden Gospels: How the Search for Jesus Lost Its Way*

Bruse Metzger, *The Canon of the New Testament*

Lee Strobel, *Discussing the Da Vinci Code*

Daily Meditations

Take a few minutes every day to read scripture, pray, and answer some thought-provoking questions pertaining to this week's topic.

This week's memory verse:

"We did not follow cleverly invented stories when we told you about the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty." 2 Pet. 1:16

Monday

This week's message had to do with the reliability of scripture, so let's meditate on the benefits of the Bible this week! According to the following verses, what is scripture good for?

Hebrews 4:12:

Acts 18:28:

Rom. 15:4:

2Tim. 3:15:

If scripture is so profitable, why then do you suppose more Christians don't know it well?

Thank God today for the priceless gift of the Bible! Ask Him to help you discipline yourself so you may know it better.

Tuesday

Read Psalm 119:105. According to this verse, the Bible gives me guidelines for life, as well as a goal to live for. Imagine: What would life be like without the belief that God has revealed His will for you in scripture?

Read 1 Thessalonians 4:3 and 5:18, and 1 Peter 2:15. What is the revealed will of God for your life in these passages?

Why do we sometimes we live as if we don't believe God has revealed His will for us in scripture?

Thank God for the grace and mercy we see in scripture, as well as the clear principles for life. Ask God to help you live by His revealed purpose for your life!

Wednesday

The Bible gives me power: Power to resist temptation and live a Christ-like life! Read Psalm 119:9-11. What does this passage say is the key to resisting temptation?

Read Matt. 4:1-10. How does Jesus practice Psalm 119:9-11? What does this teach you about resisting sin?

Ask God to help you memorize scripture so you can stand strong!

Thursday

The Bible gives me peace when I go through trials. Read Psalm 85:8; 119:114, 148.

How is God's word a refuge and shield when I meditate on its promises in times of trouble?

Have you ever had an experience when God's promises in scripture helped you through a tough time? What happened? What specific promise helped?

Remember, it's pointless for all those comforting promises to be in the Bible if we don't know them!

Thank God today for His promises and comfort! Bring to him the things that are robbing you of peace, and claim His promises right now for those circumstances!

Friday

Read Psalm 119: 97-101. According to this verse, what benefits are there from meditating daily on God's word (as you are doing right now!)?

Read the following verses and answer: What is the fundamental mistake Jesus is pointing out here? Matt. 22:29; Mark 12:24; Matt. 21:42.

What do these verses tell you about the importance of knowing the Word?

Thank God again today for His word! Spend some extra time meditating on a passage today — just thinking about it, praying about it — perhaps the psalm 119 passage above.!

Saturday

Please look over the devotions and finish any you may have missed. Polish up the memory verse, and pray for us this weekend as we cover the topic "Why does a loving, all-powerful God allow suffering?"