***How to teach those who reject the Bible as inspired***

***Introduction:*** We will increasingly meet people who regard the Bible as a book of man.

 A. The “mainline” denominational preachers have long since rejected The Bible as

 inspired.

“The results of a poll taken in 1967 among 7,441 Protestant preachers in the U.S. In this poll 89% of Episcopal priests, 82% of Methodist preachers, 81% of Presbyterian preachers and 57% of American Lutheran preachers rejected a literal interpretation of the Bible when asked if they believed the Bible is the inspired word of God.” In 1981 here are the results: 95% of Episcopalians, 87% of Methodists, 82% of Presbyterians, 77% of American Lutherans, and 67% of American Baptists said "No."

 1. In Nebraska a local Methodist preacher proudly published a book to this end.

 2. In Bessemer I had a discussion with a Disciples of Christ preacher.

 3. My experience as a student at Samford University.

 B. We are seeing a flood of immigrants from Europe and China as well as the Middle East.

 1. How do you approach an atheist? or a Moslem? or a Hindu believer?

 2. You cannot just quote the Bible to prove the Bible and be effective with many.

 C. My goal is to bring them to a belief in the God who gave the Bible.

 1. In turn one will come to accept the written word. **(2 Tim 3:16-17)**

**2 Timothy 3:16 through 2 Timothy 3:17 (NKJV)** 16All Scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, 17that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

 2. The writers of the Bible give testimony to their credibility. **(2 Pt 1:16-21)**

**2 Peter 1:16 through 2 Peter 1:21 (NKJV)** 16For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty. 17For He received from God the Father honor and glory when such a voice came to Him from the Excellent Glory: “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” 18And we heard this voice which came from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain.

19And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts; 20knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, 21for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke *as they were* moved by the Holy Spirit.

 D. If possible give the gospel message to an atheist!

 1. Some are atheists because of the will and not because of the mind.

 2. There are those who need something else first.

***I. Ask the student to first view the Bible as a document of history***

 A. It is easily established that the Bible is a collection of writings over a 1,500 year

 history. In the New Testament the majority of those writings were letters.

 1. Examine the Bible first as history!

 2. Some common obstacles that can be turned into opportunity:

 a. “The Bible is a collection of myths.”

 b. “The Bible is full of contradictions.”

 c. “People who believe in the Bible do so because of emotion and not

 evidence.”

 B. Consider the historical detail and accuracy of the New Testament. **(Lk 3:1-3)**

**Luke 3:1 through Luke 3:3 (NKJV)** 1Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, his brother Philip tetrarch of Iturea and the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene, 2while Annas and Caiaphas were high priests, the word of God came to John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness. 3And he went into all the region around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins,

 1. If Luke and others made these things up then many errors would be found!

 2. Sir William Ramsey and others who test the evidence know these were honest,

 careful men.

***II. Show the historical claims of these writers to the student***

 A. Point out the real nature of a Biblical faith.

 1. Faith is based upon evidence. **(Heb 11:1; 1 Pet 3:15; John 8:32)**

**Hebrews 11:1 (NKJV)** 1Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. **1 Peter 3:15 (NKJV)** 15But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always *be* ready to *give* a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear; **John 8:32 (NKJV)** 32And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”

 2. Those who say faith is a "blind leap in the dark" are wrong.

 3. Challenge the student to test the evidence! (Ex. Richard.)

 B. At the heart of every sermon of the apostles is their eyewitness testimony of

 the raised Christ. **(Acts 2:32; 3:14-15; 5:30-32; 10:39-43; 13:27-31)**

**Acts 2:32 (NKJV)** 32This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses. **Acts 3:14 through Acts 3:15 (NKJV)** 14But you denied the Holy One and the Just, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, 15and killed the Prince of life, whom God raised from the dead, of which we are witnesses. **Acts 5:30 through Acts 5:32 (NKJV)** 30The God of our fathers raised up Jesus whom you murdered by hanging on a tree. 31Him God has exalted to His right hand *to be* Prince and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. 32And we are His witnesses to these things, and *so* also *is* the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey Him.”**Acts 10:39 through Acts 10:43 (NKJV)** 39And we are witnesses of all things which He did both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem, whom they killed by hanging on a tree. 40Him God raised up on the third day, and showed Him openly, 41not to all the people, but to witnesses chosen before by God, *even* to us who ate and drank with Him after He arose from the dead. 42And He commanded us to preach to the people, and to testify that it is He who was ordained by God *to be* Judge of the living and the dead. 43To Him all the prophets witness that, through His name, whoever believes in Him will receive remission of sins.”

**Acts 13:27 through Acts 13:31 (NKJV)** 27For those who dwell in Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they did not know Him, nor even the voices of the Prophets which are read every Sabbath, have fulfilled *them* in condemning *Him.* 28And though they found no cause for death *in Him,* they asked Pilate that He should be put to death. 29Now when they had fulfilled all that was written concerning Him, they took *Him* down from the tree and laid *Him* in a tomb. 30But God raised Him from the dead. 31He was seen for many days by those who came up with Him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are His witnesses to the people.

 1. Is this testimony believable?

 2. Many will lie or simply are mistaken when they bear testimony.

 3. On what basis do we *reject* some testimony and *accept* other testimony?

 C. Are these writers credible?

 1. Were the apostles in a position to know the facts? (**1 John 1:1-3)**

**1 John 1:1 through 1 John 1:3 (NKJV)** 1That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life—2the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us—3that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship *is* with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.

 2. Did the apostles have any advantages in lying about the resurrection?

 **(1 Cor 15:30-32; John 16:1-3)**

**1 Corinthians 15:30 through 1 Corinthians 15:32 (NKJV)** 30And why do we stand in jeopardy every hour? 31I affirm, by the boasting in you which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily. 32If, in the manner of men, I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantage *is it* to me? If *the* dead do not rise, *“Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die!”*

**John 16:1 through John 16:3 (NKJV**) 1“These things I have spoken to you, that you should not be made to stumble. 2They will put you out of the synagogues; yes, the time is coming that whoever kills you will think that he offers God service. 3And these things they will do to you because they have not known the Father nor Me.

 3. Are the writings of the apostles historically accurate?

 4. Was there agreement between the numerous witnesses? **(1 Cor 15:1-6)**

**1 Corinthians 15:1 through 1 Corinthians 15:6 (NKJV)** 1Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, 2by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you—unless you believed in vain.

3For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, 4and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, 5and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve. 6After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep.

***III. Engage the student in testing the presented evidence***

 A. Explain and examine significant facts.

 1. **Jesus was Dead -** Hear the description of an eyewitness.

 **(John 19:32-36)**

**John 19:32 through John 19:36 (NKJV)** 32Then the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and of the other who was crucified with Him. 33But when they came to Jesus and saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs. 34But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out. 35And he who has seen has testified, and his testimony is true; and he knows that he is telling the truth, so that you may believe. 36For these things were done that the Scripture should be fulfilled, *“Not* *one of His bones shall be broken.”*

 2. **The body was placed in a new tomb. (Matt 27:60)**

**Matthew 27:60 (NKJV)** 60and laid it in his new tomb which he had hewn out of the rock; and he rolled a large stone against the door of the tomb, and departed.

 3. **The tomb was cut out of rock. (Matt 27:60)**

 4. **A large stone covered the entrance. (Matt 27:60)**

 5. **A Roman seal was placed on the stone. (Matt 27:66)**

**Matthew 27:66 (NKJV)** 66So they went and made the tomb secure, sealing the stone and setting the guard.

 6. **A Roman Guard was placed at the tomb. (Matt 27:65-66)**

**Matthew 27:65 through Matthew 27:66 (NKJV)** 65Pilate said to them, “You have a guard; go your way, make *it* as secure as you know how.” 66So they went and made the tomb secure, sealing the stone and setting the guard.

 7. **The tomb was inspected carefully. (John 20:3-8; John 20:11)**

**John 20:3 through John 20:8 (NKJV)** 3Peter therefore went out, and the other disciple, and were going to the tomb. 4So they both ran together, and the other disciple outran Peter and came to the tomb first. 5And he, stooping down and looking in, saw the linen cloths lying *there;* yet he did not go in. 6Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb; and he saw the linen cloths lying *there,* 7and the handkerchief that had been around His head, not lying with the linen cloths, but folded together in a place by itself. 8Then the other disciple, who came to the tomb first, went in also; and he saw and believed. **John 20:11 (NKJV)** 11But Mary stood outside by the tomb weeping, and as she wept she stooped down *and looked* into the tomb.

 B. There is a great question to be answered: **Who Moved the Stone?**

 1. Did the **Jews? (Matt 27:62-66)**

**Matthew 27:62 through Matthew 27:66 (NKJV)** 62On the next day, which followed the Day of Preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees gathered together to Pilate, 63saying, “Sir, we remember, while He was still alive, how that deceiver said, ‘After three days I will rise.’ 64Therefore command that the tomb be made secure until the third day, lest His disciples come by night and steal Him *away,* and say to the people, ‘He has risen from the dead.’ So the last deception will be worse than the first.”

65Pilate said to them, “You have a guard; go your way, make *it* as secure as you know how.” 66So they went and made the tomb secure, sealing the stone and setting the guard.

 a. The Jews were the very ones trying to prevent the resurrection.

 b. If so they had a perfect time to present the body 50 days later!

  **(Acts 2:32, 36)**

 2. Did the **Romans?**

 a. The Romans would not want to risk their necks for what they

 would consider as "silly Jewish superstition”.

 b. The penalty for a Roman guard's failure was death.

 **(Acts 16:26-27;27:42)**

Acts 16:26 through Acts 16:27 (NKJV) 26Suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone’s chains were loosed. 27And the keeper of the prison, awaking from sleep and seeing the prison doors open, supposing the prisoners had fled, drew his sword and was about to kill himself. Acts 27:42 (NKJV) 42And the soldiers’ plan was to kill the prisoners, lest any of them should swim away and escape.

 3. Did the **Disciples?**

 a. This was the best explanation the smartest men among the Jews

 could come up with. **(Mat 28:11-15)**

**Matthew 28:11 through Matthew 28:15 (NKJV)** 11Now while they were going, behold, some of the guard came into the city and reported to the chief priests all the things that had happened. 12When they had assembled with the elders and consulted together, they gave a large sum of money to the soldiers, 13saying, “Tell them, ‘His disciples came at night and stole Him *away* while we slept.’ 14And if this comes to the governor’s ears, we will appease him and make you secure.” 15So they took the money and did as they were instructed; and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day.

 b. If they were asleep, how did they know it was the disciples?

 c. Why did they not arrest the apostles as grave robbers?

 d. Did the apostles give their lives for a lie?

 e. Their account is believable **(Mark 16:9-14)**

Mark 16:9 through Mark 16:14 (NKJV) 9Now when *He* rose early on the first *day* of the week, He appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom He had cast seven demons. 10She went and told those who had been with Him, as they mourned and wept. 11And when they heard that He was alive and had been seen by her, they did not believe.

12After that, He appeared in another form to two of them as they walked and went into the country. 13And they went and told *it* to the rest, *but* they did not believe them either.

14Later He appeared to the eleven as they sat at the table; and He rebuked their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they did not believe those who had seen Him after He had risen.

 4. Who then moved the stone? **(Acts 13:27-31)** (NKJV)

**Acts 13:27 through Acts 13:31 (NKJV)** 27For those who dwell in Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they did not know Him, nor even the voices of the Prophets which are read every Sabbath, have fulfilled *them* in condemning *Him.* 28And though they found no cause for death *in Him,* they asked Pilate that He should be put to death. 29Now when they had fulfilled all that was written concerning Him, they took *Him* down from the tree and laid *Him* in a tomb. 30But God raised Him from the dead. 31He was seen for many days by those who came up with Him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are His witnesses to the people.

***IV. Present to the student the power of fulfilled prophecy***

 A. The words of Christ are recorded. **(Psa 22:1)**

**Psalm 22:1 (NKJV)** 1 My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me? *Why are You so* far from helping Me, *And from* the words of My groaning?

 B. The words and actions of His enemies are recorded. **(Psa 22:6-8, 18)**

**Psalm 22:6 through Psalm 22:8 (NKJV)** 6 But I *am* a worm, and no man;

 A reproach of men, and despised by the people.

7 All those who see Me ridicule Me;

 They shoot out the lip, they shake the head, *saying,*

8 “He trusted in the Lord, let Him rescue Him;

 Let Him deliver Him, since He delights in Him!”**Psalm 22:18 (NKJV)** 18 They divide My garments among them,

 And for My clothing they cast lots.

 C. The details of crucifixion are recorded. **(Psa 22:14-17)**

**Psalm 22:14 through Psalm 22:17 (NKJV)** 14 I am poured out like water,

 And all My bones are out of joint;

 My heart is like wax;

 It has melted within Me.

15 My strength is dried up like a potsherd,

 And My tongue clings to My jaws;

 You have brought Me to the dust of death.

16 For dogs have surrounded Me;

 The congregation of the wicked has enclosed Me.

 They pierced My hands and My feet;

17 I can count all My bones.

 They look *and* stare at Me.

 D. How can these things be written over a 1000 years before the event and

 even before crucifixion was even invented?

***Conclusion:*** Even though this evidence is powerful, it must be received in order to have

 power in us. **(2 Thess 1:9-10; 1 Thess 2:13)**

**2 Thessalonians 1:9 through 2 Thessalonians 1:10 (NKJV)** 9These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, 10when He comes, in that Day, to be glorified in His saints and to be admired among all those who believe, because our testimony among you was believed.

**1 Thessalonians 2:13 (NKJV)** 13For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed *it* not *as* the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe.