Why Trust the Bible?

STUDY GUIDE

A FREE downloadable version of this study guide is available at rose-publishing.com. Click on “News & Info,” then on “Downloads.”

This study guide covers each chapter of this book and includes a reproducible worksheet and/or discussion questions for each chapter.

What participants will gain from this study:

- Be able to answer common questions about biblical reliability.
- Learn about archaeological findings that help verify and/or explain the Bible.
- Gain a clear understanding of the origins of the Bible and the English translations.
- See how Jesus’ life and ministry fulfilled prophecy.

Spend time in prayer before each study session and pray for each participant.
CHAPTER 1: HOW WE GOT THE BIBLE

Main Idea
God’s Word has endured throughout the ages.

Teaching Tips
Introduce participants to the purposes of this study. Ask them what they hope to gain from the study or why they joined the study.

Everyone has questions about the origins of the Bible. Create an environment where participants feel safe to ask these questions. Do this by maintaining a relaxed, open environment in which questions and doubts are welcomed and accepted without negative judgment.

This chapter covers mostly English translations. Find translations in other languages at www.biblegateway.com. Print out the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19–20) in as many different languages as possible and post them side-by-side on a large poster-board. This will visually demonstrate how God’s Word continues to endure and spread throughout the world. You can make this into an activity by having participants identify as many languages as they can.

Digging Deeper
To understand the differences between popular English translations (such as NIV, NASB, KJV, etc.) see Bible Translations Comparison pamphlet available at www.rose-publishing.com.

Worksheet Key
(1) False  (2) True  (3) c  (4) d  (5) d

CHAPTER 2: THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS

Main Idea
The discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls provides evidence for the authenticity of Scripture.

Teaching Tips
The discovery of the Scrolls was an exciting and important event for Christianity because it added to the assurance that the Old Testament we have today was translated correctly. Make sure that you communicate this excitement in your introduction.

Be sure to allow enough time to answer the many questions participants are likely to have.

Digging Deeper
For an easy-to-read book on the Scrolls check out The Dead Sea Scrolls Today by James C. Vanderkam (Eerdmans; 1994).

Worksheet Key
(1) True  (2) False  (3) True  (4) False  (5) d  (6) d
CHAPTERS 3 & 4:  
50 PROOFS FOR THE BIBLE: OLD TESTAMENT  
50 PROOFS FOR THE BIBLE: NEW TESTAMENT

Main Idea
Many archaeological discoveries help confirm the accuracy of the Bible.

Teaching Tips
These chapters can be combined into one session or taught separately. The worksheet and discussion questions provided cover both chapters together.
These chapters contain more information than can be covered in a typical session, so pick six finds for the Old Testament and six for the New Testament on which to focus the teaching time.
Open the session by asking participants to choose two or three archaeological finds that caught their attention while reading the chapter. Ask them to explain why they found those intriguing.

Digging Deeper
Use maps during the session to point out where the finds were discovered or what area the finds concerned. Be sure to locate and mark the places prior to the session so you can easily point to them while teaching. See Then & Now Bible Maps available at www.rose-publishing.com.

Worksheet Key
(1) d  (2) b  (3) a  (4) b  (5) True

CHAPTER 5: WHY TRUST THE BIBLE?

Main Idea
We can be confident that our Bible today is faithful to the original manuscripts.

Teaching Tips
Participants may have strong feelings about this topic. If you have a disruptive participant remember these things: (1) Don’t get angry; It will only escalate tensions and become personal; (2) Tell the participant that you appreciate his/her input and participation; (3) Don’t start a debate between you and the participant; Rather, open up the discussion with the group and ask for other participants’ input; (4) See it as a teaching moment; By your example, you can show the group how to have a respectful conversation.
During the session have participants read these key passages: John 21:24–25; Luke 1:1–4; John 20:30–31; 1 Corinthians 15:3–7; 2 Peter 1:20–21; 2 Timothy 3:16. What do these passages tell us about how the New Testament writers viewed their own writings? What do these passages tell us about how the writers viewed the Old Testament?

Digging Deeper
To go into more detail about the topics in this chapter, check out the author’s book: Misquoting Truth by Timothy Paul Jones (InterVarsity Press: 2007).

Worksheet Key
(1) False  (2) True  (3) c  (4) c  (5) False
CHAPTER 6: 100 PROPHECIES FULFILLED BY JESUS

Main Idea
Jesus fulfilled the prophecies God gave to his people concerning the Messiah. Jesus is the Savior of all people, for all time.

Teaching Tips
This chapter contains more information than can be covered in a typical session, so pick 10 to 15 prophecies on which to focus the teaching time.
Get participants involved by having them read aloud the verses of prophecy and fulfillment from their Bibles. (Be sure to have a few extra Bibles on hand for participants who didn’t bring a Bible.) Split participants into two groups. Assign one group the Old Testament prophetic verses and the other group the corresponding New Testament fulfillment verses.

Digging Deeper
Another way to see how the Old Testament points to Jesus is through typology. For easy-to-understand typology charts see Christ in the Old Testament pamphlet available at www.rose-publishing.com.

Worksheet Key
(1) h (2) j (3) a (4) i (5) b (6) f (7) g (8) c (9) d (10) e

CHAPTER 7: THE GOSPELS: “LOST” & FOUND

Main Idea
There is little reason to doubt the New Testament Gospels, but greater reason to doubt the so-called “lost Gospels.”

Teaching Tips
Play a clip of The Da Vinci Code movie where references to the Gospel of Mary Magdalene are made. To get the conversation started ask participants to respond to what they observed in the clip. What claims or assumptions is the movie making?
Download the FREE twelve-slide PowerPoint® on the Gnostic Gospel of Judas from www.rose-publishing.com (key word: “Gospel of Judas”) to illustrate the kind of content in the Gnostic gospels. (If you do not have a computer and projector available, print out the individual slides and give copies to participants.)

Digging Deeper
To go into more detail about the topics in this chapter, check out the author’s book: Misquoting Truth by Timothy Paul Jones (InterVarsity Press: 2007).

Worksheet Key
(1) d (2) c (3) False (4) d (5) True

FEEDBACK
To improve future studies, be sure to get feedback from the group about teaching style, meeting location, discussion time, material covered, length of study, and group size. Choose a method that best suits your group: Anonymous evaluation sheet, e-mail response or questionnaire, open discussion. See the questions at the end of this study guide.
HOW WE GOT THE BIBLE

Worksheet

1. True or False? Papyrus is the name of animal skin used for making scrolls.

2. True or False? The Gutenberg Bible was the first book ever printed.

3. Which of the following is not one of the main, old manuscripts of the Bible?
   a. Codex Alexandrinus
   b. Codex Sinaiticus
   c. Codex Palestinicus
   d. Codex Vaticanus

4. Which is the first English Bible translated from Latin?
   a. The Revised Version
   b. The King James Version
   c. The Geneva Bible
   d. Wycliffe Bible

5. The Septuagint is:
   a. A group of theologians who met in Greece
   b. Seventy books of the Bible
   c. The Greek translation of the whole Bible
   d. The Greek translation of the Old Testament
   e. The Greek translation of the New Testament

Discussion Questions

1. Give two reasons for believing in the reliability of the Bible we have today.
2. How did the invention of the printing press affect the history of the Bible? How do you think modern technology is affecting—or will affect—the Bible’s use?
4. There are many English translations of the Bible in use today. Do you think having so many translations available is helpful for Christians? Why or why not?
THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS

Worksheet

1. True or False? The Dead Sea Scrolls are the greatest archaeological discovery of our time.

2. True or False? The Dead Sea Scrolls are the originals of the Old Testament.

3. True or False? The Dead Sea Scrolls contain portions of every book of the Old Testament, except Esther.

4. True or False? The four Gospels were found among the Dead Sea Scrolls.

5. The Dead Sea Scrolls were found in:
   a. A pyramid in Egypt
   b. Caves inside the temple in Jerusalem
   c. A cave by the Jordan River
   d. Caves by Qumran

6. How do the Dead Sea Scrolls shed light on early Christianity?
   a. By providing insight into the religious viewpoints in the New Testament
   b. By helping resolve questions about Christian interpretation of the Old Testament
   c. By helping us to understand the Apostle Paul’s vocabulary
   d. All of the above

Discussion Questions

1. What did you find most intriguing in this chapter about the Dead Sea Scrolls?
2. What do the Dead Sea Scrolls reveal about the accuracy of Bible translation over the years?
3. What do the Dead Sea Scrolls reveal about the Messiah? Is it a similar understanding to the New Testament? Are there any differences?
4. How do the Dead Sea Scrolls help us understand the background of religious life during Jesus’ ministry?
50 PROOFS FOR THE BIBLE: OLD TESTAMENT & NEW TESTAMENT

Worksheet

1. The text in the Code of Hammurapi (formerly known as Hammurabi) is about:
   a. The story of Gilgamesh
   b. The story of Baal
   c. The laws of Egypt
   d. The laws of Babylon

2. Which archaeological find allows scholars to know exactly when Paul was ministering to the Corinthians?
   a. The Moabite Stone
   b. The Gallio Inscription
   c. The Jericho Gateway
   d. The Dead Sea Scrolls

3. Which find contains the earliest extrabiblical mention of the name “Israel,” and shows that the Israelites were in fact living in the Promised Land around 1230 BC?
   a. Merneptah Stele
   b. Ancient flood stories
   c. Caiaphas’s tomb
   d. The Politarch Inscriptions

4. Which find contains the oldest example of a Scripture passage dating around 600 BC?
   a. Philistine Seaport
   b. Silver amulets
   c. The Galilee boat
   d. Herod’s Palace

5. True or False? The Megiddo church inscription verifies that Christians, as early as the third century, recognized the divinity of Jesus.

Discussion Questions

1. Which two finds would you point out to someone who was skeptical of the reliability of the Old Testament?
2. Which two finds would you point out to someone who was skeptical of the reliability of the New Testament?
3. After reading these chapters, do you have more, less, or the same confidence in the accuracy of the Bible?
4. In your experience, how important is it to discuss the reliability of the Bible when telling nonbelievers about Jesus?
WHY TRUST THE BIBLE?

Worksheet

1. True or False? With reckless abandon, the New Testament writers changed the oral tradition about Jesus.

2. True or False? The sources of the Gospels were likely eyewitnesses of events of Jesus’ life.

3. The word canon:
   a. Comes from a Greek word meaning “a group of books”
   b. Refers to the first four books of the New Testament
   c. Comes from a Greek word meaning “measuring stick”
   d. Refers to the Trinity in the Gospels

4. Most of the 400,000 variations in New Testament manuscripts:
   a. Affect doctrinal issues
   b. Show the significance of the poor quality of copying
   c. Are minor spelling errors and variations of word order
   d. Exist because some do not have illustrations

5. True or False? What matters most is the age of the existing manuscripts not their reliability when compared.

Discussion Questions

1. Read 2 Timothy 3:14–16. Why is the reliability of “holy Scriptures” important?
2. It is true that we do not have the original manuscripts of the New Testament. Does this affect the reliability of the Bible in any way? Why or why not?
3. There have been many attacks on the reliability of the Bible, especially the Gospels. Why do you think this has become so popular?
4. How has the information from this chapter helped your understanding and trust of the Bible?
100 PROPHETIC FULFILLED BY JESUS

Worksheet

Look up the following verses in the New Testament and match them with the Old Testament prophecies.

1. _____ Acts 3:25–26
   a) Jeremiah 31:15 “A voice is heard in Ramah, mourning and great weeping, Rachel weeping for her children and refusing to be comforted, because her children are no more.”
2. _____ Matthew 2:13–15
   b) Psalm 69:20–22 “...They put gall in my food and gave me vinegar for my thirst.”
3. _____ Matthew 2:16–18
   c) Deuteronomy 21:23 “…anyone who is hung on a tree is under God’s curse.”
4. _____ John 19:23–24
   d) Numbers 21:8–9 “The LORD said to Moses, ‘Make a snake and put it up on a pole; anyone who is bitten can look at it and live.’”
5. _____ Matthew 27:34
   e) Psalm 45:6–7 “Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever; a scepter of justice will be the scepter of your kingdom.”
   f) Psalm 31:15 “Into your hands I commit my spirit; redeem me, O LORD, the God of truth.”
7. _____ Matthew 21:12
   g) Malachi 3:1 “‘See, I will send my messenger, who will prepare the way before me. Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, will come,’ says the LORD Almighty.”
8. _____ Galatians 3:13
   h) Genesis 18:17–18 “Then the LORD said, ‘Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do? Abraham will surely become a great and powerful nation, and all nations on earth will be blessed through him.’”
9. _____ John 3:14–15
   i) Psalm 22:18 “They divide my garments among them and cast lots for my clothing.”
10. _____ Hebrews 1:8–9
    j) Hosea 11:1 “When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son.”

Discussion Questions

1. What does it mean that Jesus was/is the Messiah?

2. Why is it important to be aware of and study Old Testament prophecies of the Messiah?

3. What do we learn about God’s plan for humanity through these prophecies?

4. Consider the timing and the ways in which these prophecies about Jesus’ first coming were fulfilled. What can this tell us about the prophecies and fulfillment of Jesus’ second coming?
THE GOSPELS: “LOST” & FOUND

Worksheet

1. Which of the following “gospels” was not found at Nag Hammadi:
   a. Gospel of Philip
   b. Gospel of Thomas
   c. Gospel of Truth
   d. Gospel of Jesus

2. Which of the following was not a criteria the early Christians used for determining which writings came from eyewitnesses:
   a. Oral history
   b. External evidence
   c. Roman historical evidence
   d. Internal evidence

3. True or False? Five of the “lost Gospels” can be connected to firsthand testimony.

4. According to the New Testament Gospels:
   a. Jesus was a spirit who seemed human.
   b. Jesus performed self-serving miracles throughout his childhood.
   c. Jesus told Judas to betray him.
   d. Jesus was fully human and fully divine.

5. True or False? The “lost Gospels” were excluded because they couldn’t be clearly connected to persons who walked and talked with Jesus.

Discussion Questions

1. If you were asked to explain Gnosticism to someone who had never heard the term before, how would you explain it?
2. The author responds to the question, Why are so many people so enthralled by the “lost Gospels”? What is your own response to this question?
3. How has the information from this chapter helped your understanding and trust of the New Testament Gospels?
4. What questions do you still have concerning the Gospels?
FEEDBACK

1. What did you learn through this study that deepened your relationship with God and/or helped you better understand the history and reliability of the Bible? ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________

2. What was your favorite thing about this study, and why? ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________

3. How could the meeting location, setting, length, or time be improved? ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________

4. Did you think the material covered was too difficult, too easy, or just right? ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________

5. What would you like to see different about the group discussions? ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________

6. What would you like to see different about the worksheets? ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________

7. What topic would you like to learn more about? ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________
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