

# Reason

*Belief in an age of Skepticism*

study guide

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written by John Alwood

## Is the Bible True?

### **commentary**

The question to be answered here is, "Is the Bible true?" In other words, does the Bible stand up as God's authoritative, true, unique, inspired word? Is it the standard by which we can build our lives? Is it the Bible really the absolute truth? Or, is it simply another religious work by which we can glean some truth from along with whatever else? How can we know the Bible is true?

### **Fact #1 - The Bible is unique**

Nobody would argue this fact. Even the greatest skeptic or critic of the Bible would agree that the Bible is unique. It is especially unique in its composition. Even though it was written over the course of 1600 years by 40 different authors (all from different backgrounds, mind you), the Bible has consistency of message that weaves throughout all of its pages.

It is the most translated book in history with over 350 translations to date. Parts of scripture have been translated into over 2100 languages (according to Wycliff, there are over 6000 languages in the world). As this Weekly Seed is being written, there are thousands of translators working to bring the Word of God to people groups who have never heard or read it. Some are even risking their lives to bring the Bible to nations hostile to its message.

The Bible is not only the most translated book in all of history, it is also the most widely circulated book in all of history and has survived all kinds of bans, governmental eradications, and burnings, showing its unmatched resilience. It is the most published book in all of history and millions of copies are printed and sold year after year.

Millions of people world-wide believe the Bible to be God's true Word for them and claim it has had an effect on their lives to the point that they are willing to base their entire life, values, worldview, and future on it. The Bible is unique.

### **Fact #2 - The Bible is Accurate**

Probably the first question people have about the accuracy of the Bible is with regards to the miraculous stories in it. The interesting thing about this is that during the time of writing, for example, the New Testament account of miracles, there were no significant protests with regard to the biblical record on miracles. The New Testament was written during a time when people were still alive who actually were there to witness the miracles. In the case of Christ's resurrection, for example, there were over 500 witnesses who saw him back from the dead,

walking amongst them! Even after this and other seemingly unnatural events circulation did not stop. In fact intelligent people have accepted miracles as acts of God and scholars who believe in their validity have devoted their lives to the study of them.

The Bible has much evidence to support its accuracy. For example, it has thousands of ancient documents to back up the validity of its accuracy. The works of ancient Greek philosophers of Plato, Aristotle, and Socrates have no more than 10 ancient copies to prove their reliability, yet nobody ever really questions the accuracy of these documents in reflecting those actually written by the philosophers themselves. The Bible has unmatched manuscript evidence.

The Bible is historically accurate. Archaeological evidence has shown to support its recording and dating of details of historical events. There have been many seeming discrepancies between the biblical and historical accounts, but in these cases, the Bible ends up being true when revealed by archaeology. For example, the Bible speaks of a group called the Hittites. For centuries, historians claimed this was a made up people group. However, in 1906, archaeologists found the civilization of the Hittites including what is believed to be their capitol city. The biblical record proved correct. There are hundreds of examples such as this, proving the validity and accuracy of the biblical record.

### **Fact #3 - The Bible is Inspired (God-breathed)**

Not only do the writers of the Bible use the phrase “Thus says the Lord” over 3000 times, but Scripture, itself, claims to be inspired. 2 Timothy 3:16 says, “All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness.” The apostle Peter wrote (2 Peter 1:20-21), “You must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet’s own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.” God’s word is a result of God, even though He uses men to record it. Scripture claims to be inspired.

The evidence is there as to its inspiration, too. There are thousands of prophecies and foreshadows in scripture (too many to record here) that were fulfilled much later. The birth of Jesus, itself, has many detailed prophecies made hundreds of years prior to his birth, yet they all came true.

Jesus was convinced of the Bible’s inspiration. Time and time again, he referred to the scriptures as the “word of God.” In Matthew 24:35, Jesus said, “Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away.” The Bible is the inspired word of God.

If the Bible is really God’s unique, accurate, inspired word, then you must make a decision about it. Jesus made a distinction between the two views a person can have toward scripture. He said that some people will accept its message, believes it is the true word of God and build their life on it, showing that they are wise like a man who builds his house on a rock. Then there are those who do not accept the word of God and instead, they build their lives on the fleeting and changing word and “wisdom” of men. He said they are like a man who builds his house upon the sand. Jesus’ hope is that you are wise.

# personal reflection

**Sunday** - What is your view of scripture? Why is it so important? Take some extra time to reflect on the Psalm for this week. ("Law" is the term used in scripture to refer to the first five books of the Bible). How can this prayer be your prayer? How can God make you like the person described in this Psalm?

**Monday** - Reflect on 2 Timothy 3:16. How is God's word distinct? What is it useful for? How have you seen it work in your life this way?

**Tuesday** - Reflect on Matthew 24:35 and surrounding verses. Contemplate the eternity of God's word. What does this mean for you? How does it affect your view of the Bible during your life?

**Wednesday** - Reflect on Matthew 7:24-29. Are you a "wise man" or a "foolish man" according to Jesus? What about your life is built on the rock? on the sand?

**Thursday** - Reflect on 2 Peter 1:16-21. What does this passage say about the grandeur and significance of God's word? Contemplate this high view of scripture.

**Friday** - Reflect on 2 Kings 22:9-13 & 2 Chronicles 17:7-10. What do these stories say about scripture? What is it useful for? What impact does it have? How is your view of scripture similar or not?

**Saturday** - Reflect on Deuteronomy 4:1-14 and consider the role/prominence of scripture in your life's legacy.

# group discussion

**Ice breaker** - What is the most fun thing you have either done on the sand or on rocks. Be brief.

1. What did you find interesting about the message on Sunday? Did anything challenge you? Did anything particularly enlighten you?
2. What was the most convincing evidence for you as to the truth behind scripture (If you need a review, look back in the commentary)? Why?
3. **Read Psalm 1.** What is the importance of scripture for God's people?
4. **Read 2 Timothy 3:10-4:5.** What does this passage say about the usefulness of scripture? Look beyond 3:16 to what Paul is urging Timothy toward.
5. **Look at Matthew 7:24-29.** What is wisdom and foolishness defined as here? How do you relate in your own life?
6. How would you describe your life in God's word?

<input type="checkbox"/> God speaks to me frequently through his word	<input type="checkbox"/> I don't read it because I don't understand it
<input type="checkbox"/> I love to memorize scripture	<input type="checkbox"/> close my eyes, open it randomly, and point my finger on a page - that's what God wanted me to hear today!
<input type="checkbox"/> daily & consistent	
<input type="checkbox"/> infrequent or scattered	
<input type="checkbox"/> non-existent	
<input type="checkbox"/> I don't know where to start	
7. What step will you take this week toward engaging with God through his word?

