

Can I trust the Bible

Study Plan

Question / Topic	Passages
1 Is the Bible Trustworthy?	Various
2 Did God Really Create the World?	Genesis 1
3 If God is good, why does suffering exist?	Genesis 2,3
4 Why is evil so widespread and powerful?	Genesis 4-11
5 How can evil people become righteous?	Genesis 12-47
6 Who is God?	Exodus 1-12
7 What is the purpose of the Ten Commandments?	Exodus 14-34
8 What does it mean to take a "step of faith?"	Joshua, 1&2 Samuel
9 How do the Old and New Testaments fit together?	Isaiah, Luke
10 Why did Jesus perform miracles?	Mark
11 What did Jesus really say?	John
12 Is death the end (or the beginning)?	Matthew

Here is a schedule of the lessons in this study series. Since it is a very high-level study of the Bible, we call it “Creation to Christ” and abbreviate it as “C2C”.

Can I Trust the Bible?

Some thoughts...

Deep in all of our hearts, we sense that our life has a purpose – a meaning that extends beyond this physical world. Perhaps you have been lying awake at night wondering about this, but eventually, you get discouraged or distracted and try to ignore the biggest questions of life: Where did I come from? Why am I here? What will happen after I die?

I’m glad that you came today as we start a high-level study of the Bible. If you come with an open heart, I believe that you will find this book has answers to all of these questions (and much more). It is a big book - a person can spend a lifetime studying this book. Our lessons will only present an overview of some basic things that the Bible teaches. We will study the Bible chronologically and we will only study selected key events. Once you understand the basics of the Bible, the rest of the Bible is easier to understand.

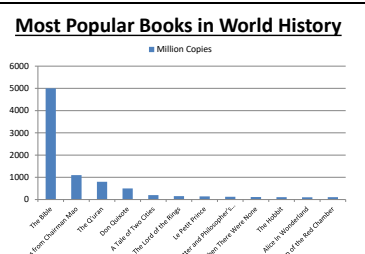
(Remember – apologetics cannot convince a skeptic to believe, but it can remove some barriers to belief for someone who desires to know the truth.)

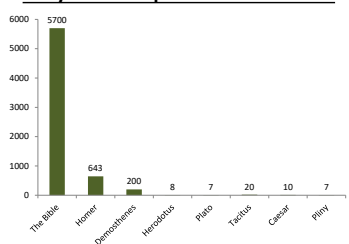
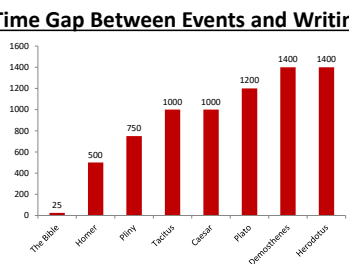
Faith: trusting something we cannot see

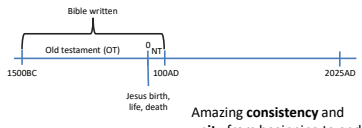
- Why do people have faith?
 - Deep in our heart, we know that our lives have meaning.
- What influences our beliefs?
 - Society, culture, family
 - It helps us cope with trouble or feel better
 - Truth
- But how do I know my belief is true?

People all over the world believe that their life has a purpose. If our lives end at the grave, it doesn’t matter whether our life is virtuous or villainous. As Tim Keller says, if you’re on the Titanic as it sinks, it doesn’t matter if you go down hugging or mugging. But deep inside, we all have been created with a greater sense of purpose that continues after we die.

Along the way, people actively choose or passively accept a belief system to live by. Why do people choose one belief system over another? Here are some reasons, but ultimately, what matters most is whether or not their belief system is true.

Finding Truth... ...in a world of counterfeits 	There are many different belief systems, and if you examine them, they are all very different. As such, they cannot all be true. So, how do we identify the one that is true?																										
<u>Is the Bible trustworthy?</u> • The Bible is Globally Significant • The Bible is Accurate • The Bible makes Important Claims	Perhaps you've heard some things about the Bible. Many people think that the Bible is just a book of Legends or that it is like many other religious books – filled with rules and philosophy. Tonight, I want to clarify what the Bible really is and why it's worth studying.																										
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<u>Where Was The Bible Written?</u> 	Some people mistakenly assume that the Bible is western, or that it came from America. It was written thousands of years before America was founded, and it is actually eastern in nature.																										
<u>Most Popular Books in World History</u>  <table border="1"> <caption>Most Popular Books in World History (Estimated Millions of Copies)</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Book</th> <th>Millions of Copies</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>The Bible</td> <td>~5000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Quotations from Chairman Mao</td> <td>~1000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>The Quran</td> <td>~1000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Don Quixote</td> <td>~500</td> </tr> <tr> <td>A Tale of Two Cities</td> <td>~400</td> </tr> <tr> <td>The Lord of the Rings</td> <td>~300</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Li Hsiang-shan</td> <td>~200</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Harry Potter and Prisoner of Azkaban</td> <td>~100</td> </tr> <tr> <td>And Then There Were None</td> <td>~100</td> </tr> <tr> <td>The Hobbit</td> <td>~100</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Anna Karenina</td> <td>~100</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Principles of Mathematics</td> <td>~100</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Book	Millions of Copies	The Bible	~5000	Quotations from Chairman Mao	~1000	The Quran	~1000	Don Quixote	~500	A Tale of Two Cities	~400	The Lord of the Rings	~300	Li Hsiang-shan	~200	Harry Potter and Prisoner of Azkaban	~100	And Then There Were None	~100	The Hobbit	~100	Anna Karenina	~100	Principles of Mathematics	~100	The Bible was the very first book printed on the first commercial printing press in Gutenberg, Germany (1450AD). For every year since then, it has been the best-selling book globally. These numbers are as of January 2000 and are only estimates. But it is clear that the Bible is by far the most printed and read book in world history.
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<u>The Bible is Globally Significant</u> • Written in ancient Middle East • The most popular book in world history • The most widely translated book in the world • Not culturally limited • Trusted by scholars throughout history It seems reasonable if God spoke to people through a written format, it would be globally accessible.	These are just a few things that demonstrate the importance of the Bible. You may not yet believe that it is the written word of God, but at least you should take some time to understand the message of the most important book in world history. And it seems reasonable that, if God spoke to people through a written format, it would be globally accessible.																		
<u>Is the Bible trustworthy?</u> • The Bible is Globally Significant • The Bible is Accurate	Perhaps you've heard some things about the Bible. Many people think that the Bible is just a book of Legends or that it is like many other religious books – filled with rules and philosophy. Tonight, I want to clarify what the Bible really is and why it's worth studying.																		
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<u>Detailed reports of actual events</u> <u>Historically verified details</u> (Luke 3:1-2) "In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene, during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John the son of Zechariah in the wilderness."	Not historical fiction! Until about 1800AD, fiction was written with vague details. Instead, the Bible is written like a news report. The Bible includes facts like these, ones that are historically verifiable.																		

Detailed, eye-witness accounts <u>Eye-witness accounts</u> (1 John 1:1): “That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched – this we proclaim concerning the Word of life.” <u>Detailed reports of actual events</u> (John 21:11) “Simon Peter climbed back into the boat and dragged the net ashore. It was full of large fish, 153, but even with so many the net was not torn.”	The Bible is amazing in that it was written either by eye-witnesses or first-person interviewers, not handed down over centuries of generations.
Bible Writers and Timeline - Bible was written: - Over a period of 1600 years: 1500BC to 100AD - By 40 separate writers in three languages - By Kings, fishermen, prophets, a doctor...  Amazing consistency and unity from beginning to end!	One of the most amazing things about the Bible is the consistency displayed from beginning to end. If you examine a book written by 40 different writers over a period of 1600 years and find that it contains amazing consistency, you know that it must be more than a human creation.
Imagine this: 40 different people over 1600 years - Each cuts out a different puzzle piece:  - How likely that they all fit together? - Impossible! - Unless, they are perfectly guided by the One who is using them to assemble His masterpiece, designed before they started writing anything.	
Detailed, Accurate Prophecies Isaiah 44:24,28 (written about 700BC, before Cyrus’ birth and while the temple was standing): “This is what the LORD says – your Redeemer, who formed you in the womb: who says of Cyrus, ‘He is my shepherd and will accomplish all that I please; he will say of Jerusalem, “Let it be rebuilt,” and of the temple, “Let its foundations be laid.”’” Ezra 1:2 (~150 years later in 538BC): “This is what Cyrus king of Persia says: “The LORD, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth and he has appointed me to build a temple for him at Jerusalem in Judah.” Over 300 specific prophecies about Jesus	The Bible is unique in that it is the only religious book that makes specific detailed prophecies about the future. While some books make general statements (e.g. there will be wars and earthquakes), the Bible actually describes places, names, and dates. Another example is found in Daniel 9:25,26 which was written about 600BC. It predicts that 483 lunar years would come between a decree to rebuild Jerusalem and the arrival of Messiah. We then see the actual history in Nehemiah 2:1,6-8 when King Artaxerxes writes decree in 444BC. Historical records show that Jesus rode into Jerusalem in 33AD.
Hundreds of Biblical references have been confirmed by archaeology  Large Mosaic at Tell es-Sultan, notice scale	Archaeology is a relatively new science, only several hundred years old. For many centuries, people questioned the existence of the cities described in the Old Testament. But now, the Bible is used as an archeological guidebook to help them find what they are looking for.

<u>Real Human Experience</u> • Genesis 12:2,12,13 > Abraham lies • Mark 14:69-71 > Peter denies • John 6:66 > People reject Jesus • Romans 3:23 > Everyone sins • Clearly reflects the beauty and brokenness of our human condition	“Principle of Embarrassment” = if the text is embarrassing to the author (or main character?), it is probably true
<u>The Bible is Accurate</u> • Thousands of ancient manuscripts • Detailed reports of actual events • First-person accounts (not legends) • Matches archaeology / history • A consistent, unified message • Detailed, accurate prophecies • Matches human experience	Unlike many religious books, the Bible does not simply provide a list of rules to obey. It contains true stories of history, showing how God created people, how they broke away from Him, and what He has done to bring them back to Himself. The detailed accounts of the Bible are characteristic of actual historical reporting (not mere fiction). And other than Jesus, the heroes of the Bible are realistically portrayed, including their mistakes and failures.
<u>Is the Bible trustworthy?</u> • The Bible is Globally Significant • The Bible is Accurate • The Bible makes Important Claims	Perhaps you’ve heard some things about the Bible. Many people think that the Bible is just a book of Legends or that it is like many other religious books – filled with rules and philosophy. Tonight, I want to clarify what the Bible really is and why it’s worth studying.
<u>The Bible Claims</u> ✓ It Came from God (2 Timothy 3:16) “All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness,”	Also, 2 Peter 1:21
<u>The Bible Claims</u> ✓ It Came from God ✓ It is eternally important (Isaiah 40:8) “The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God endures forever.”	Also Matthew 24:35

<u>The Bible Claims</u> ✓ It came from God ✓ It is eternally important ✓ It can guide our lives (Psalm 119:105) “Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.”	Hebrews 4:12 also states that the Bible “alive”: “For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.”
<u>The Bible Claims</u> ✓ It came from God ✓ It is eternally important ✓ It can guide our lives ✓ It reveals the truth about God (Ex 34:6,7) “The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished;”	Also Jeremiah 9:23,24 and Hebrews 1:1-3
<u>The Bible Claims</u> ✓ It came from God ✓ It is eternally important ✓ It can guide our lives ✓ It reveals the truth about God ✓ It tells the purpose of man (Isaiah 43:6,7) “Bring my sons from afar and my daughters from the ends of the earth – everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made.”	Also Psalm 103:11 and John 1:12
<u>The Bible Claims</u> ✓ It came from God ✓ It is eternally important ✓ It can guide our lives ✓ It reveals the truth about God ✓ It tells the purpose of man	If these claims are true, The Bible is absolutely worth studying. But even if they are not true, it is important to know the central message of the most popular book in world history!
<u>Is the Bible Trustworthy?</u> • The Bible is Globally Significant • The Bible is Accurate • The Bible makes Important Claims Everyone should understand the message of the most popular, widely translated, globally influential book in world history	In the Bible, there is a story of one brother (Philip) who discovered the truth about Jesus and told his brother (Nathanael) about Him (John 1:44-51). Nathanael was skeptical, so Philip gave him a simple invitation: “come and see.” This is my invitation to you about this Bible study series: “come and see for yourself.” We won’t try to force anything on you and will do our best to answer any questions that you might have. When I finally understood the truth about the Bible, it changed my life. And I hope it does the same for you!