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|  | 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 tonight as we begin studying 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. |
|  | People all over the world believe that their life has a purpose. And along the way, they often 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. |
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|  | 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. |
|  | To begin with, I want you to see that the Bible is very important. In fact, it is the most significant book in world history. Since it is so important, your education would not be complete without understanding the basic facts and message about the most significant book in world history.  That’s a bold claim! Here are some reasons why I think it is true. |
|  | Some people mistakenly assume that the Bible is western, or that it came from America. Actually, it was written thousands of years before America was founded, and it is actually eastern in nature. |
|  | 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. |
|  | The global importance of the Bible is clearly shown by the number of languages into which it has been translated. Almost anywhere in the world, people can read the Bible in their own language. |
|  | Unlike most religious books, the Bible is not bounded by culture. If a person submits to Islam, they must wear Arabic clothing and read the Quran in Arabic. If a person chooses to be Hindu or Buddhist, they adopt Asian appearance and meditation styles. But when the Bible enters a culture, people retain their cultural identity – it fits all cultures around the world. |
|  | Some people suggest that the Bible is only accepted by foolish, old, superstitious people. But the fact is, many brilliant scientists and philosophers from the past and the present have studied and accepted the Bible. |
|  | These are just a few things that demonstrate the importance of the Bible. And as I said earlier, it seems wise for everyone to understand the message of the most important book in world history. |
|  | 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. |
|  | The Bible is unique among ancient books in that there are so many copies of the original manuscripts in existence. Because of this, we can have confidence that the message is identical to the one that was originally delivered. |
|  | Many ancient stories were only preserved in the memories of storytellers, allowing them to develop into legends over time. But the Bible is unique: Most of the books were written down by eye-witnesses or by first person interviewers. The prevents the story from being changed over time. |
|  | Not historical fiction! Until about 1800AD, fiction was written with vague details. Instead, the Bible is written like a news report. |
|  | Many accounts in the Bible wouldn’t be written by men intending to invent a religion. They wouldn’t write about a hero who struggled with his ultimate self-sacrifice at the climax, and they wouldn’t write about women discovering the empty tomb (the testimony of women wasn’t admissible as courtroom in evidence those days). |
|  | 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. |
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