

Why Do We Trust The Bible?

Lesson 01 of the series, "Why?"

"But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect..." 1 Peter 3:15 (NIV)

A. At Centerpoint we believe the Bible is our guide in all matters of faith and practice.

"The sole basis for our belief is the Bible – the 66 books of the Old and New Testaments. The Bible is God's word to all people in all times. The entire Bible is uniquely God-breathed, without error, and the final authority on all matters of faith and practice." Centerpoint Statement of Beliefs

B. Seven reasons why we trust the Bible.

1. The Bible is a supernatural book.

"For the word of God is alive and powerful. It is sharper than the sharpest two-edged sword, cutting between soul and spirit, between joint and marrow. It exposes our innermost thoughts and desires."

Hebrews 4:12 (NLT)

Revelation = God's disclosure of Himself and His ways (things we would never have discovered) because He wants a relationship with us. "Above all, you must realize that no prophecy in Scripture ever came from the prophet's own understanding, or from human initiative. No, those prophets were moved by the Holy Spirit, and they spoke from God." 2 Peter 1:20-21 (NLT)

Inspiration = "God-breathed" divine influence on the minds of 40 different Biblical authors ranging from farmers to kings, from different countries, over a period of 1500 years. "All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right. God uses it to prepare and equip his people to do every good work." 2 Timothy 3:16-17 (NLT)

Illumination = The Holy Spirit helps us understand the spiritual truths in the Bible. "For his Spirit searches out everything and shows us God's deep secrets. No one can know a person's thoughts except that person's own spirit, and no one can know God's thoughts except God's own Spirit. And we have received God's Spirit (not the world's spirit), so we can know the wonderful things God has freely given us." 1 Corinthians 2:10-12 (NLT)

2. Jesus viewed Scripture as reliable and authoritative.

"I did not come to abolish the Law of Moses or the writings of the prophets. No, I came to accomplish their purpose. I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not even the smallest detail of God's law will disappear until its purpose is achieved." Matthew 5:17-18 (NLT)

"Make them holy by your truth; teach them your word, which is truth." John 17:17 (NLT)

3. Moses, David and the apostles viewed Scripture as reliable and authoritative.

Moses: "These instructions are not empty words—they are your life!" Deuteronomy 32:47 (NLT)

David: "How can a young person stay pure? By obeying your word... I have hidden your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you... I have rejoiced in your laws as much as in riches. I will study your commandments and reflect on your ways. I will delight in your decrees and not forget your word. Open my eyes to see the wonderful truths in your instructions." Psalm 119:9-18 (NLT)

Paul: "For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope." Romans 15:4 (NIV)

4. Archaeological discoveries continually verify that the people and places in the Bible were real.

"It was now the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius, the Roman emperor. Pontius Pilate was governor over Judea....." Luke 3:1 (NLT)

Archaeological evidence = The Pilate Stone discovered in June 1961

"King Mesha of Moab was a sheep breeder. He used to pay the king of Israel an annual tribute of 100,000 lambs and the wool of 100,000 rams. But after Ahab's death, the king of Moab rebelled against the king of Israel." 2 Kings 3:4-5 (NLT)

Archaeological evidence = The Mesha Stele (Moabite Stone) discovered in August 1868.

5. The Bible contains an astonishing number of fulfilled prophecies.

“For I alone am God! I am God, and there is none like me. Only I can tell you the future before it even happens. Everything I plan will come to pass, for I do whatever I wish.” Isaiah 46:9-10 (NLT)

<u>Event in Jesus' life</u>	<u>OT Prophecy</u>	<u>NT Fulfillment</u>
Born in Bethlehem	Micah 5:2	Luke 2:4-7, Matthew 2:3-6
Silent before his accusers	Isaiah 53:7	Matthew 27:12-14
Condemned with criminals	Isaiah 53:12	Luke 23:32-33
Hands & feet pierced	Psalms 22:16	John 19:18

6. The Bible is unquestionably historically reliable when compared to other ancient writings.

“Many people have set out to write accounts about the events that have been fulfilled among us. They used the eyewitness reports circulating among us from the early disciples. Having carefully investigated everything from the beginning, I also have decided to write a careful account for you...” Luke 1:1-3 (NLT)

Note: The Dead Sea Scrolls discovered in 1947 give us great confidence that the Bible has been accurately copied and reliably handed down to us.

7. The Bible changes people.

“I am not ashamed of this Good News about Christ. It is the power of God at work, saving everyone who believes—the Jew first and also the Gentile.” Romans 1:16 (NLT)

“So get rid of all the filth and evil in your lives, and humbly accept the word God has planted in your hearts, for it has the power to save your souls.” James 1:21 (NLT)

Life Application: We must read the Bible and obey what it says.

“But don't just listen to God's word. You must do what it says. Otherwise, you are only fooling yourselves. For if you listen to the word and don't obey, it is like glancing at your face in a mirror. You see yourself, walk away, and forget what you look like. But if you look carefully into the perfect law that sets you free, and if you do what it says and don't forget what you heard, then God will bless you for doing it.” James 1:22-25 (NLT)

“Those who accept my commandments and obey them are the ones who love me. And because they love me, my Father will love them. And I will love them and reveal myself to each of them.” John 14:21 (NLT)

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Connect Group Questions

1. Have you read the Bible? If so, how did it impact your life?
2. What is your favorite story in the Bible? Why?
3. What claims does the Bible make about itself in the following verses?
 - Hebrews 4:12-13
 - Isaiah 55:10-11
 - James 1:21-25
4. How did the following people view Scripture?
 - Jesus - Matthew 5:17-18, John 17:17
 - Paul – Romans 15:4, 2 Timothy 2:15, 3:15-17
 - David – Psalm 119:9-16

Whose opinions about the Bible have influenced you most? Why?

5. Christians have more resources than ever – Bibles, churches, Christian schools, bookstores, media, etc. Do you think it is harder or easier to be a Christian now than it was in earlier centuries?
6. Share one insight God has given you through your Bible reading lately. Pray for each other. Ask God to give everyone in your group a hunger for His Word.
7. Discuss the following quotations:

“It is important to realize that archaeological excavations have produced ample evidence to prove unequivocally that the Bible is not a pious forgery. Thus far, no historical statement in the Bible has proven false on the basis of evidence retrieved through archaeological research.” Keith N. Schoville, former president of the Near East Archaeological Society

“The evidence for our New Testament writings is ever so much greater than the evidence for many writings of classical authors, the authenticity of which no one dreams of questioning... if the New Testament were a collection of secular writings, their authenticity would generally be regarded as beyond all doubt.” – F.F. Bruce, The New Testaments Documents: Are They Reliable?

Resources:

Bible reading plans: www.bible.com

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