



JourneyChurch

## “By the Book”

### Sermon 1, Overview/credibility

### Study Supplement

#### **Overview:**

The Bible is hard to understand if simply read from front to back.

It is not a story that continues from one chapter to the next.

It is a collection of 66 books divided into two testaments.

The Old Testament is made up of \_\_\_ books written by \_\_\_ different authors and spans a time frame of \_\_\_\_\_ years.

Three types of books are found in the Old Testament.

1. \_\_\_\_\_. The first 17 books.
2. \_\_\_\_\_. The next 5 books.

3. \_\_\_\_\_. The last 17 books.

The new testament is made up of 27 written by 9 different authors over a span of 100 years.

The New Testament is made up of 3 different types of books:

1. \_\_\_\_\_. The first 5 books, known as the Gospels.

2. \_\_\_\_\_. The next 13 books, Pauline Epistles.

3. \_\_\_\_\_. The last 9 books, General Epistles.

If you want to learn more about Paul's instructions to churches and individuals you would need to read the next 13 books.

And if you want to learn more about the instructions made by men just as the apostle Peter and John, read the last nine books.

Just as with the old Testament, The New Testament is not recorded in Chronological order. The book of \_\_\_\_\_ does profess to give an "orderly account" but does not include the entirety of events that unfolds between all the gospels. Books call \_\_\_\_\_ of the Gospels can give us a chronology of the life of Christ.

Take time to visit [www.journeyky.church/move-university](http://www.journeyky.church/move-university) for links to purchase suggested readings such as:

"One Perfect Life" (A blended Harmony of the Gospels), John MacArthur.

"30 days to understanding the Bible."

## Credibility of the Bible:

The Bible is the \_\_\_\_\_ word of God.

It is written by a host of \_\_\_\_\_ men.

These men live in different times under different circumstances but all gave a consistent account of God's story.

There is ample evidence that the Bible is without \_\_\_\_\_.

## The Reliability of the Bible: 4 Quick Thoughts

### 1. We Have Thousands of Biblical Manuscripts

The original books of the bible no longer exist. They were originally written on animal skins and other degradable materials.

However, a high number of copies do still survive called \_\_\_\_\_.

There are more than 6000 surviving manuscripts for the New Testament alone. The next closest contender is Homers "The Iliad" at only 600 copies making the bible the most trusted manuscript in history!

The fact is, we do not have any of the original writings of Biblical books. The original writings were often written on animal skin and other materials that deteriorated rather quickly. So if what we have are copies of copies of the originals, how can we know that they are accurate?

Fortunately, there is an incredibly high number of surviving copies of original Biblical writings. These copies are called manuscripts, and there are roughly 6,000 surviving manuscripts for the New Testament alone. This makes it the best attested document of all ancient writings. The next closest contender is Homer's "The Iliad", which has only 600 existing copies.

Given all that we know, the bible we read today has a 99.5% level of accuracy from the original books. Any differences or discrepancies and/or omissions are said to have been related to spelling and grammar but no

evidence tells us that such errors have changed the theology of the scriptures.

The early 19<sup>th</sup> century discovery of the \_\_\_\_\_ at a place called Qumran near at the northern shores of the dead sea, further solidify the accuracy of the manuscripts. The ancient documents verify the accuracy of modern copies and the unchanged nature of the Hebrew language. What a gift from the dedicated \_\_\_\_\_ who faithfully preserved the scriptures in the face of the persecution of the Roman empire.

## **2. Archaeology Supports the Biblical Record**

Nazareth. Many doubters have tried to claim that Ancient Nazareth never existed. However, ruins of dwellings and communal wine presses have been unearthed that prove that this small village where Jesus was raised by his stepfather and his mother did indeed exist in the region of Galilee.



1<sup>st</sup> century wine press discovered in Modern day Nazareth.



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## Examples of Archeological evidence.

### Capernaum:

Many have surmised that the city of Capernaum, Jesus' base of operations, never existing during Jesus' lifetime. But excavation have revealed that the city did exist and was exactly as the bible describes.

Archaeologist have determined with 99% accuracy the location of \_\_\_\_\_ house just a stone throw from an unearthed 1<sup>st</sup> century synagogue. Certainly, the one where Jesus preached just before healing Peters' mother-in-law. A modern Catholic church is constructed over Peter's home where graffiti on the ancient plaster confirms it as Peter's home.



Octagonal structure, church over Peters House. 4<sup>th</sup> century synagogue built on 1<sup>st</sup> century foundation in the foreground.

### Jerusalem and The Pool of Bethesda

John 5:1-15 describes a pool in Jerusalem, near the Sheep Gate, called Bethesda, surrounded by five covered colonnades. Until the 19th century, there was no evidence outside of John for the existence of this pool and John's unusual description "caused bible scholars to doubt the reliability of John's account, but the pool was duly uncovered in the 1930s – with four colonnades around its edges and one across its middle

Model of the 1<sup>st</sup> century pools of Bethesda at the Israeli museum, Jerusalem.



Ruins of the Pools of Bethesda discovered North of the Temple Mount in Jerusalem just as described in the NT.



## Jerusalem and The Pool of Siloam

In the 400s AD, a church was built above a pool attached to Hezekiah's water tunnel to commemorate the healing of a blind man reported in John 9:1-7. Until recently, this was considered to be the Pool of Siloam from the time of Christ. However, during sewerage works in June 2004 engineers stumbled upon a 1st century ritual pool when they uncovered some ancient steps during pipe maintenance near the mouth of Hezekiah's tunnel. By the summer of 2005, archaeologists had revealed what was "without doubt the missing pool of Siloam.

Partial excavation of the Pool of Siloam.



### 3. The Original Writings Were Faithfully Preserved

The discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls in the 1940's allowed scholars to compare Old Testament manuscripts that were separated by hundreds of years. Of particular importance was the newly discovered copy of Isaiah, which predated the earliest known copy of the book by 1,000 years.

Comparing the two ancient documents revealed that they were nearly identical, except for some minor spelling or stylistic differences. Even though one of the manuscripts had been copied countless times more than

that which was found among the Dead Sea Scrolls, there was no substantial difference between the two texts.

This is one important example of how faithful scribes were when copying the Scriptures. These copies were accurately created by those dedicated to preserving the Word of God. Even though we do not possess any of the original writings, we can be confident that the copies we do have were reliably handed down over the centuries.



Original container of the first of the dead sea scrolls.

#### **4. The New Testament Was Written Shortly After the Events it Records.**

Once you have established that our Bibles contain reliable copies of what was originally written, you may find it necessary to provide evidence that the originals were accurate to begin with. After all, it would mean very little to have accurate copies of New Testament writings if the originals were not true. So how can we present the fact that the Bible provides an accurate account of historical events?

When it comes to the New Testament, it is important to know that the gospels were recorded relatively soon after the events which they record. At the very latest, the four gospels were written 40-60 years after Jesus'

resurrection. Many New Testament books predate the gospels. Paul's letters to the Galatians and Ephesians, for example, were likely written 15-20 years after the time of Christ. (See also, Dating the Book of Acts).

While this may seem like a great deal of time between the events and the writings, it is helpful to note that these dates are remarkably early for ancient documents.

Since the written record was created in close proximity to the actual events, those who wrote these books were in a position to know if they were true or not. Furthermore, there would have been living eyewitnesses who could have discredited these texts if they were not accurate.

When Paul defended the reality of the resurrection in 1 Corinthians 15, he said "Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep."

### **Wrap up.**

Take time to meditate on the gift of the scriptures. How have they changed your life?

What does the evidence of the accuracy of the Scriptures mean to you?

How do these facts change the way you look at trying to live "by the Book"?

Discuss this openly together if reviewing this as a group. Consider dividing into pairs or triads to discuss.