

## Truth Series: Lesson 2

### How Do We Know the Bible is True?

#### Life Question:

How do I know that the Bible is true?

#### Scripture:

Daniel 9:24-27, Ezekiel 26:3-5, Ezekiel 29:15, Isaiah 40:22, Isaiah 55:9, II Peter 3:7, Ecclesiastes 1:7, Jeremiah 33:22, Psalm 102:25-27, Leviticus 17:11, Ecclesiastes 1:6, Job 26:7, Joshua 1:1-9

#### Key Passage:

Joshua 1:1-9

#### Reality Impact:

Students will learn that history, archeology, and prophecy validate the Bible's authenticity.

#### Materials Needed:

Napoleon Dynamite video

#### I. Prayer:

#### II. Introduction:

a. **Illustration:** Video Clip—Napoleon Dynamite and his Glamour Girlfriend  
And now we return to our brilliant theologian from the classic movie, Napoleon Dynamite. Napoleon and his new friend, Pedro, discussed which girl they each wanted to take to the school dance. Napoleon told Pedro that he couldn't take his real girlfriend because she lived in Oklahoma. Napoleon was lying, and Pedro fell hook, line, and sinker—especially when Napoleon showed him a glamorous picture of a girl whom Napoleon had never actually met. Pedro believed Napoleon's lie without even questioning how a nerd with a red afro could possibly date a woman as beautiful as the girl in the picture!

i. **Application:** Faith without evidence is blind. Pedro accepted Napoleon's fib on blind faith. As Christians, we need to know that our faith is *not* blind. Evidence backs up our faith.

b. **Review:** Last week, we learned that the Bible was recorded accurately—but that's not enough. The Grim brothers recorded their fairytales accurately, too, but the fairytales were just that: fairy tales. How do we know the Bible is true—that its events actually happened?

- c. If the Bible is true, then we should find evidence that proves its events actually happened—and we do. This evidence falls into five different categories:
  - i. Historical Evidence
  - ii. Textual Evidence
  - iii. Scientific Evidence
  - iv. Archeological Evidence
  - v. Personal Evidence

III. **Historical Evidence**—such as fulfilled prophecy and biblical history, shows that the Bible is true.

a. Fulfilled Prophecy

i. **Illustration:** Psychic Hotline Prophecies

We've seen advertisements on TV and in the newspaper from psychics who claim to see the future. For a nominal fee, someone can call the Psychic Hotline or Dial-A-Psychic and receive his or her own personal prophecy. These hotlines are usually scams. When someone calls, the psychic might say, "Ooh, the forces tell me that something is troubling you...." Well *of course* something's troubling the caller—otherwise he wouldn't have called! The psychic will usually give the caller a fortune cookie prophecy—a vague, undefined statement that almost anything can fulfill. The callers call again and again, and CHA-CHING! The so-called psychics make money.

ii. **Illustration:** Your Mother's Prophecies

Unlike psychic hotlines, most mothers have uttered true prophecies at one time or another. Remember when you were little and you acted up in a restaurant? Or a theater? Or—egad!—at church? Your mother probably turned to you and said, "When we get home, I'm going to give you a spanking!" This is an example of a real prophecy. Your mother gave you a specific time (when you got home) and a specific action (administer a spanking). And it probably came true every time!

How can mothers be such prophets, you ask? Mothers have the power to control the surrounding circumstances in order to fulfill said spanking prophecies. They can run faster than their children and they're bigger. Escape is not an option.

1. **Application:** God has the power to control the surrounding circumstances in order to fulfill His prophecies, and His prophecies are anything but generic, psychic hotline blurbs. His prophecies are the real deal, and the Bible contains loads of fulfilled prophecies.

- b. **Messianic Prophecies:** Many Old Testament prophecies foretold of a future Messiah, and Jesus fulfilled over 300 of them during His first coming. Here are a few examples.
- i. Daniel 9:24-27: In about 538 BC, Daniel predicted that the Persian emperor would eventually give the Jews authority to rebuild Jerusalem, which was then in ruins. Daniel then predicted that the messiah would come as Israel's promised Savior and Prince 483 years after that. Both prophecies were fulfilled.<sup>1</sup>
- c. **Historic Prophecies:** Some Old Testament and New Testament prophecies foretold the fates of various countries. Here are a few examples:
- i. Ezekiel 26:3-5: <sup>3</sup>Therefore this is what the Sovereign Lord says: "I am against you, O Tyre, and I will bring many nations against you, like the sea casting up its waves. <sup>4</sup>They will destroy the walls of Tyre and pull down her towers; I will scrape away her rubble and make her a bare rock. <sup>5</sup>Out in the sea she will become a place to spread fishnets."
    1. Alexander the Great eventually destroyed Tyre in 332 B.C.<sup>2</sup> His army pulled her buildings pulled down, and to this day, fishermen in the Mediterranean dry their fishnets on her bare, lonely shores.<sup>3</sup>
  - ii. Ezekiel 29:15 [Egypt] will be the lowliest of kingdoms and will never again exalt itself above the other nations. I will make it so weak that it will never again rule over the nations.
    1. Need I say more? Egypt is no longer a world power.
  - iii. Luke 19:41-44 <sup>41</sup>As [Jesus] approached Jerusalem and saw the city, he wept over it <sup>42</sup>and said, "If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace—but now it is hidden from your eyes. <sup>43</sup>The days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment against you and encircle you and hem you in on every side. <sup>44</sup>They will dash you to the ground, you and the children within your walls. They will not leave one stone on another, because you did not recognize the time of God's coming to you."
    1. This was fulfilled when the Romans under Tiberius ransacked Jerusalem in 70 AD. They set the temple on fire and then pried apart the stones to collect the gold that had melted off the roof.<sup>4</sup>
- d. **Transition:** These fulfilled prophecies and others like them validate the Bible's accuracy. So does history, which shows that what the Bible says happened actually happened.

#### IV. Historical Accuracy

- a. Biblical History—the following are a few examples of the historical accuracy of the Bible:
- i. Hittites: Bible critics once claimed that the Hittites were only a Biblical legend—until archeologists discovered their capital and records at Bogazkoy, Turkey.<sup>5</sup>
  - ii. Solomon’s Wealth: Many accused the Bible of over-exaggerating Solomon’s wealth—until archeologists recovered records from the past, which showed that wealth in antiquity was concentrated with the king, making Solomon’s prosperity feasible.<sup>6</sup>
  - iii. Sargon: Critics once claimed that no Assyrian king named Sargon, as recorded in Isaiah 20:1, ever lived because no one had found his name in any other record. Then, archeologists discovered Sargon’s palace in Khorsabad, Iraq, and they found the exact event mentioned in Isaiah 20, his capture of Ashdod, recorded on the palace walls. What’s more, they found fragments of a stela memorializing the victory at Ashdod itself.<sup>7</sup>
  - iv. Belshazzar: Critics said the same about Belshazzar, the king of Babylon in Daniel 5. They insisted that according to recorded history, the last king of Babylon was Nabonidus—until archeologists discovered tablets showing that Belshazzar was Nabonidus’ son who served as coregent in Babylon. Thus, Belshazzar had the power offer to make Daniel “third highest ruler in the kingdom,” as he did in Daniel 5:16, for reading the handwriting on the wall. Here we see the “eye-witness” nature of the Biblical record, as archaeological studies often bring out.<sup>8</sup>

If you want to look these up, you can find them at:  
<http://www.christiananswers.net>

- b. Secular History supports the Bible and its historical roots as well. The Antiquities of the Jews, book 18, chapter 3, paragraph 3 the famous historian Flavius Josephus writes:
- i. “Now, there was about this time Jesus, a wise man, if it be lawful to call him a man, for he was a doer of wonderful works—a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure. He drew over to him both many of the Jews, and many of the Gentiles. He was [the] Christ; and when Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men amongst us, had condemned him to the cross, those that loved him at the first did not forsake him, for he appeared to them alive again the third day, as the divine prophets had foretold these and ten thousand other wonderful things concerning him; and the tribe of Christians, so named from him, are not extinct at this day.”<sup>9</sup>
- c. **Transition:** We not only have historical evidence of the Bible’s truth, we also have scientific evidence.

## V. Scientifically True

- a. **Illustration:** Video Clip—Napoleon Dynamite and the Liger  
 Deb asked Napoleon what he was drawing. He showed her a picture of a tiger with a woman's head. He called it a liger and insisted that they were bred for their magical powers.
- i. **Application:** Napoleon believes in ligers, animals he claims are bred for their magical powers, and he has a fictitious girlfriend in Oklahoma. Would you trust Napoleon? Not at all! You can't trust that he has a firm grip on reality any more than you can trust that he actually has a girlfriend.
- b. **Illustration:** Mark 17  
 A minister told his congregation, "Next week I plan to preach about the sin of lying. To help you understand my sermon, I want you all to read Mark 17." The following Sunday, as he prepared to deliver his sermon, the minister asked for a show of hands. He wanted to know how many had read Mark 17. Every hand rose. The minister smiled and said, "Mark has only sixteen chapters. I will now proceed with my sermon on the sin of lying."
- i. **Application:** No one trusts a liar. We don't trust Napoleon; we don't trust congregations who insist they've read Mark 17. We also can't trust myths and legends that vary from science. For instance, in Greek mythology, Theseus, needed to find his way out of a labyrinth without getting killed by the minotaur—a half-man, half-bull monster. Is this story true? Probably not. We know it's a fabrication because minotaurs don't exist.
- c. The Bible, however, does not exaggerate or vary from science. It never once mentions a liger—or a minotaur, flying horse, or any other mythological creature. In other words, the Bible is scientifically accurate.
- i. The Bible recorded many principles of modern science as facts of nature *long before* scientists confirmed them. Here are a few examples:<sup>10</sup>
1. **Roundness of the Earth** (Isaiah 40:22—He sits enthroned above the circle of the earth....)
  2. **Almost Infinite Extent of the Sidereal Universe** (Isaiah 55:9—As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts higher than your thoughts.)
  3. **Law of Conservation of Mass and Energy** (II Peter 3:6-7—By the same word the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the Day of Judgment and destruction of ungodly men.)
  4. **Hydrologic Cycle** (Ecclesiastes 1:7—All streams flow into the sea, yet the sea is never full.)

5. **Vast Number of Stars** (Jeremiah 33:22—I will make the descendants of David my servant and the Levites who minister before me as countless as the stars of the sky and as measureless as the sand on the seashore.)
6. **Law of Increasing Entropy** (Psalm 102:25-27—<sup>25</sup>In the beginning you laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands. <sup>26</sup>They will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like a garment. Like clothing you will change them and they will be discarded. <sup>27</sup>But you remain the same and your years will never end.)
7. **Paramount Importance of Blood in Life Processes** (Leviticus 17:11—For the life of a creature is in the blood....)
8. **Atmospheric Circulation** (Ecclesiastes 1:6—The wind blows to the south and turns to the north; round and round it goes, ever returning on its course.)
9. **Gravitational Field** (Job 23:7—He spreads out the northern skies over empty space; He suspends the earth over nothing.)

ii. Be wary, however. This does not give us license to petition our teachers to include the Bible in our science class as a textbook for scientific study.

iii. **Quote:** “This common objection to believing the straightforward history of Genesis has, in one sense, a simple answer—‘No, it’s not’. Dr D. James Kennedy correctly says about the Bible, ‘It is not a scientific textbook. It is not a textbook on religion. It is not a textbook at all; it is a revelation from God!’”<sup>11</sup>

d. **Transition:** We know the Bible is true not only through historical evidence and scientific evidence, but also through textual evidence.

## VI. Textual Evidence

- a. As we learned last week, scholars use two methods to help determine textual accuracy.
  - i. Form Criticism—Scholars match the style, structure, and vocabulary of one group of works to the style, structure, and vocabulary of other works to determine authorship and era. We learned last week that scholars used form criticism to validate the authenticity of the Bible and the Dead Sea Scrolls
  - ii. Textual Criticism—Scholars compare the current text to the oldest manuscripts to see if they match.<sup>12</sup>
- b. **Illustration:** Love letters  
*[For this illustration, replace Jack and Jill with the names of a boy student and a female student in your class.]*

One day, Jill found a love letter in her locker. She opened it, and her heart raced as she read it. (Quite a racy love letter!) Jill just had to know who wrote the letter, but no one signed it. Her boyfriend, Jack, might have written it, or maybe some other sexy scribe. How can Jill find out who wrote it? What clues might she look for? Jill might compare the handwriting on the love letter to Jack's other love letters. (No love letters from Jack? That might be a clue!) Jill also might compare terminology. If Jack always calls her, Babe, but this letter is addressed: To My Ageless Darling, Jack might have some competition to contend with. If Jack is an honor student, but the love letter lacks decent punctuation, the author might not be Jack.

- i. **Application:** These are examples of form criticism.
- c. Throughout the ages, the Bible has withstood the scrutiny of some of the most ruthless critics:
- i. "Both the Old and New Testaments are strongly supported by manuscript evidence (the evidence of early hand written copies). The famous Dead Sea Scrolls are one example of the Old Testament evidence. These documents came from the "library" of a settlement founded at Qumran before 150 B.C. and abandoned about 68 A.D. Some of the manuscript copies were made during that period, and some were written earlier (third century BC) and brought to the settlement. Ignoring spelling-oriented (orthographic) changes and similar small differences, the Dead Sea Scrolls match the Hebrew text behind today's Old Testament, in spite of the passage of over 2,000 years (where one would expect errors to creep in).  
 "Over 20,000 known manuscripts document the New Testament text. This makes the New Testament the most reliable document of antiquity (a document written before the printing press). These manuscripts vary in size from a part of a page to an entire Bible (Old and New Testaments). The earliest New Testament manuscripts date from the second century (100-199) AD these manuscript copies were written in different languages by people of different nationalities, cultures, and backgrounds. In spite of all those differences between them, the New Testament texts all agree. (That is, those differences that we do observe between these handwritten documents are occasional changes in the spelling of names or isolated cases of missing or changed words. Still, since we have so many copies, it is obvious to anyone but the hardened skeptic can see that they all represent the same text.)"<sup>13</sup>
- d. **Transition:** We now know that the Bible is true based on historical evidence, scientific evidence, and textual evidence. We also know its true based on archeological evidence.

## VII. Archeological Evidence

*Joshua 1:8 Do not let this book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night....*

- a. **Illustration:** Backyard Archeological Dig  
 Pretend that you have owned a ton of pets: including a few dogs, a couple cats, some hamsters, a boa constrictor, a few toads and turtles, and a rabbit. All of those pets eventually died, and you buried them in your backyard. If I wanted to, I could show up at your house with a pick axe and a shovel, excavate your backyard, and track the history of your family pet lineage. The bones of all your dead pets in your backyard would prove the authenticity of the stories about your pets.
- i. **Application:** If the Bible is true, we should expect to find ruins and artifacts that validate its stories.
- b. The archeological evidence falls into three categories:
- i. Evidence that demonstrates the historical and cultural accuracy of the Bible. We discussed much of this earlier.
  - ii. Evidence that shows the sharp contrast between the Bible's message of a loving Creator God who interacts in the affairs of mankind and has provided a means of salvation and the pagan fertility religions of the ancient world as archaeology reveals.<sup>14</sup>
    1. Somehow, out of the sands of the pagan polytheistic desert sprang a living, monotheistic God. Our God is different from pagan Gods. How does that happen except through divine intervention?
  - iii. Archaeological findings demonstrate that the Bible's prophets accurately predicted events hundreds of years before they occurred—something that lies beyond the capability of mere men.<sup>15</sup>
- c. Unfortunately for the Bible's critics, archeologists keep digging up stuff that supports the authenticity of the Bible. For example:
- i. "The discovery of the Ebla archive in northern Syria in the 1970s has shown the Biblical writings concerning the Patriarchs to be viable. Documents written on clay tablets from around 2300 B.C. demonstrate that personal and place names in the Patriarchal accounts are genuine. The name "Canaan" was in use in Ebla, a name critics once said was not used at that time and was used incorrectly in the early chapters of the Bible. The word "tehom" ("the deep") in Genesis 1:2 was said to be a late word demonstrating the late writing of the creation story. "Tehom" was part of the vocabulary at Ebla, in use some 800 years before Moses. Ancient customs reflected in the stories of the patriarchs have also been found in clay tablets from Nuzi and Mari."<sup>16</sup>
- d. **The Flood**—The most documented Biblical event is the world-wide flood described in Genesis 6-9.<sup>17</sup>

- i. Archeologists have discovered a number of Babylonian documents that describe the same flood. The Sumerian King List, for example, lists kings who reigned for long periods of time—until a great flood occurred. After the flood, Sumerian kings ruled for much shorter periods of time. We find this same pattern in the Bible. Men had long life spans before the flood and shorter life spans after the flood.<sup>18</sup>
  - ii. The 11th tablet of the Gilgamesh Epic speaks of an ark, animals taken on the ark, birds sent out during the course of the flood, the ark landing on a mountain, and a sacrifice offered after the ark landed.<sup>19</sup>
- e. Other similar stories
- i. The Story of Adapa tells of a test for immortality involving food, resembling the story of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden.<sup>20</sup>
  - ii. Sumerian tablets tell of a golden age when all mankind spoke the same language. The god Enki, lord of wisdom, then confused their speech. The Babylonians recorded a similar account in which the gods destroyed a temple tower and “scattered them abroad and made strange their speech.” The Bible records this in its account of the Tower of Babel (Genesis 11:1-9).<sup>21</sup>
- f. **Transition:** We now know the Bible is true by examining historical evidence, scientific evidence, textual evidence, and archeological evidence. One more bit of evidence validates the Bible: personal evidence: the most valuable, most life changing evidence of all. Your friends may learn about the truth of the Bible, but they will eventually want to know how the Bible has affected your life and the lives of others.

## VIII. Personal Truth

- a. The transformation of lives is the most powerful evidence of the Bible’s truth.
- b. **Illustration:** Personal Testimony  
[Give your personal testimony of how God changed your life or ask someone else].
- c. The Bible doesn’t become true because we believe it. We BELIEVE it because it is true.

## IX. Closing:

### a. Lesson Recap:

- i. We know the Bible is authentic because of:
  1. Historical Evidence: What the Bible says happened actually happened including fulfilled biblical prophecies.

2. Textual Evidence: The Bible of today matches the original manuscripts.
3. Scientific Evidence: The Bible is scientifically true.
4. Archeological Evidence: Archeology shows that the Bible's events actually happened.
5. Personal Evidence: the evidence that God is working in our lives.

**b. Life Lessons:**

- i. When you understand and accept that the Bible is true you will begin to see life with God in a new way. Suddenly the Bible will become a method of learning about God instead of something to memorize so God will like you more. You will begin to realize that life isn't about you, it's about God.
  1. When you believe in the Bible you find yourself moving "Beyond Belief to Convection (Josh McDowell)."

**X. Action Steps:**

- a. We need to act on what we believe. If the Bible is God's word, we need to read it, believe it, know it, and apply it to our lives.

**i. Illustration: Unwanted Visitor**

A man, down on his luck, entered a church that catered to the "uppity". A deacon spotted the man's dirty clothes and worried about the church's image. He approached the man and asked him if he needed help. The man said, "I was praying and the Lord told me to come to this church."

The deacon suggested that the man pray some more and possibly he might get a different answer.

The next Sunday the man returned. The deacon asked, "Did you get a different answer?"

The man replied, "Yes I did. I told the Lord that they don't want me in that church, and the Lord said, 'Don't worry about it son; I've been trying to get into that church for years and haven't made it yet.'"

1. **Application:** God has revealed Himself to us not only through creation and science but also through His word. Many of us have not listened to His word, and for many of us, God is still waiting to begin a true and authentic relationship.

**ii. Scripture: Joshua 1, 1-9**

<sup>1</sup>After the death of Moses the servant of the Lord, the Lord said to Joshua son of Nun, Moses' aide: <sup>2</sup>"Moses my servant is dead. Now then, you and all these people, get ready to cross the Jordan River into the

land I am about to give to them—to the Israelites. <sup>3</sup>I will give you every place where you set your foot, as I promised Moses. <sup>4</sup>Your territory will extend from the desert to Lebanon, and from the great river, the Euphrates—all the Hittite country—to the Great Sea on the west. <sup>5</sup>No one will be able to stand up against you all the days of your life. As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will never leave you nor forsake you. <sup>6</sup>Be strong and courageous, because you will lead these people to inherit the land I swore to their forefathers to give them. <sup>7</sup>Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go. <sup>8</sup>Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful. <sup>9</sup>Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.christiananswers.net/q-eden/edn-t003.html>

<sup>2</sup> Kenneth Barker, ed., *The NIV Study Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1985) 1262

<sup>3</sup> **Need Note (Michelle)**

<sup>4</sup> Barker, 1477

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.christiananswers.net/q-abr/abr-a008.html>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.christiananswers.net/q-abr/abr-a008.html>

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.christiananswers.net/q-abr/abr-a008.html>

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.christiananswers.net/q-abr/abr-a008.html>

<sup>9</sup> Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews* (city: publisher, date) pg#

<sup>10</sup> **Need Note**

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.answersingenesis.org/creation/v22/i2/textbook.asp>

<sup>12</sup> **Need Notes**

<sup>13</sup> [http://www.clarifyingchristianity.com/b\\_proof.shtml](http://www.clarifyingchristianity.com/b_proof.shtml)

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.christiananswers.net/gospels/gospel1.html>

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.christiananswers.net/q-aiia/aiia-arch1.html>

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.christiananswers.net/q-abr/abr-a008.html>

<sup>17</sup> <http://www.christiananswers.net/q-abr/abr-a009.html> **[Are these all from one page**

<sup>18</sup> <http://www.christiananswers.net/q-abr/abr-a009.html>

<sup>19</sup> <http://www.christiananswers.net/q-abr/abr-a009.html>

<sup>20</sup> <http://www.christiananswers.net/q-abr/abr-a009.html>

<sup>21</sup> <http://www.christiananswers.net/q-abr/abr-a009.html>

## Truth Series: Lesson 2

### Small Group Questions

1. What are the five categories of evidence that support the Bible as true?
2. What is the difference between form criticism and textual criticism? How were they both used to prove the Bible true?
3. If the Bible is true, how does it affect my life?
4. Why don't people want to believe that the Bible is true?