
Longer quotations do not appear in the Study Sheet, but can be read in the accompanying transcript.

The New Testament is Reliable

Why should we _____ the Bible? Are the events and messages described in the New Testament _____? Yes, we can believe! We want to _____ your faith, give you hope, and deepen your love for God and for others. Throughout the centuries, the Bible has had its critics and skeptics, yet the Bible _____ the best-selling book of all time. It contains within its pages God's _____ to all people for all time. Scripture has given hope, comfort, and encouragement to millions who've _____ its pages and believed them. We hope you haven't set your Bible aside and forgotten it.

Some think the Bible is just an ancient book written by _____ and filled with myths and contradictions. Others think the Bible is just one sacred book among _____. Is the Bible really _____? Can you trust it to give you _____ information? The Bible _____ to be the Word of God, and what will judge us in the last day. If this is true, we need to _____ to everything the Lord has to say!

Jesus Christ said, "Why do you call Me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not _____ what I say?" (Luke 6:46). Many people say they love the Lord and follow Christ but have never taken the _____ to read the New Testament. A person who doesn't read the New Testament is no better off than the person who doesn't _____ a New Testament. I hope you're paying close attention to the teaching found here and examining your _____ by its teaching. Let the written Word of God work in your heart and soul; let it _____ your life. If you love and serve God in this life, you'll be able to serve Him in the ages to come.

Our reading today comes from the Gospel According to John chapter 20:30-31.

What a wonderful blessing that is, to know about Jesus and to have life in His name.

The Bible is a unique book, _____ any other book in all of history. It's the best-selling book of all time. It's made more _____ on American culture and society across the world than any other book. Can we believe the Bible's _____ about Jesus the Savior? Is He Lord and will He _____ us at the end of time? If we believe this book, the answer is yes, so this question is most serious.

Occasionally, someone says that we don't _____ whether Jesus Christ ever really lived or not. When I hear someone say that I wonder if they are merely repeating what they've _____ or if they've examined the evidence for themselves.

If Jesus were not historical, the New Testament is certainly an untrustworthy book; but since other sources corroborate the _____ we know about Jesus, the Bible has credibility. Gary Habermas, a recognized university professor and historian, in his book *The Historical Jesus*, recorded and examined 45 ancient sources for the life of Jesus _____ the New Testament. Some were Christian but many were non-Christian, and some were archaeological. He found _____ reported facts revealing the life, person, teachings, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Dr. Habermas concluded, "While some believe that we know almost nothing about Jesus from ancient, non-New

Testament sources, this is plainly not the _____. Not only are there many such sources, ... Jesus is one of the persons of ancient history concerning whom we have a significant amount of quality _____. His is one of the most mentioned and most substantiated _____ in ancient times.” Yes, Jesus really lived, and when you add the books of the New Testament, we see how Jesus has _____ the world!

The New Testament _____ tells about Jesus, His teaching, His kind acts, His miracles, His death, and His resurrection. You may ask, “Did that _____ happen? We weren’t there and we didn’t _____ those things for ourselves; we can only _____ on the testimony of those who were eyewitnesses. Did Jesus really _____ from the dead?” What we’re asking now is whether the New Testament documents written by eyewitnesses and people who investigated, told the _____ about Jesus.

Dr. Harvey W. Everest, in his classic book, *The Divine Demonstration*, lists seven criteria used to _____ historical evidence. He notes that we can _____ testimony to be the truth when it meets these criteria. First, the evidence is _____ when the witnesses are honest, competent and have opportunity to know. The accounts written shortly _____ an event are usually more reliable than accounts written hundreds of years later. We want to know the truth from those who were _____ and heard it firsthand. We can’t _____ guesses or opinions. Someone has said opinions are merely guesses in the absence of evidence.

The apostle Peter, who was an eyewitness of Jesus Christ from his baptism to His resurrection said, “For we did not follow cleverly devised _____ when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of His majesty. For when He received honor and glory from God the Father, such an utterance as this was made to Him by the Majestic Glory, ‘This is My beloved Son with whom I am well- pleased’— and we ourselves _____ this utterance made from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain” (2 Peter 1:16-18). The Father wanted Peter to _____ to Jesus, and He wants the same from us. We must _____ the messages Jesus brings.

Though Luke came on the scene later, he revealed the _____ that he used to write his account of the gospel. Luke wrote, “Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile a narrative of the things that have been accomplished among us, just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word have delivered them to us, it seemed good to me also, having _____ all things closely for some time past, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, that you may have certainty concerning the things that you have been _____” (Luke 1:1-4).

If Peter or Luke or any other writer of the New Testament had written something untrue there would be hundreds of brothers and sisters who would have _____ their writings. Instead, the early church from the earliest times regarded the four gospel accounts, Acts, and the epistles as trustworthy _____ of what really happened in their day.

Second, evidence is credible when the witnesses _____ in the general statement, although they may differ on minor points. What some say are contradictions in Scripture are not really contradictions but different perspectives of the _____ event. Investigators of crime scenes will frequently find witnesses who _____ to disagree with each other but are actually speaking the truth. In fact, though they may emphasize and focus on different points, they actually _____ important facts in their reports of the events. Facts do not really contradict one another but rather provide their perspective.

In some cases, similar passages are actually talking about _____ events. Matthew 5 provides a list of beatitudes in the Sermon on the Mount that _____ from Luke’s version. In

Matthew 5, Jesus was sitting on a _____; but Luke 6:17 says that Jesus stood on a _____ place. These were different occasions, even though the material sounds similar.

On the Day of Pentecost in Acts 2 the apostles stood together in proclaiming the _____ as eyewitnesses of the Lord's death and resurrection. When Paul defended himself to Agrippa, he noted in Acts 26:26 that the things that Jesus did were well known and "not done in a corner."

Third, evidence is credible when there is no known _____ for imposture or faking. The apostles and preachers of the first century didn't become _____ or honored by men because of their testimony. Peter told the man that he healed at the gate of the temple, "I do not possess silver and gold, but what I do have I give to you: In the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene—walk!" (Acts 3:6). When they healed this lame man, they certainly didn't do it for _____.

Fourth, the testimony is reliable when the facts recorded are strongly _____ the well-being or interest of the narrator. The book of Acts records the persecution of the church and those who suffered for their _____. It records the opposition from the leading _____. The apostles and early Christians were beaten, imprisoned, and some killed; but they never _____ their Lord. They lived difficult lives in order to _____ Jesus as the Christ and risen Lord. History records numerous persecutions by the _____ for centuries, but Christianity survived and grew. In the second century, it was commonly said that "the _____ of the martyrs is the _____ of the kingdom." One may question many things, but there can be no doubt the apostles and early Christians were _____ believers!

Fifth, the testimony is reliable when such witnesses are _____. Jesus made several appearances in the forty days after his resurrection and He demonstrated himself to be the Son of God by many convincing _____ (Acts 1:1-3). The New Testament records at least fifteen appearances of Jesus to various people. Paul said that Jesus appeared to more than _____ brethren at one time (1 Corinthians 15:6). He knew what he wrote could be tested by others.

Sixth, the testimony is reliable when the recorded facts and the existing facts are _____ as cause and effect. The places, people, culture and circumstances recorded by the authors of the New Testament accurately represented the _____ things really were. The New Testament is not filled with nameless, mythical people, who could never have lived. Rather, archaeology and secular historical records support the _____ found in the New Testament. The _____ of the New Testament match historical and geographical realities in the world of that era.

Seventh, the testimony is reliable when the _____ recorded are sustained by existing monuments, coins, games or other public institutions. The fact that the _____ itself exists is a marvelous testimony to the resurrection of Jesus Christ and to the truth of the apostles' teaching. There would never have been a church had the apostles not _____ in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The fact that churches, after twenty centuries, still _____ on the first day of the week to have the Lord's supper is a testimony to the fact that the events of the New Testament are _____.

People have criticized the Bible through the years, but the enduring nature and the power of the Bible itself is a _____ evidence. Though men have done everything in their power to _____ the Scriptures, they survive stronger than ever! You can find copies of the whole Bible translated into 670 languages, the New Testament alone into 1,521 languages, and portions in another 1,000, other languages. The United Bible Society estimates that more than 5 billion copies of Scripture are currently in print. If you add the audio and digital copies found on computers, phones, and tablets, nobody knows how many copies exist throughout the world.

Wherever the influence of the Bible is _____, morality flourishes; wherever it's _____, selfishness and evil flourish. In any and every age, Scripture has made an _____ on the morals and

the happiness of the people. According to John Richard Green in *A Short History of the English People*, “No greater moral change ever passed over a nation than passed over England during the years which parted the middle of the reign of Elizabeth from the Long Parliament. England became a people of the book, and that book was the Bible. It was read at church and read at home, and everywhere its words, as they fell on ears which custom had not deadened, kindled a startling enthusiasm.”

He continued, “As a mere literary monument, the English version of the Bible remains the noblest _____ of the English tongue. But far greater was the effect of the Bible on the _____ of the people. Elizabeth might silence or tune the pulpits, but it was impossible for her to silence or tune the great preachers of justice and mercy and truth who spoke from the Book. The whole temper of the nation felt the _____. A new moral religious impulse spread through every class.”

How can Scripture have such a great impact? It’s powerful because Scripture is from _____ Himself. The Bible is sacred; it’s _____ than a human product. **Read 2 Timothy 3:16-17.** Wherever Scripture goes, people _____ the teaching that leads to life eternal. They learn what is good and right. They learn how to love, how to treat other people, and how to serve. Scripture teaches the most important _____ of life.

The Scriptures also _____ us; they tell us what sin is and how sin will destroy us. They warn and admonish us to keep us from hurting ourselves and hurting those we love. You might think reproof is a negative thing, but Jesus told the lukewarm church in Laodicea, “Those whom I _____, I reprove and discipline; therefore be zealous and repent” (Revelation 3:19). Parents who love their children lovingly reprove them to keep them safe.

The Scriptures _____ us in order to bring us spiritual healing and make us whole. It’s only when a person has been taught and he makes _____ to correct his life that he is ready to be trained in righteousness. God will use him to do _____ to all people. Have you let the Word of God be a mirror to your soul, so that you can become what God created you to be?

There are other reasons to trust your Bible that we’ll explore another day. For me, the Lord Jesus settled the _____ of the reliability of the Bible. He considered events of the Old Testament to be real _____. Jesus understood Jonah’s three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish as historical. Jesus used the punishment of Lot’s wife as a means to _____ his disciples not to turn back (Luke 17:32). There is no evidence that He ever regarded the creation, the flood, the crossing of the Red Sea, or any other story of the Bible as a myth or fable. As the Word who lived from the beginning, Jesus is an eyewitness in the position to _____. We can _____ Him to tell us the truth!

The Lord Jesus said, “If anyone is willing to do His will, he will know of the teaching, whether it is of God or whether I speak from Myself” (John 7:17). If we’ll listen to God, hear His Word, and obey it, our lives will change! We’ll know God speaks the truth. We need to believe, to repent of our sins, and to come to the Lord for answers. Perhaps we have great problems because we’ve tuned out the Bible and listened to our lusts and desires. We got what we wanted but not what we needed. Read the Bible, meditate on it, memorize it, love it, obey it, and share it! It can change your life.

And if you are not a committed Christian, become one. Believe with your heart, repent of your sins, confess Jesus Christ as the Son of God, and be baptized in the name of the Lord. God will forgive your sins, He’ll give you a new life, and make you His child.