

BIBLE BASICS

GETTING TO KNOW GOD'S WORD

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Printed in China

Book of Books

The Bible is a book unlike any other. Do you know why? Some people don't believe that the Bible is special. But we can know the truth about the BIBLE if we remember the following:



B - Book of Books

I - Incredible Impact

B - Bedrock Base

L - Letter of Love

E - Exciting to Explore

The Bible is the Book of books. It is different from any other book that has ever been written. That's because the Bible doesn't contain stories made up by men who can sometimes make mistakes. Instead, it is the true history of the universe, given to us by God. God cannot lie (Titus 1:2). We know that what He has told us is true. There are no mistakes in the Bible.

WORD TO KNOW

Bible: Four hundred years after Jesus returned to heaven, people began to use the Greek word *biblia* (meaning "books") to describe the collection of 66 books of the Old and New Testaments. Our English word *Bible* comes from *biblia*.

Where did the Bible come from?

The Bible is actually a collection of 66 books, written by about 40 different men from many different walks of life. One was a shepherd (Moses), some were kings (David, Solomon), one was a fisherman (Peter), one was a tax collector (Matthew), and another was a tent maker (Paul).

The Bible was written over a period of about 2,000 years, from near the time of Moses until a few years after Jesus returned to heaven. Each book was considered inspired (God-breathed) when it was written and was received by the Jews as part of the *canon* of Scripture, since it came from a man who was recognized as speaking for God (a prophet or apostle; Ephesians 3:5) and contained no mistakes.



WORD TO KNOW

Canon: The word *canon* originally referred to a reed, which was used as a measuring rod, like we use a ruler today for measuring. The complete list of biblical books is called the canon, meaning the “measuring rod” or the “authority” for determining truth.

BOOK OF BOOKS



Who wrote the Bible?

The authors wrote their inspired books through the guidance of the Holy Spirit (2 Timothy 3:16). This means that God the Holy Spirit guided the minds of the writers so that all of the words they recorded in their own distinctive styles on the original scrolls were exactly what God wanted them to write and were without error (2 Peter 1:21).

The men who penned the books listed in the Old Testament (OT) wrote mainly in the Hebrew language, although a few parts were written in Aramaic. The writers of the New Testament (NT) books wrote mainly in the common language of their time—Greek.

Less than 1,000 years ago, the Bible was translated into English so that English-speaking people could read it.



WORD TO KNOW

Scripture: This word was used by the NT authors to refer to the sacred books of the OT (Mark 12:10; 2 Timothy 3:15) and also to other books of the NT (2 Peter 3:15–16; 1 Timothy 5:18; 2 Timothy 3:16). Christ Himself said, “Scripture cannot be broken” (John 10:35).

BOOK OF BOOKS

How do we know God wrote the Bible?

We've said that the Bible is God's Word. But how do we know that?

The first, and most important, way is that God tells us He moved men to write the books of the Bible. For example, Moses says that he wrote the words of the Lord (Exodus 24:4).

Prophets including Jeremiah (10:1–2), Isaiah (1:2), Ezekiel (1:3), Jonah (1:1), and Micah (1:1) all claimed to be writing the words of the Lord.

Paul tells us in his letter to Timothy that all Scripture came about by inspiration of God (2 Timothy 3:16)

WORD TO KNOW

Word of God: The Bible claims to be the Word of God over 3,000 times (e.g., John 10:35; Hebrews 4:12). The authors of NT books often begin a quote taken from the OT with the phrase, "God said" (e.g., Matthew 15:4–6). They often begin direct quotes from God in the OT with "Scripture says" (e.g., Romans 11:2; 1 Timothy 5:18). The NT authors believed the "Word of God" was the same as "Scripture."





and that he was writing what had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 3:3–5).

Peter wrote in his second letter that the men who wrote the Old Testament spoke from God as they were moved by the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:21).

When He was on earth, Jesus, who is God, used the Scriptures to explain about Himself to people. He taught from the books of Moses and other Old Testament prophets that all the Scriptures were about Him (Luke 24:27).


Fulfilled Prophecy

Another way that we know that the Bible is from God is through fulfilled prophecy. A prophecy is a statement about what will happen in the future. Only God knows for sure what the future will be like.

For example, the prophet Micah wrote where Jesus would be born over 400 years before Jesus was born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2; Matthew 2:1; Luke 2:4).

Daniel predicted over 450 years before Jesus that the Messiah would appear in Jerusalem as King. When Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey on the first Palm Sunday and was hailed as the King, it fulfilled Daniel's prophecy to the day (Daniel 9:25–26; Luke 19:37–38)!

The prophet Zechariah wrote in about 500 BC that the Messiah would be betrayed. This was over 500 years before Judas betrayed Jesus (Zechariah 11:12–13; Matthew 26:15, 27:3–10).



Over 700 years before Jesus was put to death on the Cross between two thieves, Isaiah wrote about how the Messiah would die among criminals (Isaiah 53:12; Matthew 27:38; Mark 15:27; Luke 23:32–33).

WORD TO KNOW

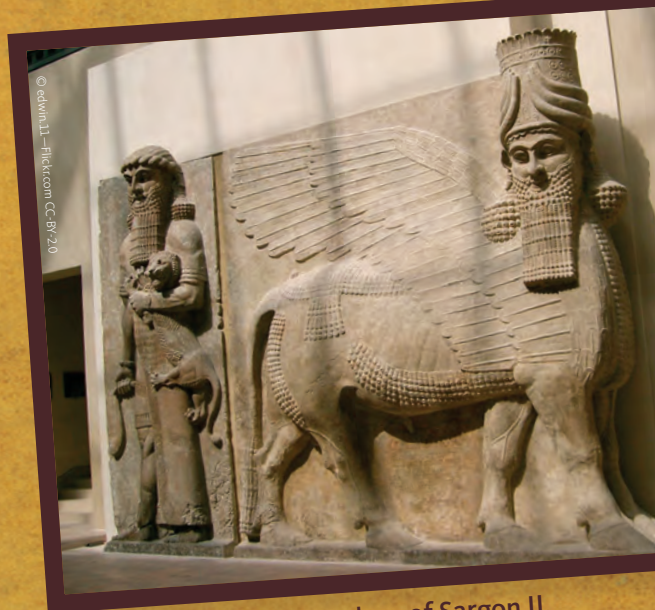
Prophet: A prophet was a special spokesman for God. He spoke, by God's power, the actual words God gave him to say.

Archaeology

Archaeologists have made many discoveries that confirm what the Bible says. For example, they have discovered the city of Jericho—or, at least, what's left of it!

Do you remember what happened at Jericho? As Joshua 6 tells us, the Lord commanded the Israelites to march around the walls of Jericho a certain number of times. After they did this, they were to blow trumpets and shout. Then, the walls of Jericho would fall to the ground, and the Israelites could march into the city. According to the Bible, that's what happened—the walls of Jericho fell down flat (Joshua 6:20).

Archaeologists digging in the ruins of the old city of Jericho have



Sculptures from the palace of Sargon II, who is mentioned in Isaiah 20:1.



Ruins from Jericho

found piles of bricks from fallen city walls!

Not only that, they also found a section of wall that is still standing. Do you remember how God spared Rahab (the lady who hid the Israelite spies) and her house (Joshua 2)? Some think that the section of wall that is still standing may be where Rahab's house was—showing how God spared her as He said He would.

Archaeologists have made other discoveries that confirm the Bible's teachings, too!

WORD TO KNOW

Archaeology: Archaeology is the study of the remains of past human life and activities.

Science

The Bible tells the truth about scientific things. There are many examples, so we'll just list a few here.

Countless Stars

In the past, some people thought there were only about 3,000 stars because that is all they could see before the telescope was invented (in 1608). But today we know that there are too many stars to count. Over 3,000 years ago, God told Abraham to count the stars, if he could (Genesis 15:5). God knew then that the stars were countless, as we know they are today.

Paths of the Sea

Matthew Maury lived 200 years ago. He loved to study the Bible and believed that it was accurate in every area of its teachings. When he found Psalm 8:8, which talks about “paths of the sea,” he set out to discover them. And he discovered several currents that run through the oceans—including the Gulf Stream, which runs up the east coast of America in the Atlantic Ocean and then over toward England!



Laws of Nature

About 2,700 years ago, the prophet Jeremiah wrote that there were ordinances, or laws, of heaven and earth (Jeremiah 33:25). These laws describe the way God created His world to work. We study these laws when we study science. Only the orderly God of the Bible could have created such orderly laws that operate the same throughout time. They reflect His nature.

One of those laws is what keeps our feet on the ground and prevents us from flying off into space when we jump—the law of gravity!

We also study the laws of God when we study math. $1+1$ always equals 2 no matter where we are in the universe. When we do math, it's kind of like we are learning how God thinks in an orderly mathematical way!



Law of Life

In the beginning, God created various kinds of life: flying animals, swimming animals, beasts of the field, insects, plants, and people. He created them “after their kind” and told them to reproduce (Genesis 1, 8:17).

God is the original author of all life. The Law of Life that we might learn about in biology teaches that life only comes from life. We don’t, for example, observe life coming from a pile of rocks or a pool of mud.

And organisms produce more organisms like themselves (dogs produce dogs, cats produce cats). We don’t observe one kind of organism (such as a dog) changing into a completely different kind of organism (such as a cat). This is what we would expect to find from reading the Bible!

Incredible Impact

The Bible is the most read book in the world. It has had an incredible impact on cultures around the world.

Its teachings have provided the basis for English law, the American Bill of Rights, and the constitutions of great democracies, such as the United Kingdom, the USA, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand.

The Bible's message has changed lives all through history. Jesus changed the life of Peter and Paul. The Bible's teachings about salvation through repentance and faith in Jesus changed the

lives of Martin Luther and

Charles Wesley, who went on to teach many people about

Jesus. Tribal groups in the Philippines

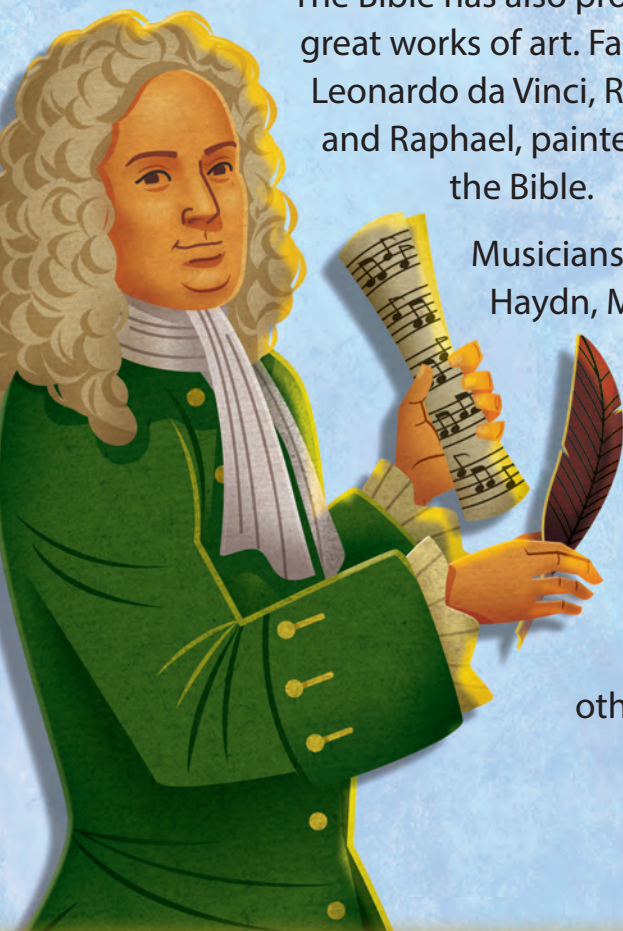


were delivered from fear, and former cannibals in Papua New Guinea now live in peace, all because of the gospel. Muslims, Hindus, and atheists have been changed by the message of God's Word.

The Bible has also provided the basis for many great works of art. Famous artists, such as Leonardo da Vinci, Rembrandt, Michelangelo, and Raphael, painted many scenes from the Bible.

Musicians including Bach, Handel, Haydn, Mendelssohn, and Brahms all composed music based on biblical themes.

The impact the Word of God has had on the world is truly incredible and unique. There is no other book like it.



Bedrock Base

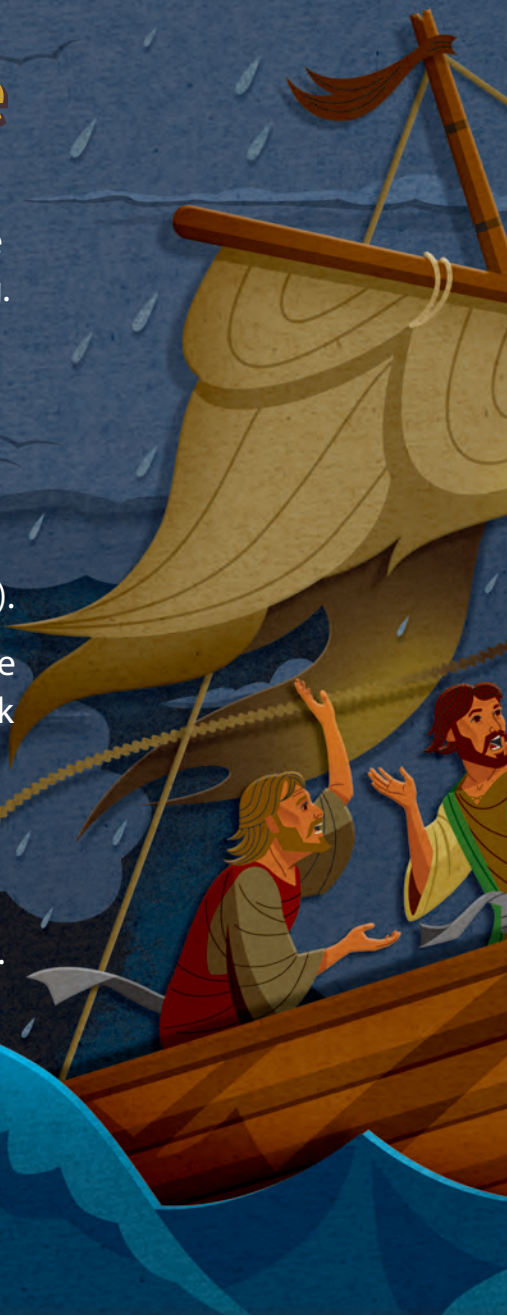
God is the Creator (Genesis 1). Because He is the Creator, He is the one who is in control of everything. He is the supreme authority over His creation.

Jesus (who is God) showed us His authority when He was on earth by commanding the wind and the waves to be still (Matthew 8:23–27).

Because the Bible is the Word of the Creator, we accept it as our bedrock base, our absolute authority, in every subject that it teaches on. Since it is the complete Word of God, who cannot lie, we can trust the Bible to always tell us the truth.

WORD TO KNOW

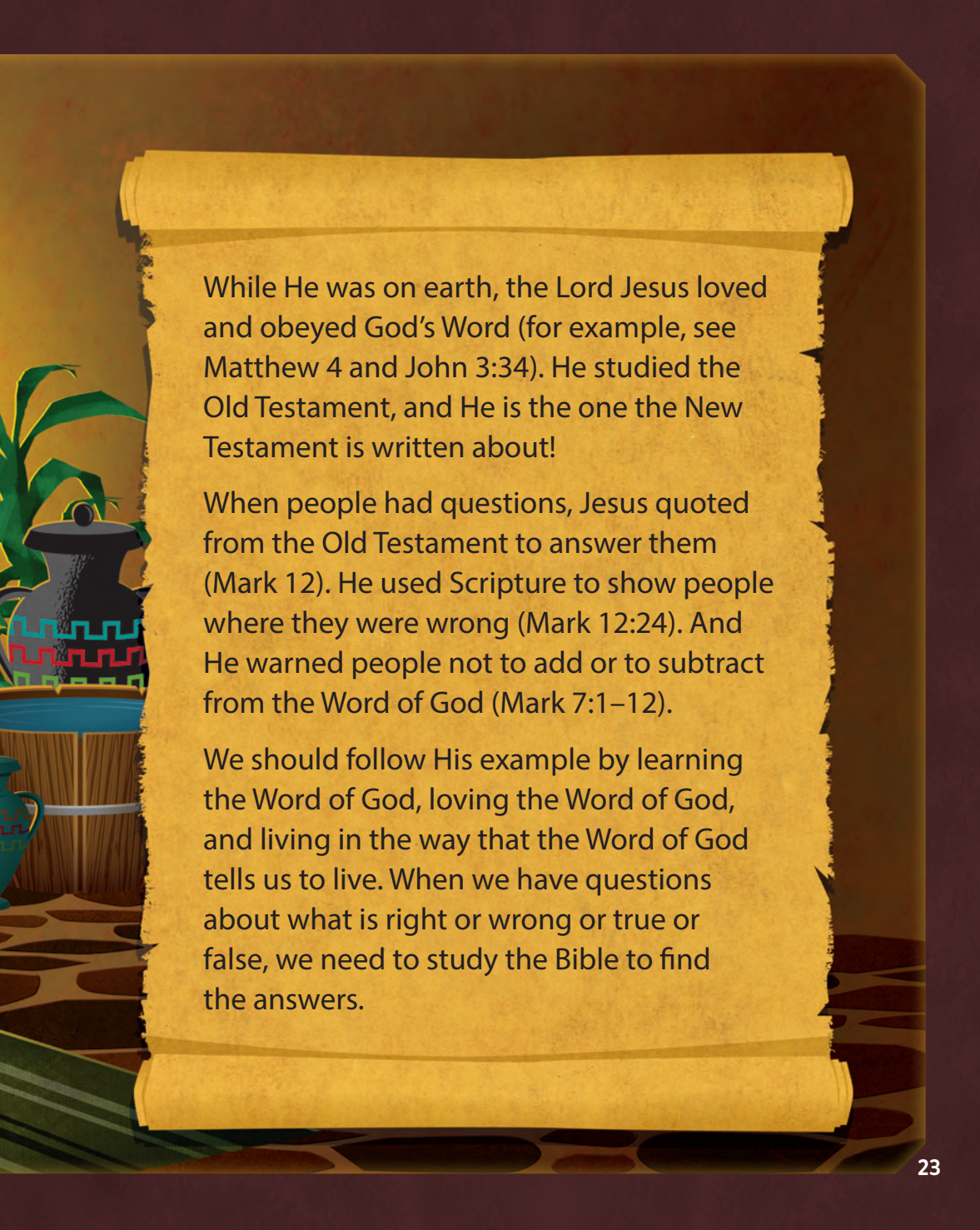
Authority: Person in command





BEDROCK BASE



A scroll with text on a background of a garden with a fountain and plants.

While He was on earth, the Lord Jesus loved and obeyed God's Word (for example, see Matthew 4 and John 3:34). He studied the Old Testament, and He is the one the New Testament is written about!

When people had questions, Jesus quoted from the Old Testament to answer them (Mark 12). He used Scripture to show people where they were wrong (Mark 12:24). And He warned people not to add or to subtract from the Word of God (Mark 7:1–12).

We should follow His example by learning the Word of God, loving the Word of God, and living in the way that the Word of God tells us to live. When we have questions about what is right or wrong or true or false, we need to study the Bible to find the answers.

Letter of Love

The universe and everything in it shouts, “There is a God!” (Romans 1:18–21). But the universe can’t tell us how it was made. It can’t tell us very much about its history. And it can’t tell us about how we can be saved from our sin.

For that, God has given us the Bible. It is like a beautiful letter of love from God for us.

God has told us that He created all things in six actual days, that it was originally a “very good” place, and that the first man, Adam, disobeyed the Creator, corrupting the entire creation (Genesis 1–3; Romans 8:20–22). God said that the punishment for sin is death (Genesis 2:17).

After Adam sinned, in His great love for His people, God promised He would one day send someone to save them from their sin (Genesis 3:15).

From the time Adam and Eve sinned, everyone born into their family (all humans—including you and me) is born a sinner and disobeys God’s commands (Romans 3:23). And we all deserve the punishment for sin: death and eternal separation from God’s goodness in a terrible place called hell (Romans 6:23; Matthew 10:28).



LETTER OF LOVE

We need someone to take care of that punishment for us.
And because God loves people He created in His image,
He sent someone to do just that! Four thousand years

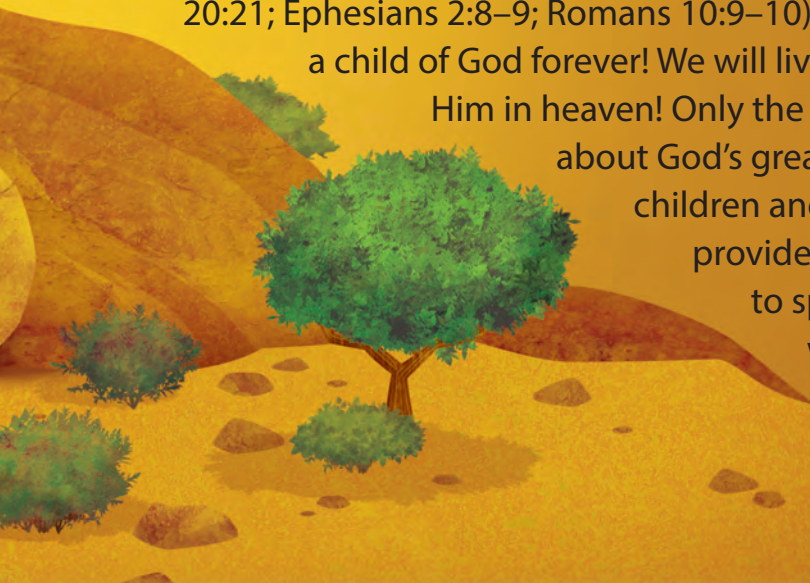


after Adam sinned, God the Father sent His Son Jesus Christ to earth. He was the one who came to fulfill the promise God had given Adam way back in the beginning!

Jesus is God and was born in a human body, and He lived a perfect life—never sinning even once! But, about 2,000 years ago, He was put to death on the Cross, paying the penalty for sin that we deserved.

But here is the power in all of that. Jesus rose from the dead two days later, showing that God had accepted His sacrifice. When we say we are sorry for our sins (repent) and believe that Jesus died in our place, we receive the gift of salvation from the punishment our sin deserved (Acts

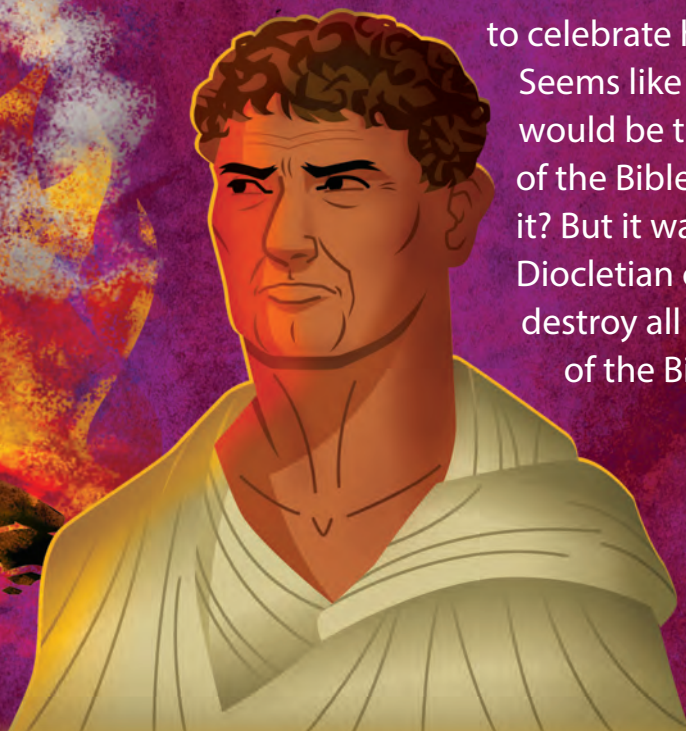
20:21; Ephesians 2:8–9; Romans 10:9–10). We become a child of God forever! We will live forever with Him in heaven! Only the Bible tells us about God's great love for His children and how He has provided a way for us to spend forever with Him.



Exciting to Explore

The Bible has been amazingly preserved over the years—another sign that God wrote it (Matthew 24:35). For example, over 1,500 years ago one Roman emperor, named Diocletian, decided that he wanted Christianity to end.

He ordered every Bible to be found and burned, and he even built a stone column over the ashes of a Bible to celebrate his victory. Seems like that would be the end of the Bible, doesn't it? But it wasn't. Diocletian couldn't destroy all the copies of the Bible. And



25 years later a new emperor, named Constantine, had 50 new Bibles produced.

Since the Bible is the eternal Word of God, we need to read and study it and obey what it says. We can use it to help us understand the world around us. When we read the Bible as the writers intended and in the way their original audiences would have read it, we have a basis for understanding and explaining what we observe in the world.

It's exciting and important to study God's Word as much as we can!



EXCITING TO EXPLORE



Pray

Pray before you read the Bible. Ask God to help you understand His Word. The writer of Psalm 119:18 asked God to open his eyes so that he could see wonderful things in God's Word.

Read

Read the Bible. Pay close attention to what you're reading. Write down what you learn from the verses. EXPLORE the Word of God! As you read, ask yourself:

EX Is there an **ex**ample to follow?

P Is there a **p**romise to claim?

L Is there a **l**esson to learn?

O Is there an **o**ffense—a sin—to confess?

R Is there a **r**ule to obey?

E Is there an **e**rror to avoid?



Learn it! Love it! Live it!

The Bible is a book like no other. It is a special, one-of-a-kind book. Because it is the Word of God, it doesn't have any mistakes in it. We know that the Bible tells the truth because God cannot lie (Titus 1:2). It has had an incredible impact on our world in so many ways and is our bedrock base in every area it touches. It is a letter of love that tells us how we can be saved from sin and have a personal relationship with God and live with Him forever. And it is exciting to explore as we find out more about who God is and how we can become more like Jesus Christ.

When someone tells you that the Bible is just another book written by men, remember the BIBLE!

B - Book of Books

I - Incredible Impact

B - Bedrock Base

L - Letter of Love

E - Exciting to Explore

