



SESSIONS 1-7

# THE BIBLE: GOD'S AMAZING BOOK





# The Bible:

GOD'S AMAZING BOOK

---



**COMMUNITY**  
BIBLE STUDY

### How does this study work?

This study will help anyone regardless of whether they are just starting to explore a Christian faith or have been walking with Jesus for a while. Our idea in producing it is that it will be inspiring, invigorating, faith-deepening and life-transforming. Our other study materials make an ideal follow up. Study questions are designed so that you can observe the Bible, understand the Bible and apply what you have learnt.

If you have never studied the Bible before then this is the study for you!

### Session 1



A leader will introduce the session and explain how subsequent sessions will run. Watch the session 1 video clip.



Get to know one another

**Go on to session 2...**

### Sessions 2 to 7



Step 1

Individuals read the commentary and complete the next session's study questions at home.

Attend the group.



Step 2

Come to the group ready to share your answers.

This discussion should be led by an experienced discussion group facilitator.



Step 3

Watch the video clip.

**'Rinse and repeat' from step 1... !**

For more help and information on this ministry or to order more books and access the video clips go to: [www.cbsuk.org](http://www.cbsuk.org)

CBS UK  
6 Warren Lane  
Witham St Hughs  
LN6 9US

Tel: +44 1522 869092

THE BIBLE: GOD'S AMAZING BOOK

# Contents



Session 1: God's Amazing Book .....	7
Session 2: Letting the Book Speak .....	9
Session 3: God Speaking in the Old Testament.....	13
Session 4: God Speaking in the New Testament.....	17
Session 5: When God Speaks Hard Things.....	21
Session 6: God's Big Ideas .....	25
Session 7: Meeting the Author.....	29



THE BIBLE: GOD'S AMAZING BOOK • SESSION 1

# God's Amazing Book

Why should I care about a book written thousands of years ago?  
Can there be anything relevant in it for me?

No one in their right mind would doubt that the Bible is a remarkable book. It has long been the number-one bestseller. Each year, people buy hundreds of millions of Bibles. The Bible — the whole book or part of it — is available in more than 1,500 languages, and each year it sees yet more translations. All this despite the fact that the Bible is no lightweight paperback novel.

The Bible is not a single book either. It is a collection of 66 books written by 40 human authors whom God inspired. It uses more than three-quarters of a million words written over a period of more than 1,000 years. And there is an amazing harmony in it from beginning to end!

## **The Bible's Unique Message**

The Bible tells the story of Jesus Christ. The Old Testament foretells His coming, and the New Testament explains why He came. Most religious writings describe humankind's attempts to reach

up to God by doing something to earn favour or acceptance. Only the Bible's message of Christ reveals what God has already done for humankind. Many religions have saviour images, but none equals Christianity's unique claim. The Bible declares that the eternal, true, and living God became a human man, one without sin. This man is Jesus, who died and rose again so that everyone who believes in Him can live forever (see John 1:12; 3:16).

The Bible is not an easy book, however. In some places, it appears complicated, and in others, it seems dry. There are several possible explanations for this.

First, it was written in a different period of history: the most modern bits are nearly 2,000 years old! And it was written in cultural and political contexts vastly different from our own.

- Second, the text we read has been translated from other languages, usually Hebrew in the Old Testament and Greek in the New Testament. It's tricky to translate the nuances of other languages, especially ancient ones.
- Third, the Bible contains a huge and sometimes bewildering array of subjects, characters, and literature types.

This is what *Time* magazine (December 30, 1974) had to say about the reliability of the Bible:

After more than two centuries of facing the heaviest scientific guns that could be brought to bear, the Bible has survived—and is perhaps better for the siege. Even on the critics' own terms—historical fact—the Scriptures seem more acceptable now than they did when the rationalists began the attack. The miraculous can be demythologized, the marvel explained, but the persistent message of the Bible will not go away.

### Why Read the Bible?

Sometimes people make judgments about the Bible without having read it for themselves. If you have never read the Bible, or have read only parts of it, there are some good reasons to dig in for yourself.

*It tells us how to live.* The Bible is God's Word to humankind. He is its author, and His words reveal what He is like and how He thinks. God loves the people He made and wants us to know how to live well. So the Bible offers us guidelines for how to deal with almost every situation – some things to avoid and other things to do. It provides a set of values and principles to help us plot our course through the stormy waters of a world where a clear sense of direction is hard to find.

What does God say about true peace and joy? Can God love me even when I mess up? Who is really

in control of my destiny? Concerns like these are addressed in the pages of the Bible.

*It is a spiritual antibiotic.* The Bible can destroy the “diseases” that assault our souls and spirits. God's truth combats the lies that attack our spiritual health. When we fall for these deceptions, we get a distorted view of ourselves, of others, of God, and of the world. But the truth we find in the Bible renews our thinking and restores our health.

*It is nourishing food.* God created humankind to thrive. He gave us the Bible as the most nourishing spiritual food anyone could ever find. A high-Bible diet fosters growth, vitality, and abundant life. But we can't just binge on it once in a while—we need a regular intake of Scripture. The Bible will feed our inner being and bring us assurance and strength in a way nothing else can.

*It has power to change us.* Anyone who has ever tried to kick a bad habit or just become a better person knows how hard change can be. Sometimes change seems so out of reach that we're tempted to give up. But God is a great life coach, and He has the power to do what we cannot. The Bible says that the same power He used to bring Jesus back from the dead is available to work in us to bring about real and lasting change.

Sound too good to be true? It's not! Find out for yourself as you continue in this course over the next few weeks.

*When I first joined Community Bible Study, I was very nervous and couldn't understand the Bible well, but I wanted to know about God. Then I started to change slowly. Homework time got shorter. Studying the Bible was fun. My shyness slowly disappeared. I know now that everything is made by God, even my timid personality.*

—Gina



THE BIBLE: GOD'S AMAZING BOOK • SESSION 2

# Letting the Book Speak

.....

If we want to be people who live God's way, it's important for us to get to know and understand His book, the Bible. This week we'll look at some ways we can do that.

## DAY 1—INDIVIDUAL STUDY

1. Throughout history, God's people have put high importance on knowing personally what God's book says. Read Psalm 119:97-104 and 2 Timothy 3:15-17. What are some of the benefits of reading and studying the Bible?

---

---

---

---

---

2. What challenges do you expect when it comes to reading and studying the Bible yourself?

---

---

---

---

---

---

DAY 2—ENCOURAGING DISCUSSION

3. When we discuss and debate ideas, it can help us decide what we think and believe. Read Proverbs 27:17 and Acts 17:11–12. How could it help you to be part of a small group that discusses the Bible?

---

---

4. \*Read Acts 8:26–38. How did this very small group (just two people) experience life-changing results when they discussed the Scriptures together?

---

---

---

---

---

DAY 3—EFFECTIVE TEACHING

5. Learning about the Bible from others who have studied it, or have known the Bible for many years, is helpful. Read Nehemiah 8:7–8 and Acts 2:42. How can effective teaching of God's Word benefit those who listen?

---

---

---

---

6. How can you make the most of opportunities to receive such teaching?

---

---

---

---

---

DAY 4—INSIGHTFUL COMMENTARY

7. We can also learn by reading what has been written by people who know, understand, and live out what the Bible says. Read Proverbs 13:20 and Acts 15:30–31. What wisdom and help could we receive by reading what wise people have written about God's Word?

---

---

---

---

DAY 5—CARING COMMUNITY

8. Jesus showed His followers how to demonstrate love. Read John 13:34–35; Philippians 2:3–4; and Ephesians 4:32. What does Jesus's kind of love look like?

---

---

---

9. What are some reasons you would enjoy being with people who treat each other the same way these Bible verses describe?

---

---

---

*\*Questions marked with a \* are optional, but they're really great questions. If at all possible, please take the time to go deeper and experience richer engagement with God's Word.*



The Bible claims to be God’s message to the world.  
What evidence do we have for believing the Bible to  
be God’s amazing book?

### Impressive Manuscripts

A large part of the Bible deals with eyewitness accounts—firsthand information passed on with meticulous care. When the Gospels—the four books that describe Jesus’s life, death, and resurrection—were first circulating, many people were alive who would have known about these events personally. If the facts had been inaccurate or made up, there would have been an uproar.

There are more and earlier manuscripts of New Testament writings than any other respected ancient writings. Well over 5,000 manuscripts of New Testament writings exist in Greek. Some of these were copied a mere 200 years after the original documents were composed. Scholars accept the validity of works by authors like Homer, Plato, and Sophocles with far weaker manuscript evidence than exists for the New Testament. And as time goes by, earlier manuscripts come to light, and these confirm the later copies’ accuracy. All in all, the manuscript evidence for the New Testament is impressive. And there is an equally significant number of early Old Testament manuscripts dating back as far as 150 BC.

So the Bible is a very well-documented, carefully compiled piece of literature. It is an authentic record of events, preserved over the centuries with unequalled accuracy. It cannot be dismissed lightly.

### What Archaeology Reveals

From as long ago as 2,000 BC, there is archaeological evidence that confirms many of the details given in the Bible: facts about the city Abraham came from, inscriptions from the time of Moses,

the unearthing of some of Solomon’s military installations.

Turning to the New Testament, scholars had dismissed John’s pool-of-Bethesda description of “five roofed colonnades” (John 5:2) as poetic licence. But archaeologists excavated the site in 1888 and discovered all five porches, just as John had written. Before that find, in 1866, at the Church of Saint Anne—located in the same area—an artefact was found containing an inscription proving that people believed that the water had healing properties!

A British scholar detailed other notable evidence in his archaeological study. He found that Luke—author of the third Gospel and the book of Acts—was a reliable historian and an accurate writer.

### Many Prophecies Fulfilled

Another thing that makes the Bible such an amazing book is the way it predicts future events, which then happen. It doesn’t make predictions of the sort that you can read in your average horoscope—“Today you will meet a handsome stranger. Tomorrow it will be dry, if it’s not raining.” The Bible foretells specific events that are unmistakably fulfilled. There are hundreds of them in the Bible.

Ezekiel predicted in the sixth century BC that Tyre (a major city and thriving industrial centre) would

*Community Bible Study found its way to Chile, and this is where I started studying the Bible on my own, not just taking notes on someone else’s study of God’s Word.*

—Portia

be defeated and utterly destroyed. Nebuchadnezzar and then Alexander the Great brought about the fulfilment of this prophecy in 332 BC. It even says in Ezekiel 26:14, "I will leave only a bare rock where fishermen can dry their nets" (GNT). Sure enough, after Tyre was taken over by the Arabs in AD 1291, it became a poor fishing village.

Among many other fulfilled predictions, Amos foretold the downfall of Israel; Jeremiah, the capture of Jerusalem; Isaiah, the Jews' return from exile; and Jesus, the destruction of Jerusalem.

Jesus's own coming to the earth was predicted in a precise way. The prophet Micah said that Jesus would be born in Bethlehem (see Micah 5:2). He would enter Jerusalem on a donkey (see Zechariah 9:9) and be rejected and killed (see Isaiah 53:3–5) while men gambled for his clothes (see Psalm 22:18). Prophets made all these predictions hundreds of years before Jesus came. Each one happened.

### **Survival under Attack**

The Bible has had its enemies, yet it has survived all their attacks. Not only has it survived, but its influence continues to grow. This is even more remarkable when you consider the nature of the opposition.

There has been opposition from philosophers. Some have relegated the Bible to the level of ancient superstition, a set of ideas appropriate to the dawn of civilization but irrelevant to our advancing culture. The 18th-century French thinker Voltaire said, "Another century and there will not be a Bible on earth!" He predicted that the Bible's days were numbered, and as more advanced philosophies took over, an enlightened world would soon discard it. But more than 200 years after his death, the Bible is more widely read than ever before.

There has been opposition from governments. From time to time, over Christianity's last 2,000

years, the Bible has been outlawed. During the French Revolution, it was seen as an instrument of aristocratic oppression, and owning or reading a Bible was officially discouraged. Even in the last 100 years, millions of people have lived under government regimes that actively discouraged them from owning and reading the Bible.

There have been other types of opposition too. New theories arise that question the Bible's accuracy. Some public figures scorn it. Television documentaries attempt to discredit it. Individuals cast doubt on its capacity to provide a coherent explanation about humanity and the world. But if the Bible can take the worst that the last 2,000 years have thrown at it and still flourish, it seems unlikely to be in danger from any 21st-century critic.

### **It Works!**

The four areas of evidence outlined so far all point to the reliability of the Bible, but this is the crux of the matter: the message of God's amazing book works in real life.

The Bible makes sense of the world, provides an explanation for what has gone wrong, and gives a blueprint for change. And this blueprint works. Millions of people—and this is no exaggeration—have read the Bible and found that it was like looking into a mirror. Everything it says about human nature is true.

The Bible has no qualms about describing the mess we are in—steeped in greed, pride, envy, lust, and selfishness of every kind. No sugary coating on this bitter pill! What makes it even harder to swallow is that no one escapes judgment, no one at all.

But it's not all bad news. The Bible provides the antidote to this mess that we humans have created. There is an opportunity for a fresh start: we can be forgiven of the wrong things we've done and experience a new power for living.

