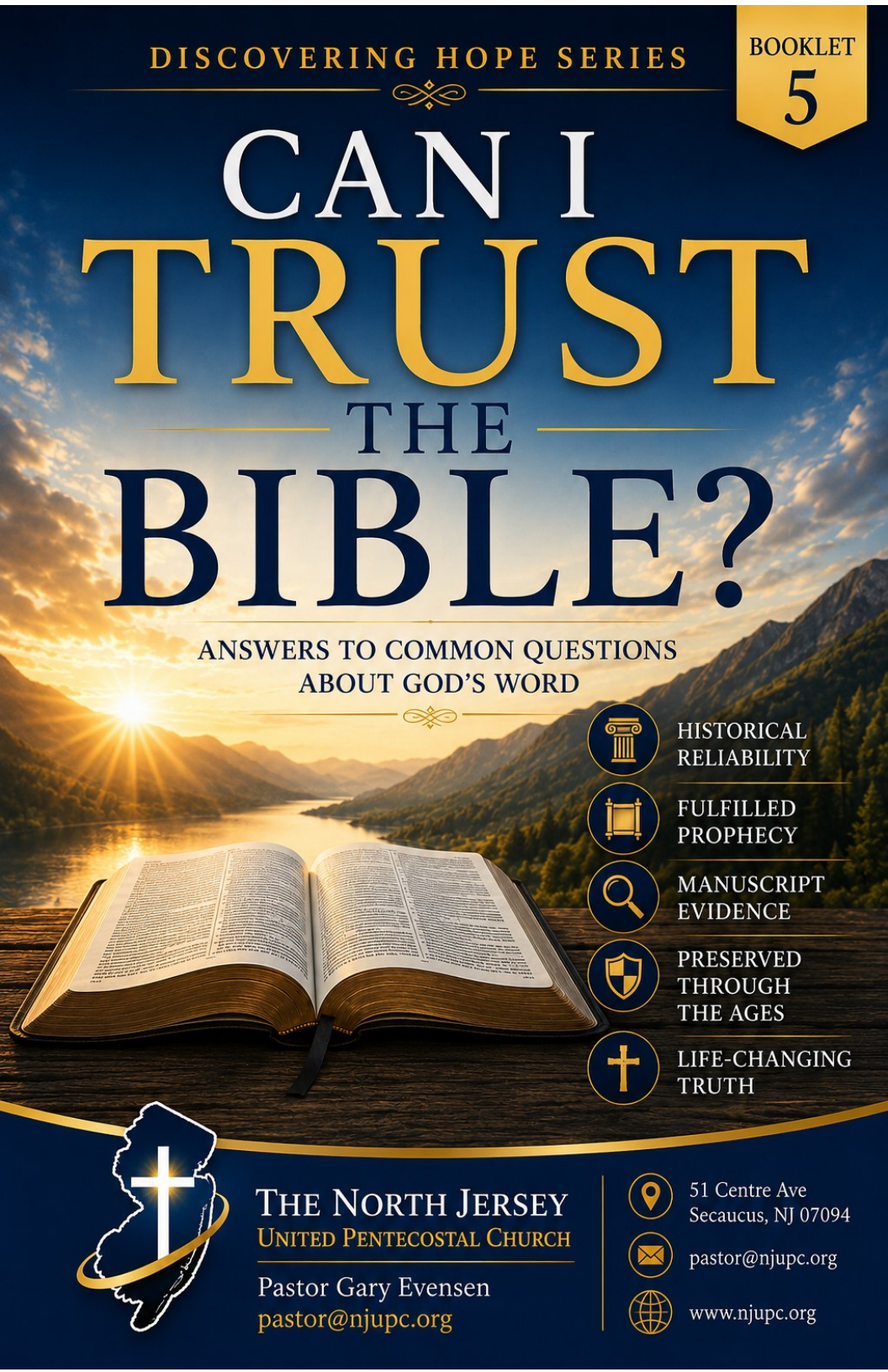
DISCOVERING HOPE SERIES

BOOKLET 5

CAN I TRUST THE BIBLE?

ANSWERS TO COMMON QUESTIONS ABOUT GOD'S WORD



- HISTORICAL RELIABILITY
- FULFILLED PROPHECY
- MANUSCRIPT EVIDENCE
- PRESERVED THROUGH THE AGES
- LIFE-CHANGING TRUTH

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WELCOME TO THE
DISCOVERING HOPE SERIES

Real Questions. Biblical Answers. Lasting Hope.

Life raises questions that are not always easy to answer.

Why am I here?, Does God really exist? , Can I trust the Bible?, Why does God allow suffering?, Can my life really change? Is there hope when I feel trapped, broken, or uncertain about the future?

The **Discovering Hope Series** was created to help people explore questions like these through the truth of God's Word.

You need not be a Bible scholar or have all the answers.

And you do not need to have everything in your life figured out before you begin.

Each booklet focuses on a different question, struggle, or biblical truth and is designed to help you discover what the Bible actually says.

As you read, take your time.

Consider the Scriptures for yourself.

Ask questions, Pray.

And most importantly, allow God to speak to your heart through His Word.

The Bible is more than a book of religious teachings. It reveals a God who loves us, seeks us, and desires to transform our lives.

Whatever brought you to this booklet, we hope it becomes one more step in your journey toward discovering the hope that can only be found in Jesus Christ.

There is hope. There are answers.

And God may be closer than you think.

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CAN I TRUST THE BIBLE?

Introduction

The Bible is the most widely distributed and most influential book in human history.
It has shaped civilizations, transformed lives, inspired great works of art, and guided countless people in their search for God.
Yet many people still ask:
Can I trust the Bible?
Was it changed over time?
Is it full of contradictions?
How do we know it is accurate?
These are important questions.
God never asks us to believe blindly.
The Bible welcomes honest examination.
Let's consider some of the reasons millions have concluded that the Bible is trustworthy.

1. THE BIBLE WAS WRITTEN OVER 1,500 YEARS

Most books have one author.
The Bible is actually a collection of 66 books written by approximately 40 different authors.
These writers came from many backgrounds:

- Kings
- Prophets
- Fishermen
- Priests
- Shepherds
- Government officials

The books were written over a period of approximately 1,500 years.

Yet they tell one unified story:
God's plan to redeem humanity through Jesus Christ.
That level of unity is remarkable.

2. THE BIBLE IS HISTORICALLY RELIABLE

The Bible repeatedly refers to:
• Real people
• Real nations
• Real cities
• Real historical events
Archaeological discoveries have repeatedly confirmed details recorded in Scripture.
Many individuals once dismissed by critics have later been confirmed through historical evidence.
The Bible is not presented as mythology.
It presents itself as history.

Luke 1:3-4

"It seemed good to me also... to write unto thee in order... that thou mightest know the certainty of those things..."

3. THE BIBLE CONTAINS FULFILLED PROPHECY

One of the strongest evidences for the Bible is fulfilled prophecy.
The Bible contains predictions written hundreds of years before the events occurred.
Many were fulfilled in the life of Jesus Christ.
For example:
• Born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2)
• Born of a virgin (Isaiah 7:14)

• Betrayed for thirty pieces of silver (Zechariah 11:12-13)
• Crucified (Psalm 22; Isaiah 53)
• Buried in a rich man's tomb (Isaiah 53:9)
• Resurrected (Psalm 16:10)

No other religious book contains a comparable record of fulfilled prophecy.

Mathematician Peter Stoner calculated that the probability of one person accidentally fulfilling only eight specific Messianic prophecies is approximately 1 in 10^{17}. Yet Jesus fulfilled far more than eight. Many scholars identify more than 300 Old Testament prophecies relating to the Messiah. The fulfillment of these prophecies provides powerful evidence that not only was Jesus was exactly who He claimed to be, but that the Bible is what it claims to be. The inspired Word of God.

4. THE BIBLE SURVIVED ATTACKS

For centuries people have attempted to destroy, ban, suppress, and discredit the Bible.

Empires have risen and fallen.

Critics have come and gone.

Yet the Bible remains the most translated and widely distributed book in history.

Isaiah 40:8

"The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever."

5. THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS CONFIRMED ITS ACCURACY

In 1947 a remarkable discovery was made.

Ancient manuscripts known as the Dead Sea Scrolls were found in caves near the Dead Sea.
Some contained portions of the Old Testament that were more than 1,000 years older than previously known manuscripts.
When scholars compared them, they found an extraordinary degree of accuracy.
This demonstrated that the biblical text had been preserved with remarkable care.
The Bible had not been radically changed as some critics claimed.

6. WAS THE BIBLE CHANGED OVER TIME?

Many people have heard the claim:
"The Bible has been changed so many times that nobody knows what it originally said."
At first glance, this sounds convincing.
However, the evidence points in the opposite direction.
The Bible is supported by thousands of ancient manuscripts copied over many centuries.
When scholars compare these manuscripts, they find that the vast majority of differences are minor spelling variations, word order differences, or copyist mistakes that do not affect any major doctrine.
In fact, the New Testament is supported by far more ancient manuscript evidence than any other book from the ancient world.
The discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls provided additional confirmation that the Old Testament had been preserved with remarkable accuracy.

When copies separated by more than a thousand years were compared, the message remained substantially the same.
No major Christian doctrine depends upon a disputed text.
The central teachings of Scripture remain clear:
• There is one God.
• Humanity needs salvation.
• Jesus Christ died for our sins.
• Jesus rose again.
• God calls people to repentance and faith.
Rather than weakening confidence in the Bible, the manuscript evidence demonstrates how carefully the Scriptures have been preserved through the centuries.

Matthew 24:35

"Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away."

7. JESUS TRUSTED THE SCRIPTURES

Even more important than archaeology or manuscript evidence is this fact:
Jesus trusted the Scriptures.
He quoted them repeatedly.
He taught from them.
He fulfilled them.

John 10:35

"...and the scripture cannot be broken;"
If we trust Jesus, it makes sense to trust the Book He trusted.

8. THE BIBLE CHANGES LIVES

Perhaps the greatest evidence is personal.
Millions testify that the Bible has transformed their lives.

- Addictions broken
- Marriages restored
- Hope discovered
- Lives changed

The Bible is not merely information.
It is a living message that continues to impact people today.

Hebrews 4:12

"For the word of God is quick, and powerful..."

How Does the Bible Compare to Other Ancient Books?

Ancient Work	Approximate Number of Manuscripts
New Testament	Over 5,800 Greek manuscripts and more than 24,000 manuscripts and portions in all languages
Homer's *Iliad*	About 1,800 manuscripts
Plato's writings	About 250 manuscripts
Julius Caesar's *Gallic Wars*	About 250 manuscripts

No one doubts the existence of ancient figures such as Julius Caesar, Plato, or Homer.
Yet the manuscript evidence for the New Testament far exceeds that of other ancient writings.
Consider the comparison:
Not only does the New Testament have far more manuscripts, but the copies are also much closer in time to the original writings.
Many ancient works survive in copies made hundreds or even thousands of years after the originals.
By contrast, portions of the New Testament can be traced to within decades of the original writings.
The manuscript evidence supporting the New Testament is extraordinary.
Even ancient works such as the *Epic of Gilgamesh* survive only through a relatively small number of fragmentary clay tablets, yet historians readily accept their existence and content.
Likewise, the writings of Plato, Julius Caesar, and Homer are accepted as authentic despite having far fewer surviving manuscripts than the New Testament.
The New Testament stands in a category of its own, supported by thousands of Greek manuscripts and tens of thousands of ancient copies and translations.
If historians trust other ancient documents based upon much smaller amounts of evidence, then the manuscript evidence for the New Testament deserves serious consideration.
The Bible is not merely one ancient book among many.

It is the best-preserved document of the ancient world.

WHAT ABOUT DIFFICULT QUESTIONS?
The Bible contains passages that require study.
Some questions are not easily answered.
But difficult passages do not invalidate the entire Bible.
Every field of study contains challenging questions.
The existence of unanswered questions does not erase the overwhelming evidence supporting Scripture.

Conclusion
The Bible has endured examination for thousands of years.
It stands apart because of:
• Its unity
• Its historical reliability
• Its fulfilled prophecy
• Its preservation
• Its influence
• Its power to transform lives
Ultimately, the greatest way to test the Bible is to read it for yourself.
Psalm 34:8

"O taste and see that the Lord is good..."
The Bible does not merely ask to be admired.
It asks to be believed, obeyed, and experienced.