

## Lesson 122

# **We Can Trust the New Testament**

The Holy Spirit guided the apostles to record God's words.

# Studying God's Word

## Studying God's Word

Don't forget! Review the Optional Supplements and determine where you can use them.

### Introduction

If doing the Invisible Ink Object Lesson, remember to do the prep the night before.

Print and follow the instructions to prepare the Invisible Ink Object Lesson message the night before. Bring papers with invisible ink letters and other supplies. To start today, you're going to reveal a secret word written in invisible ink! Follow the instructions for students to find and reveal the invisible ink message and unscramble the word "Manuscripts."

Great job, everyone! That took some work to reveal the message.

Raise your hand if you've heard of manuscripts before. Show of hands.

Does anyone know what manuscripts are or what the word means?  
Allow guesses.

Manuscript just means written by hand, and that's how the writers of the New Testament recorded their messages. They didn't have computers to type a message or the internet to send it all over the world. People who heard or read the original writings of the New Testament scriptures made handwritten copies we call manuscripts. God has preserved, or kept safe, thousands of copies so that we can know the events of Jesus' life in the Gospels. The Gospels were written in Greek and then translated into different languages. Other people made copies to take to other places. When people today read and compare all the copies of Scripture, the manuscripts, they can figure out the original message of the writers.

We'll talk more about New Testament manuscripts at the end of the lesson. But today we'll be answering the important question, "How do we know the New Testament is true?" Before we answer that, let's review.

Refer to the Seven C's of History Poster. The Seven C's of History help us remember the big events in the Bible.

Which C's are recorded in the Old Testament? Creation, Corruption, Catastrophe, and Confusion. Briefly review these events.

Which C's are about the message of the New Testament that the Messiah has come? Christ and Cross.

The seventh C is still in the future. It's the promise that Christ will create a new heaven and a new earth for believers, those who have trusted in Jesus to save them from their sins. What word reminds us of this event?

Consummation.

Slide #3

Refer to Lesson 121 Theme Poster. From the beginning, in Genesis, God had a plan to save mankind from the sin that corrupted the entire creation. He spoke of a descendant (offspring) of Eve who would defeat the serpent, who is Satan.

How did Jesus defeat Satan when he came to earth? He died on the cross then rose from the dead.

We learned how the Messiah was pictured in the death of the Passover lambs, whose blood was shed to save the people from physical death. Jesus' blood was shed on the cross to save us from eternal death so that those who believe may have eternal life!

But how can we be sure Jesus was the one prophesied about in the Old Testament? Can we trust the New Testament to be true and accurate? Let's find out!

**God's Word Is Inspired**

Refer to the Books of the Bible Poster. Turn in your Bibles to the book of John chapter 14. John is the fourth Gospel in the New Testament. John was one of Jesus' apostles and closest friends. The apostles, also called disciples, were 12 men who followed Jesus during his years of ministry when he traveled throughout Israel teaching about the kingdom of God and performing miracles.

Slide #4Slide #5

John 14:25-26

Who will read what Jesus told his disciples in John 14:25-26? Choose a reader.

This was before Jesus' death, and he knew he wouldn't be with them much longer.

Jesus mentioned someone the Father would send in his name. Who was it? The Helper, the Holy Spirit.

What would the Holy Spirit do? Teach them all things and help them remember the things Jesus had said.

The Holy Spirit would be a teacher and a helper as the disciples wrote down the details of Jesus' time on earth.

Pass out the Class Notes.

Let's start the Class Notes and fill in the missing words. Who will read #1 and give the answer? Choose a reader. Father. Have students complete #1. Who will read #2 about what the Holy Spirit would do for the disciples? Choose a reader. Remember. Have students complete #2.

Slide #6Slide #7

John 16:13

Turn to John 16. Who will read what Jesus said in verse 13? Choose a reader.

Who is this verse about? The Spirit of truth.

This is the same Spirit—the Holy Spirit—that Jesus was talking about in John 14:26, the verse we just read.

What would this Spirit of truth do? He would guide them into truth. He would declare (tell) things to come.

Jesus told his apostles that after he was gone the Holy Spirit would come. And the Spirit would guide them in truth. He would also tell them of things to come. The Spirit would not speak on his own authority, but he would speak what Jesus had spoken.

When we start talking about the Holy Spirit, people sometimes get confused and wonder, "Who is he?" Well, we have talked many times about the Trinity. What does that word refer to? Allow discussion.

Show the Illustration. The Trinity refers to God—that there are three persons in the one true God.

Who are the three persons of the Trinity? Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Each of these three IS God. But the Father is NOT the Son. The Son is NOT the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is NOT the Father. They are each unique and separate persons, but they are all ONE God.

The Trinity is difficult to understand, and that is because we are just people. God understands this perfectly. And the Trinity has existed forever . . . because God has existed forever. We know it is true because we read about it in God's Word. And we know that God cannot lie!

So, God the Son, Jesus, told his apostles that after he was gone—after he died and rose from the dead—God the Father would send a helper to them. This Helper is God the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit would teach the apostles all things and help them remember what Jesus said and did. The Holy Spirit would guide the writers to record all the truth God wanted them to. God doesn't make mistakes. We know the New Testament is true! Jesus himself promised the apostles that the Father would send the Spirit of truth to help them write.

Slide #8

Slide #9

Who will read #3 on the Class Notes? Choose a reader. Truth. Have students complete #3.

What will you fill in for #4? Choose a reader. Trinity. Have students complete #4.

Let's fill in the names of the three persons of the Trinity on the Class Notes diagram. Have students write Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in the circles.

Refer to the Attributes of God Poster. Our God is an amazing God! We can trust what he has written in his Word because he is all-knowing. Which

attribute tells us God is all-knowing? Omniscient.

God is also wise beyond what we could ever imagine. What is the definition of wise? He does everything perfectly without mistakes.

We can trust that God is wise. He has directed the writing of the Bible perfectly and without mistakes. We can trust the New Testament. It was written by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit!

## God's Word Is True

We trust that God inspired the writing of his Word, and he also verified its truth in several ways. One way we saw in our last lesson was the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies about the Messiah that were made many years before Jesus came. The only way Jesus could be born into a specific family (Abraham, David) in the exact town the prophets said is if God told the prophets and then made it happen. The fulfilled prophecies show that God's Word is true.

Another way to verify if something is true is to hear from someone who saw it happen—an eyewitness. And we have many eyewitness accounts of Jesus' life given in the four Gospels.

Refer to the Books of the Bible Poster. Who wrote the four Gospels? Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

Slide #10

Slide #11

John 19:35

We'll look more at the Gospels and their specific messages in the next lesson, but for now we'll stay in the Gospel of John and turn to chapter 19, verse 35. This is what John said about the words he had written. Choose a reader.

First, who was John writing about? Who is the book of John about? Jesus.

John saw the events he recorded and gave his witness, or testimony, about Jesus.

What is a testimony? Allow discussion.

Testimony: a firsthand account of what happened

Testimony is just another word for a statement. When someone gives a testimony, he is telling others what happened to him—what he saw. It is a firsthand or eyewitness account of what happened.

How did John describe the testimony he wrote about Jesus? It was true.

John said that all he had written was true and that he had written it so that all who would read it would believe.

Slide #12

Slide #13

Slide #14

John 20:31

Why did John want others to believe? We can find out. Turn to John 20:31. Someone read that. Choose a reader.

What did John want others to believe? That Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.

Why was that so important to John? What would believing in Christ give to the believers? Life in his name.

Refer to the Lesson Theme Poster. John wanted people to believe that Jesus is the Christ, the promised Messiah who would save people from their sins. John knew that everyone who believed in Jesus and trusted in his name would have eternal life, forgiveness of sins—the hope of heaven and being in the presence of God forever. That is why John wrote his account!

John wanted to be sure that his readers knew that he walked with Jesus. He was an eyewitness of Jesus' life and saw the miracles he did, like Jesus healing the leper. He learned from Jesus. And what he wrote about Jesus was true. Jesus is the Son of God!

Who will read #5 on the Class Notes? Choose a reader. Testimony. Have students complete #5.

And #6, what did John want his readers to believe about Jesus? Choose a reader. Son of God. Have students complete #6.

Slide #15

Slide #16

2 Peter 1:16

Let's turn toward the back of the Bible to the book of 2 Peter. Like John, Peter was a disciple and very close friend of Jesus, and he wrote this book. We are going to read 2 Peter 1:16. Choose a reader.

Peter said that he and the other disciples "did not follow cleverly devised myths" when they spoke and wrote about Jesus. What does this mean? What's a myth? Allow discussion.

A myth is a made-up story—something that isn't true. Peter said the same thing that John said, only in a different way. What he and the other New Testament authors wrote was true. It wasn't made-up!

Who did Peter make known to his readers? Who was he writing about? The Lord Jesus Christ.

What did Peter say about himself and the other disciples? They were what? Eyewitnesses of Jesus' majesty.

He was an eyewitness just like the Apostle John. He lived with Jesus and saw his life, death, and resurrection. This was his testimony.

What will you fill in for #7 on the Class Notes? Choose a reader.

Eyewitnesses. Have students complete #7.

So, the apostles were eyewitnesses. How does that show the truth of their writings? Allow discussion.

We can trust the New Testament writings about Jesus. Eyewitnesses, or friends of eyewitnesses, wrote the accounts of things that really happened. These men weren't making up myths. They walked and talked, ate and slept, prayed and traveled with Jesus. They were Jesus' friends. What they wrote is true! We can believe every word of it.

Another man was chosen by God as an apostle after Jesus returned to heaven. This man hated and persecuted people who followed Jesus—until Jesus appeared to him! Then he changed and became a faithful follower of Jesus, preaching the gospel and starting churches in many cities. Does anyone know who I'm talking about? He wrote many of the epistles (letters) in the New Testament. Allow guesses. Saul, Paul.

Saul, also called Paul, was chosen by God to spread the gospel and encourage the early believers in the churches he started. The apostles, including Paul, were directed by God the Holy Spirit to record exactly what he wanted to say.

Slide #17

Slide #18

Slide #19

2 Peter 3:15–16

Let's see what the Apostle Peter said about Paul's letters. Who will read 2 Peter 3:15–16? Choose readers.

In verse 15, how did Peter say Paul wrote to the churches? According to the wisdom given him.

Who gave Paul that wisdom? God, the Holy Spirit.

What word does Peter use to describe Paul's writings at the end of verse 16? Scriptures.

What is Scripture another word for? The Bible, the Word of God.

By calling Paul's letters Scriptures, Peter acknowledged the authority of God in the writings of Paul, his fellow apostle. And under the direction of the Holy Spirit, Peter also acknowledged the Apostle Paul's writings as inspired wisdom from God.

Let's finish the Class Notes. Who will read #8 about Paul's writings? Choose a reader. Scriptures. Have students complete #8.

## Application

Before Jesus died, he promised that the Father would send the Helper, the Holy Spirit, who would teach the apostles and guide them into all truth. The Holy Spirit is God, and God never makes mistakes, so we can be sure the New Testament is true!

Slide #20

Refer to the Lesson Theme Poster. We can also trust the authors of the New Testament. They were either eyewitnesses to Jesus' life or close friends of the apostles. The apostles lived with Jesus and talked with him. They wrote down

what they had personally seen and experienced—their testimony. Others, like Paul, were specially chosen by God to write what God wanted them to.

You might hear people say the Bible can't be believed and that Jesus wasn't real. Some have said we can't "prove" that Jesus was God or that he did everything the Bible says he did. Others think the New Testament is just a bunch of made-up stories because there is no evidence that the events in it really happened.

But we do have evidence—manuscripts! These are handwritten copies of the writings of the New Testament. The authors of the New Testament (like John, Peter, and Paul) wrote their testimony about Jesus on animal skins, papyrus, or other kinds of paper. We don't have their original writings, but we do have copies of them, enough for the "experts" to compare and figure out what the original writers were saying.

There are thousands of these ancient manuscripts from the Bible. They are in different languages and found in different countries. These manuscripts show us that people were not only hearing about Jesus but also writing down what they heard and sharing the message with others.

Have pictures of biblical manuscript cartonnage ready to show.

Did you know that more manuscripts containing parts of the Bible are discovered all the time? In fact, an exciting new discovery happened recently in Egypt. The ancient Egyptians liked to make fancy masks. These masks were made of papyrus and linen bonded together with plaster, kind of like papier-mâché—the material piatas are made of. The layered material is called cartonnage. Just like today when we use old newspaper scraps with writing on it to make something out of papier-mâché, the pieces of papyrus used to make these old Egyptian masks often had writing on them. Recently, more of these masks were found. The scientists working with these Egyptian masks sometimes carefully pull the layers apart to see what is written on the papyrus. They did that this time. And it was discovered that the papyrus had parts of the Bible written on them! These manuscripts were some of the oldest ever found! Show pictures of biblical manuscript cartonnage, if available.

God says that the Bible will stand forever. It cannot be destroyed. You can be sure God's Word is true.

## Lesson Review

We encourage you to play a lesson review game.

## Bible Baseball

Students will answer questions and run the bases!

## Materials

Review Questions (included in lesson)  
Three chairs set out for bases



Optional: gift wrap tube and a large balloon

## Instructions

Print one copy of the Review Questions for your use. Set out chairs as bases. Have the students line up by the home base area facing you (at the pitcher's mound). Each student up to "bat" will have a chance to answer a review question. If he can answer it correctly, let him run the bases. If he can't answer correctly, give the answer and ask him to go to the end of the line and try again.

You may want the students to sit on the chair at each base while they wait to run to the next base or have them run all the way around and return to the line. Repeat the questions until all the students have run around the bases.

For some added fun, you can use a gift wrap tube as a bat and toss a large balloon for students to hit after they answer each question.

## Limited License to Reproduce

A limited, non-exclusive, non-transferable, nonsublicensable license is hereby granted to a single local church or organization to print copies of the PDF materials in the Teacher Digital Resources if 1) you are the original purchaser; 2) you are using the copies for noncommercial purposes (such as for teaching in class) exclusively within your single local church or organization (multi-campus churches, and national/regional denominations are not covered under this license); and 3) you follow the instructions provided in the curriculum pertaining to the printable materials.

This license is for the specific purchaser of the product and does not include affiliated groups or organizations, or other churches or groups in the same denomination as the purchaser, not identified as the actual purchaser. There is no limit to the number of printed copies for use within the single local church or organization which is the actual purchaser. None of the material in this curriculum may be reproduced for any commercial promotion, advertising, or sale of a product or service, or to share with any other persons, churches, groups, or organizations.

The media (audio/video) portions are copyrighted and duplication is prohibited. This license is for materials in the Teacher Digital Resources only and does NOT include reproduction rights for pre-printed teacher books, student guides, student take home sheets, or posters, except on an emergency basis when purchased quantities are not sufficient for a given week.

## Bible Version

Scripture quotations are from the ESV® Bible (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®), copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.