

This study sheet belongs to:

Study 1. Why Believe the Bible?

READ: 1 Peter 1: 22-25



KEY VERSE:
John 17: 17

**“Sanctify them by Your truth.
Your word is truth.”**

Sooner or later, Christians will face the questions, ‘Why do you believe the Bible?’ or, ‘How can you be sure that everything from Genesis to Revelation is true?’ It would be most helpful if we could answer those questions by saying, ‘Here is the proof that God is the author of the Bible...’. That is not possible! God did not intend that this would ever be the case! In the same way, it is impossible to prove to a cynic that God created the world, or that the Lord Jesus rose from the dead, or that God has definitely forgiven our sins. God demands our FAITH to accept that He made the world, that Christ rose from the dead and so on. This is the only response that He requires. (Note **Hebrews 11: 6**) When it comes to accepting the Bible as the Word of God, the same applies. We must take God at His Word, and accept, by faith, the Bible in its entirety, as His Word!

However, there are helpful facts, which enable us to explain why we believe the Bible is God's Word. These may also assist those who have problems in believing the Bible.

1) THE BIBLE MAKES UNIQUE CLAIMS FOR ITSELF.

In the previous Studies on this topic, it was explained that in the Old Testament the phrase **“Thus says the Lord”** is frequently used. (**Amos 1: 3, 6 & 9**) The Lord Jesus Himself, gave authority to the Old Testament by often quoting from it. (**Mark 7: 6, 7 & 10**) A further testimony of the Lord Jesus is given in the **Key Verse**. We also learned that Paul explained, on several occasions, that his writings were given to him by the Lord. (**1 Thessalonians 4: 15**) Such claims help us to be sure of the truth of the Bible. Paul did write **“God ... cannot lie ...”**. (**Titus 1: 2**) We know that God is true; therefore we have confidence that the Bible is His Word and is true!

2) THE BIBLE CONTAINS MANY PROPHECIES WHICH HAVE COME TRUE.

The Bible is a remarkable book, because it frequently gives us the words of prophets who record what God had told them would happen in the future. Those prophecies were proved to be completely accurate when they were fulfilled, often hundreds of years later. The birth of the Lord Jesus was prophesied by Isaiah some 700 years before He was born. (**Isaiah 7: 14 & 9: 6**) Micah even

prophesied the place of His birth. (**Micah 5: 2**) His life's work was also explained by Isaiah (**Isaiah 61: 1 & 2**), and the same prophet gave graphic details of His death. (**Isaiah 53**) It is almost as though Isaiah had some special knowledge of what was going to happen when the Lord Jesus came. He did, for God had told him! It is a good exercise to read the Gospel of Matthew and note how often Matthew finishes his account of an event by saying, **“Now all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet ...”**. (**Matthew 1: 22**) The Bible has yet to be proven wrong in its prophecies. We know it never will. It is the Word of God!

3) THE BIBLE HAS STOOD THE TEST OF TIME.

Peter wrote, **“The word of the LORD endures for ever”**. (**1 Peter 1: 25**) The Lord Jesus also said, **“Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away”**. (**Matthew 24: 35**) There have been times in history, when it looked as though everything was being done to completely destroy the Bible. For example, in England, William Tyndale, who in the 16th century, produced one of the first New Testaments in English, was strangled and burned at the stake. He had tried to make the Bible available to ordinary people. Massive bonfires were lit to destroy Tyndale's New Testament, so that only two copies remain today! In many other countries the Bible has been banned, burned or even buried. Even today, there are many countries, where the Bible cannot be sold or read publicly without the risk of imprisonment. How thankful we should be that we have the Bible today! God has overruled, in that, whatever men or governments have done, the Bible has survived. It is still the world's best-seller!

4) THE BIBLE HAS IMPACT ON PEOPLE'S LIVES.

It is possible to reach a dead end when trying to convince somebody else of the truth of Christianity. They seem to have an answer for everything! Some have found that the only way forward is to explain what the Lord has done for them, and the change in their lives. This is something that cannot be argued against. For example, the people of Berea, tested out what Paul had said, by comparing it with the Old Testament Scriptures. (**Read Acts 17: 10-12**) In the same way, our personal experience of what Christ has done for us, and how His Word guides us each day, is proof of the reliability and the relevance of the Bible in a Christian's life.

5) THE BIBLE IS CONFIRMED BY ARCHAEOLOGY.

A leading Christian archaeologist has said that you cannot prove the Bible by archaeological research, but archaeology confirms it. In effect he was saying, archaeological digs in the Middle East have found many artefacts which fit in with the Bible, and nothing significant which contradicts it!

Peter says, **“Always be ready to give a defence to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you”**. (**1 Peter 3: 15**) Would you be able and willing to defend the truth of the Bible, if challenged at school or at work?

Study 1. Why Believe the Bible?

1 WRITE TRUE OR FALSE AFTER EACH OF THE FOLLOWING:-

- i. It cannot be proved scientifically that the Bible is the Word of God.
- ii. Christians need only believe parts of the Bible.
- iii. The Lord Jesus did not believe the Old Testament.
- iv. God cannot lie, so the Bible is true!
- v. God requires Christians to accept His Word by faith.

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2 ALTHOUGH MEN AND GOVERNMENTS, IN DIFFERENT COUNTRIES, AND AT DIFFERENT TIMES, HAVE DONE EVERYTHING TO DESTROY THE BIBLE, IT HAS SURVIVED. HOW CAN YOU EXPLAIN THIS?

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3 LOOK AT MATTHEW 27 (ESPECIALLY VERSES 8, 9, AND 35) AND THEN EXPLAIN WHICH PROPHECIES FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT WERE FULFILLED AT THE DEATH OF THE LORD JESUS.

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4 READ ACTS 17: 10 -12, AND THEN ANSWER THE QUESTIONS.

How did the people at Berea treat the message they received from Paul?

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What did they do each day?

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What impact did this have on them?

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What can we learn from this?

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5 WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED FROM THIS STUDY WHICH WOULD HELP YOU TO DEFEND THE BIBLE AS THE WORD OF GOD? CHOOSE TWO OF THE FIVE FACTS WHICH THIS STUDY HAS HIGHLIGHTED AND SUMMARISE THEM IN YOUR OWN WORDS.

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6 THE STUDY HAS SUGGESTED THAT OUR PERSONAL EXPERIENCE OF THE BIBLE HELPS US TO UNDERSTAND THAT GOD WROTE IT. EXPLAIN BRIEFLY WHAT THE BIBLE MEANS TO YOU.

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Total marks for this

This study sheet belongs to:

Study 2. Why Obey the Bible?



KEY VERSE:

Matthew 7: 24

“Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock.”

These Studies about the Bible have frequently reminded students of the importance of reading and studying the Bible to help them in their Christian lives. However, it is not just a case of reading the Bible and having some knowledge of it - its teaching has to be put into practice! There is little value in reading the Bible, if its truths do not affect the way we live. The epistle that James wrote is often regarded as one of the most helpful books in the New Testament for emphasising how our faith should be shown by our works.

(James 2: 14 & 17)

THE BIBLE INFLUENCES US IN THE WAY WE LIVE.

In the Bible Reading, James teaches that it is important to read the Bible in the right way and for the right reasons. We should not just read it out of curiosity, or with a desire to be entertained, nor should we be like the wicked people of Ezekiel's day of whom it was said: **“So they come to you as people do, they sit before you as My people, and they hear your words, but they do not do them . . .”** **(Ezekiel 33: 31)** We must read the Bible with a desire to know how we ought to live. It is so easy to think that because we read the Bible, pray, go to a Church fellowship, mix with other Christians, that our lives are bound to be all right. James says no! In **verse 19** he speaks about the danger of getting angry, and in **verse 21**, the possibility of **“filthiness and overflowing wickedness”**. James' answer is to humbly accept the Word planted in us. He is saying that when the Word of God is planted in us (through reading and meditation), then we can be strong and resist the evil influences of Satan, the world, and our own sinful flesh. No wonder Christians who neglect God's Word struggle to maintain holiness in their daily lives.

THE BIBLE SHOWS US WHAT WE ARE.

James likens the Bible to a mirror. **(James 1: 23-25)** When we look at ourselves in a mirror, and discover that we have a dirty mark on our face, we wash it off. That is, we compare what we look like with what we ought to look like, and if anything is wrong, we do something about it. James is teaching that, if by looking carefully into the Scriptures, we discover that we are not living in a way that pleases God, we should not ignore it, but we should take steps to correct it.

The Bible Reading contrasts two men. The first man takes a hasty and careless glance into the mirror. Instead of noting the blemishes on his face, he goes away, quickly forgetting

READ: James 1: 19-25



what he has seen, and so allows things to remain as they were before. This foolish man is like the man who reads the Bible, but does not practise what he learns.

The second man does not merely glance at God's Word, but gazes with concentrated attention. He carefully weighs up what he sees there. Unlike the first man, he does not forget what he reads. He does what it says! **(See Psalm 119: 9)**

THE BIBLE BRINGS US INTO GOD'S BLESSING.

God's Word is called by James **“the perfect law of liberty”**. It is His law, because it is given by the Supreme Ruler of the universe and carries the full force of a divine command. To the Christian, however, God's **“commandments are not burdensome”**. **(1 John 5: 3)** They bring liberty and freedom. To obey God's Word is to be free from the bondage or slavery of sin. People who are not Christians may think that they are free, but the Bible describes them as in slavery to sin. The Lord Jesus told people, **“Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin”**. **(John 8: 34 - 36)** When people live as they please, rather than as God requires, they give in to sin and Satan. Obedience to the Word of God always brings true liberty and freedom.

The Christian should not be a 'hearer who forgets but a doer who acts'. The person who only hears the Word of God and does not practise it, is all ears - he has no hands or feet!

James tells us to persevere in the attentive reading and practising of God's Word. Jesus told the Jews who claimed to believe Him, **“If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free”**. **(John 8: 31-32)**

The Bible Reading concludes by reminding us that we are blessed (or happy) in 'doing' God's will. As Christians we find great pleasure in reading the Bible, but James emphasises that true happiness comes in obeying it.

Study 2. Why Obey the Bible?

1 JAMES, IN *CHAPTER 2: 20-26*, GIVES THE NAMES OF TWO OLD TESTAMENT CHARACTERS WHO SHOWED THEIR FAITH BY WHAT THEY DID! WHO WERE THEY, AND WHAT DID THEY DO TO SHOW THEIR FAITH?

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2 LOOK AT THE BIBLE READING AGAIN AND WRITE DOWN THREE INSTRUCTIONS ABOUT PRACTICAL LIVING THAT JAMES GAVE TO THE CHRISTIANS TO WHOM HE WAS WRITING.

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3 THE LORD JESUS SPOKE ABOUT 'HEARERS' AND 'DOERS' IN A WELL-KNOWN PARABLE. (*MATTHEW 7: 24-27*) EXPLAIN THE MEANING OF THE PARABLE IN YOUR OWN WORDS.

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4 WHY IS THE ILLUSTRATION WHICH JAMES USES OF A MIRROR A GOOD ONE?

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5 THE LORD JESUS EXPLAINED THAT HIS DISCIPLES HAD TO ABIDE IN HIM, AND LET HIS WORDS ABIDE IN THEM. (*JOHN 15: 7*) SUGGEST WAYS IN WHICH WE CAN DO THIS EACH DAY, IN VIEW OF THE TEACHINGS OF THIS STUDY?

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6 LOOK AT *HEBREWS 11: 4-17* AND WRITE A LIST OF THREE PEOPLE WHO OBEYED GOD. IN EACH CASE EXPLAIN WHAT THEY DID.

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Study 3. What is the purpose of the Bible?

This study sheet belongs to:



KEY VERSE:
Psalm 119: 130

“The entrance of Your words gives light; it gives understanding to the simple.”

Somebody once said that the Bible is like a big picture book, yet the vast majority of Bibles do not have pictures! This means that the Bible may use 'word pictures' to explain the meaning of a particular truth. For example, the Lord Jesus spoke of the reason for His death in a particular way. **“I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep.” (John 10: 11)** This word picture helps us to understand why the Lord Jesus died and for whom. Similarly, parables present a very powerful picture to explain a truth. For instance, the parable of the Good Samaritan illustrates so clearly that we should love our neighbour whoever he may be.

The Bible uses word pictures to describe its own importance. In this Study we look at five of them.

1. LIGHT



The Bible often uses the word picture of darkness to show what we are really like naturally.

Peter wrote that our salvation is like being **“called ... out of darkness into His marvellous light”.** (1 Peter 2: 9)

If we were in darkness, we needed to find a way into the light. **Psalm 119: 130** has the answer, **“The entrance of Your words gives light; it gives understanding to the simple”.** Even as Christians we can still struggle to find our way in this world, which is morally and spiritually dark. **Psalm 119: 105** is the answer to that. **“Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.”** Without the Bible, we cannot find our way to the Lord Jesus, or find God's way for our lives.

2. WATER

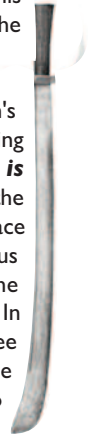
When we first believed the Gospel, we were **“washed ... from our sins ...”.** (Revelation 1: 5) In God's sight we are clean for ever. Yet we still have our sinful nature and each day we sin and need cleansing. John says, **“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness”.** (1 John 1: 9) If we confess our sins daily, then each day He will forgive and cleanse us. How may this happen? The Lord Jesus gives us a clue in **John 15: 3. “You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you.”** Just as ordinary water is necessary for washing our bodies before school or work, so His Word is essential for our spiritual cleanliness.



READ: Mark 4: 1-9

3. SWORD

One of the Christian's greatest challenges is his battle with Satan. Just as the Lord Jesus faced the attacks of Satan, so do we! Paul uses a very helpful word picture to illustrate this in **Ephesians 6: 10-17**. He describes the Christian's armour in six parts, and he concludes by saying **“take . . . the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God”.** (Verse 17) This is the weapon we use to attack the temptations we face from the evil one. Remember how the Lord Jesus victoriously overcame Satan by wielding the **“sword of the Spirit”.** (Matthew 4: 1-11) In His temptation, He answered Satan's attacks three times by saying, **“It is written”.** The Bible was “the sword” by which He defeated Satan. Note also **Hebrews 4: 12** which uses the same word picture.



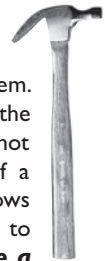
4. SEED

We call one of the Lord Jesus' great parables, 'The Parable of the Sower'. (Mark 4: 1-9) In it He illustrated the preaching of His message by likening it to the scattering of seed, as farmers used to do. When He explained the parable to the disciples, (Mark 4: 13-20) He said, **“The sower sows the word”.** The sower's seed fell on four types of ground which represent the four responses to the preaching of God's Word. The first three types of soil produced no fruit, but the fourth represented people who received and benefited from the Word of God. **“But these are the ones sown on good ground, those who hear the word, accept it, and bear fruit.”** (Mark 4: 20) So it is when we read the Bible regularly, accept its message and apply it to our hearts. In so doing, we produce spiritual fruit in our lives for the glory of God.



5. HAMMER

Jeremiah was a prophet who lived at a time when God's people did not listen to the Word of God which he brought to them. However, Jeremiah faithfully kept on bringing the same message time and time again. It is not surprising that he uses the word picture of a hammer because it was the steady, regular blows of the Word of God which eventually began to achieve some results. **“Is not My word like a fire? says the LORD, And like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces?”** (Jeremiah 23: 29)



We have discovered that the living Word of God can accomplish a variety of purposes in our lives. Is the daily reading and application of the Word of God having an effect on your life?

Study 3. What is the purpose of the Bible?

1 'EVEN AS CHRISTIANS WE STILL STRUGGLE TO FIND OUR WAY IN THE WORLD, WHICH IS MORALLY AND SPIRITUALLY DARK.'

a. In what ways is the world morally and spiritually dark?

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b. How does the Bible help a young Christian to find the way?

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2 PUT A ✓ OR A ✗ AGAINST EACH OF THESE SENTENCES:-

i. When we believe Christ died for our sins, He washes us clean for ever.

ii. After we have become Christians, we never sin.

iii. We need to confess our sins daily.

iv. As far as God is concerned, in our natural state, we are holy.

v. It is essential for spiritual cleanliness to read the Bible.

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3 READ AGAIN MATTHEW 4: 1-11 AND EXPLAIN WHAT EACH TEMPTATION WAS AND ALSO HOW THE LORD JESUS OVERCAME IT.

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4 DESPITE THE IMPORTANCE OF THE BIBLE MANY PEOPLE IGNORE OR REJECT ITS MESSAGE. HOW DOES THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER HELP TO EXPLAIN WHY THIS IS THE CASE?

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5 THERE ARE TWO WORD PICTURES IN JEREMIAH 23: 29, ONE OF WHICH IS EXPLAINED IN THE STUDY. SUGGEST SOME WAYS IN WHICH THE OTHER WORD PICTURE REPRESENTS THE BIBLE.

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6 LOOK UP THESE REFERENCES AND WRITE BELOW EACH ONE WHICH OF THE FIVE WORD PICTURES BEST SUITS IT.

HEBREWS 4: 12

PSALM 119: 9

1 PETER 1: 23

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Total marks for this

This study sheet belongs to:

Study 4. Who is the Word of God?



KEY VERSE: John 1: 14

“And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.”

We have referred to the Bible as the 'Living Word of God', which is exactly what it is. The word pictures which we looked at in Study 3, all gave the idea of life and activity. A dead book could not have the impact on people's lives that the Bible has had. It is important to know that we can also consider the Lord Jesus Christ as the Word of God. **“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” (John 1: 1)** By considering the Lord Jesus, we can learn much that can help us in understanding the significance and importance of the Bible.

THE WORD (THE LORD JESUS) IS ETERNAL.

Some think of the Lord Jesus just as living about 33 years on this earth. Nothing could be further from the truth. **“He was in the beginning with God.” (John 1: 2)** From this statement, we must think of the Lord Jesus as being eternal, having no beginning. Also He has no end. **“I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore.” (Revelation 1: 18)** Although the Bible came from God to men, and so had a beginning, it has no end - just like the Lord Jesus! **“But the word of the Lord endures for ever.” (1 Peter 1: 25)**

THE WORD (THE LORD JESUS) SPOKE ONLY GOD'S WORDS.

The Lord Jesus was God's mouthpiece. This is seen in **John 3: 34. “For He whom God has sent speaks the words of God.”** After the Lord Jesus had completed the teaching, which we refer to as the Sermon on the Mount, we are told, **“And so it was, when Jesus had ended these sayings, that the people were astonished at His teaching, for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.” (Matthew 7: 28-29)** Every word that came from His lips came with the authority of God. Read the claims He made for His words in **John 14: 24 & 17: 8.** So the Word of God is BOTH the Bible AND the Person of the Lord Jesus.

THE WORD (THE LORD JESUS) FULFILLED ALL GOD'S WORDS.

We have already learned that the Lord Jesus often quoted from the Old Testament and showed that what He was doing was a fulfilment of the words of the prophets. For instance, **“And He cast out the spirits with a word, and**

READ: John 1: 1-14

healed all who were sick, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying: ‘He Himself took our infirmities and bore our sicknesses’.” (Matthew 8: 16-17) Later when He died on the cross, it is recorded, **“Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, ‘I thirst!’ ”. (John 19: 28)** This was followed by, **“It is finished!”** In so saying, the Lord Jesus was announcing that everything God had said would happen, had happened. Nothing remained to be fulfilled! Clearly the Son of God totally fulfilled the Word of God. What an example to us! (See Study 2)

THE WORD (THE LORD JESUS) MEETS EVERYBODY'S NEEDS.

We have seen that when the Lord Jesus was being tempted He quoted the words of the Old Testament. When tempted concerning His hunger, the challenge was, **“Command that these stones become bread”.** (Matthew 4: 3) His answer was to quote the words of Deuteronomy, **“Man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the LORD”.** (Deuteronomy 8: 3) In His reply to Satan the Lord Jesus was making it clear that besides needing physical food to keep us alive, we also need spiritual food – the Word of God. In a similar way He showed that He Himself is the Bread who can spiritually feed those who believe and follow Him. **“I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst.” (John 6: 35)** He explained that just as God had sent the manna from Heaven to feed the people of Israel in the desert so He had come down from Heaven as the Bread of God, and this was to give **“life to the world”.** (John 6: 33)

It is only as we daily read the Bible, and trust and follow the Lord Jesus that we shall be strong in our Christian lives. When we fail to do this then our lives become spiritually weak and we often fail.



Study 4. Who is the Word of God?

1 LOOK AGAIN AT THE BIBLE READING AND MARK EACH OF THESE STATEMENTS AS TRUE OR FALSE:-

- i. The Lord Jesus became the Word when He came to this earth.
- ii. The Lord Jesus was responsible for all Creation.
- iii. The Lord Jesus was, is, and always will be, God.
- iv. The Lord Jesus was not mentioned by John.
- v. The Lord Jesus never became a real man.

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2 ON A NUMBER OF OCCASIONS WE ARE TOLD THAT WHEN THE LORD JESUS SPOKE, PEOPLE WERE ASTONISHED AT HIS TEACHING. WHY WAS THIS?

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3 LOOK AT JOHN 19: 28-30 AND ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS.

- a) What did Jesus know?
- b) What did Jesus want?
- c) What did they give Him?
- d) What were the final words of Jesus, recorded by John?
- e) What did these words mean?

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4 READ JOHN 6: 35 & 51 AGAIN. WHAT DID JESUS MEAN WHEN HE SAID THAT THOSE WHO CAME TO HIM WOULD NEVER HUNGER?

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5 WHAT DO THESE STUDIES TEACH ABOUT THE SECRET OF LIVING A STRONG AND ACTIVE CHRISTIAN LIFE?

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6 LOOK AT JOHN 14: 6 & JOHN 17: 17 WHICH INFORM US THAT BOTH THE LORD JESUS AND THE BIBLE ARE THE TRUTH.

- a. Write out these two verses.

- b. What evidence of the truth of God's written Word has impressed you as you have done these Studies?

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100

Total marks for this Unit

Return your study sheets to:

25

Total marks for this study