

# Why Should We Trust The Bible Today?

**According to Guinness World Records, the Bible is the best-selling book of all time, with an estimated five billion copies sold and distributed worldwide.** Dan Brown's Da Vinci Code is also one of the world's best-sellers, which means that the most-read literature of all time relates either to the Bible or to literature seeking to undermine it. With such divided opinion, why should we trust the Bible? Here is what I have discovered in answer to that question:

## **Because it is consistent.**

The Bible is a collection of all kinds of literature written over many years. The Old Testament covers the whole span of human history, especially the history of the Jewish people. The New Testament was written over perhaps three or four decades in the years following Jesus' death and resurrection. What is surprising is that despite having different authors, written to different people at different times and in different places, its internal message is staggeringly consistent and would be extremely difficult to fabricate.

## **Because it is authentic.**

The Old Testament was written in Hebrew, the New Testament in Greek. It is possible to compare manuscripts of different ages to see how many copying errors have crept in. There are very few. Whether people believe its content, the authenticity of the account in the world of ancient literature is very high.

## **Because of its self-understanding.**

The more I have studied the Bible, the more I have found that the way in which the different parts relate, in promise and fulfilment, type and reality, is overwhelming. It is not just the direct but also incidental details which are convincing; even more so when we find all these details relating to the death, resurrection and rule of Jesus.

## **Because of its variety.**

Some parts of the Bible are clearly 'poetic' (for example, the trees of the field do not literally 'clap their hands' (Isaiah 55:12); other parts are clearly 'historical' and meant to be understood as such (for



Reverend Simon Austen

example, the claims of the resurrection of Jesus). This variety, far from undermining its consistency and authenticity, confirms it.

## **Because it is powerful.**

Strange though it may seem, what the Bible tells us about the world – and what it says will happen in the world – is exactly what we see today. And the message which is at its centre – that of God loving the world so much that he gave his Son for us so that we might be forgiven and be with him for ever – still brings millions of people into a personal encounter with the living God.

At her coronation, on 2 June 1953 the Queen was presented with a Bible. The words spoken to her as she received it are words which might be said to us today: "The most valuable thing that this world affords. Here is wisdom; This is the royal Law; These are the lively Oracles of God."

## The Foundation That I Build My Life Upon

**Jessica Cantell** discusses faith, family and finding success without a degree.



### How did you become interested in Christianity?

"I was raised in a Christian family, but when I was younger Christianity wasn't impacting my life. I thought I was a Christian, but I was just going through the motions. I did what I wanted to do, and didn't really take God into account. One of my best friends at school was a Christian, and she stood up for her faith. But I just stayed quiet. I cared more about what other people thought than God. However, I remember a man at church in Sidmouth gave me a book on Christianity, which I read and realised I needed to change."

"My faith has developed since I started coming to St Leonard's five years ago. We're rooted in Christ and the Bible, and I've got a strong group of friends. I also spend time on my own reading the Bible and praying. And it's great to have a Christian family who I can talk openly with."

### Why did you choose to work as an estate agent?

"I didn't want to go to university. So when I was at school I looked into other options. I wanted to be an estate agent after going on viewings with my grandmother when she was moving house. But I did a year at an estate agency and was put off by their deceitfulness towards people."

"However, friends at church told me about an estate agency where they did things differently, because the staff were Christian. It's called Southgate Estates, and now I work there instead. We always try to be open and honest with people. For example, we don't value properties highly to win business and we don't tie people into contracts. We also pray regularly together to seek God's help and guidance."

"It's been so refreshing to be part of an ethical estate agency. We don't have any targets, but we work hard because we all want it to succeed. I really appreciate my job."

### What do you do in your spare time?

"I do make-up art as a hobby. I completed a make-up course at college, but I've developed the skill mainly by looking at what other people do. Now I have my own website and social media channels. It's a great way to connect with other people outside of church. I also like singing and I sing in the band at church which I really enjoy."



## Services at St Leonard's

We meet every Sunday at 9.45am, 11.30am and 6.30pm. We would love you to join us.