



## SESSION 7: CAN WE REALLY KNOW WHAT THE BIBLE MEANS?



### Aim

To teach that, although the Bible is an ancient text written hundreds of years ago in a time and culture very different to our own, we can know what it means, and God speaks to us today through it.



### Starter

Option 1: What is your favourite book and why?

Option 2: Quiz - see page 4

Answers - Part One: A2, B4, C1, D3

Part Two: 1. C, 2. C, 3. All of them!

Did you know?

- ◆ The Bible has been translated into more languages than any other literature
- ◆ The YouVersion Bible app has been downloaded over 500 million times into over 1250 languages
- ◆ The Bible is the best-selling book of the year, every year.



### Video

Watch the video [Can We Really Know What the Bible Means?](#) (Running time 3:41)



### Questions

Encourage pupils to write any questions on sticky notes as they occur to them.

Answer questions of understanding about the video straight away unless these will be answered later in the session. If there is not time for a question, confirm you will answer it another time. Consider using the 'car park' so pupils know you will not forget.



### Exploring the Bible

In the video Andy Bannister asks the question: can we really know what the Bible means? This is an ancient text set in very different times to ours so can I interpret it the way that suits me, and you interpret it the way that suits you? Surely a book written over a period of 1500 years by 40 different authors can have several different interpretations to it.

Discuss

Read Mark 10:17-25

### **How fair is it to say the man knew what the Bible and the commandments said?**

Jesus says the man knows the commandments and the man says he has kept the commandments since he was a boy, so he must know them.

### **Why did the man walk away from Jesus sad?**

Jesus tells the man to give up his wealth, and the man does not want to. He would rather keep his money and things than follow Jesus.

Jesus tells the disciples it is easier to fit a camel through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God. Have you ever tried getting a piece of wool through a needle? Or have you watched the contestants on the TV programme Taskmaster try to fit a toy camel through a narrow gap? It is hard! It is completely impossible to get a real camel through such a small gap.

What Jesus is saying is that we really can know what the Bible means (although as Andy Bannister said in the video, sometimes we must work hard to understand) but the reason we disagree about it is because we do not like the truth that we find there. The rich man decides not to follow Jesus because he would rather keep his money. For us it may not be losing money that worries us, but losing reputation, friends or time doing something we love.

### **What holds you back from following Jesus? Perhaps you do not believe the Bible is true, or perhaps there are things you might have to give up that you do not want to?**

The author of The Chronicles of Narnia, CS Lewis, did not believe in God as a young man, but later came to accept the Bible was true. He wrote this:

*‘I am trying here to prevent anyone saying ... I’m ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don’t accept his claim to be God. That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic — on the level with the man who says he is a poached egg — or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God, or else a madman or something worse. You can shut him up for a fool, you can spit at him and kill him as a demon or you can fall at his feet and call him Lord and God, but let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about his being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to.’*

#### Discuss

### **Who do you think Jesus was – a mad man, an evil man or the Son of God?**



#### **Reflection**

Allow a time of reflection that is most appropriate to your group.

You may wish to reflect quietly or discuss the following:

- ◆ Can we really know what the Bible says?
- ◆ Was the rich man wise to walk away or did he give up the chance of a lifetime?
- ◆ Who do you think Jesus is?
- ◆ What will you do about it?



## Further resources

**Can I Really Trust the Bible?** – a book by Barry Cooper



## Quiz

### Part One

Match the books in the left-hand column to the number sold so far in the right-hand column

- |  |                            |
|--|----------------------------|
| A) Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone | 1) 120 million copies sold |
| B) The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe  | 2) 5 billion copies sold   |
| C) The Hobbit                            | 3) 4 billion copies sold   |
| D) The Bible                             | 4) 85 million copies sold  |

### Part Two

- The Bible was written over a period of  
a) 600 years      b) 1000 years      c) 1500 years
- The Bible was written by  
a) one author      b) 25 authors      c) 40 authors
- Who wrote the Bible?  
a) fishermen      b) kings      c) poet      d) statesmen  
e) philosophers      f) teachers      g) historians      h) prophets  
i) doctors      j) a taxman