A SHORT BIBLE STUDY

Looking for the Truth

Starting Out with Christ · Book 2



Why it matters which door you open

Andrew Dominguez

Trinfinity Enterprises

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A Note on the Bible Translation Used in This Book

My preferred Bible for personal study, teaching, and research is the Steadfast Literal Bible (SLB). I chose it because it is a word-for-word translation in today's language, built on the ancient Scripture sources: the Hebrew and Aramaic of the Old Testament and the Greek of the New Testament. I prepared the SLB myself, and the Scripture in this book is taken from it.

Where a literal phrase would mislead an English reader, the SLB gives the writer's meaning in plain words. Words added for sense are set in bold italics so you can see what is in the original and what is not.

The complete Steadfast Literal Bible is free to read, search, download, and print at trinfinityenterprises.com/slb. If you want to check a verse in its full setting or read the translation's preface and principles, that is the place to go.

Above all, my desire is not to promote one translation over another, but to faithfully teach the Word of God, encourage careful examination of the Scriptures, and help readers grow in their knowledge, understanding, and relationship with the Lord.

May every page of this book direct attention not to the translation itself, but to the truth of God's Word and the One whom it reveals.

Introduction

Everyone is looking for something to believe. Many people sincerely search for truth but never stop to check whether what they were told is actually true. They accept it because they heard it often enough.

My family attended the Catholic church when I was young, but faith did not become personal for me there. It took a neighbor down our street in Victorville, Pastor Jimmy Carter, to show me the truth of Scripture. I wrote this book for anyone standing in front of different spiritual doors and wondering which one leads to God. Eternity hangs on what is behind the door you open.

This book is for anyone who is honestly searching. It looks at how easily we accept what we are told, why the idea that all religions are the same does not hold up, the evidence that points to Jesus, and the invitation to look for yourself.

1 The cheese behind the door

Put a mouse in a box with three holes and place cheese behind the third one. He will check all three, but he will find it. Do this enough times and he will run straight to the third hole. Move the cheese, and he will go to the third hole first, but before long he will start searching the others.

Now put a man in a box with three doors. You do not have to train him. Just tell him the cheese is behind door three, even though it is really behind door one. Put phony cheese behind door three, and he will say

there must have been real cheese here, because this was made from it. Put crackers there, and he will say cheese must be close, because cheese and crackers go together. Put nothing there, and he will insist the cheese is there and we just have not found it yet.

The cheese represents truth. People will believe almost anything if they are told it enough, and they will rarely investigate it, even when the evidence does not add up. So the question is a fair one. Will I check for myself?

At 16 I passed the California High School Proficiency Exam early and aced the Air Force tests. They promised me a computer job, the future I wanted. When it came time to sign, they would not give me that job, so I walked away. What looks like a great prize can turn out to be an empty promise once you get close.

> *There is a way right before a man, and its end **is** ways of death.*
> **Proverbs 14:12 (SLB)**

2 Tolerance and truth

Today the word tolerance is often used to mean that every belief must be accepted as equally true. But that is not what the word means. To tolerate your belief means I respect your right to hold it. It does not mean I have to agree with it. I am not intolerant because I disagree with you.

This matters, because if every belief is equally true, then nothing is really true. And if we are only the

product of chance, there is no solid foundation for right and wrong. Society's standards just drift with the times.

Christians should be the most respectful people in any conversation. First Peter 3:15 (SLB) tells us to be "ready always for a defense to everyone who asks you an account concerning the hope in you, with gentleness and fear." Respecting people and believing that truth exists go together.

When I was a boy in Victorville, Pastor Jimmy Carter lived down our street. I mowed his lawn, and he took me to church. He never put down where I came from, and he held firmly to what the Bible says. That mix of patience and clear truth is what led me to Christ.

3 Phony cheese and crackers

One common idea is that all religions are inspired by God and the differences are just human error. It sounds generous, but the major religions contradict each other on the most basic questions: who God is, what is wrong with us, and how it is made right. They cannot all be true at once.

That approach also lets a person pick and choose. Keep the parts you like and throw out the parts you do not, especially sin and accountability.

Another idea is that God set the universe in motion and then stepped back, never involving Himself in our lives. That allows a person to admit there is a God without needing to listen to Him. Still another is the idea of karma and endless rebirth, where you never

know whether you are ahead or behind, and the suffering of others is just a debt being paid. None of these offer forgiveness. None of them offer a Savior.

For a long time I tried to fill the emptiness with my own success and with doing the things I wanted to do, and I kept my distance from God. Those substitutes kept me busy but never gave me peace. Only the real truth of Christ satisfies.

4 Evidence that points to Jesus

The Bible invites us to check the evidence. The people of Berea were called "more noble" because they were "examining the Scriptures every day to see if these things might be so" (Acts 17:11, SLB).

One searcher's account tells of a man who was raised between two faiths and had learned to argue against Christianity. Someone challenged him to read Isaiah 53, Daniel 9, and Psalm 22 and explain them any way other than Christ. He could not. Those passages, written centuries before Jesus was born, describe a suffering servant pierced for our sins, "an anointed one" who "will be cut off" (Daniel 9:26, SLB), and a man surrounded by enemies whose garments are divided by casting lots (Psalm 22:16-18, SLB).

> *And He **was** pierced for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities; the chastening of our peace **was** on Him, and by His wound **there** was healing for us.*
>
> **Isaiah 53:5 (SLB)**

The sacrifices of the Old Testament pointed forward to this. Hebrews says, "apart from shedding of blood there is no forgiveness" (Hebrews 9:22, SLB). The blood of unblemished animals was a temporary picture of the sinless blood Christ would shed once for all people.

Translating the Steadfast Literal Bible word for word, I saw how tightly the history and the prophecy fit together. You do not have to check your brain at the door to follow Christ. The evidence holds up under close inspection and points to Jesus.

5 The cheese was behind door one

Jesus did not claim to be one of many ways. He said, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me" (John 14:6, SLB). Either that claim is true or it is not. It deserves an honest look.

The good news is that God is not hiding. He says, "you will seek Me and find Me, when you seek Me with all your heart" (Jeremiah 29:13, SLB).

> *and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.*
> **John 8:32 (SLB)**

If you are searching, I pray you will look at the evidence with an open mind. Read the Gospels for yourself. Read Isaiah 53. Ask God to show you the truth. If you have questions or want to challenge what you have read here, that is all right. Honest questions are where honest faith often begins.

For five straight years I helped lead youth mission trips to Baja, Mexico. We met believers who had very little, yet had deep joy in Christ. We went to serve, and we came home having learned what real life is. It is found in Jesus, not in what the world offers.

Looking for the Truth

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Many people sincerely search for truth but never check whether what they were told is true. This book looks at how easily we accept what we hear, tolerance and truth, why every religion cannot be right, the evidence that points to Jesus, and the invitation to look for yourself.

I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.

John 14:6 (SLB)

Book 2 of 11 in the collection Starting Out with Christ

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