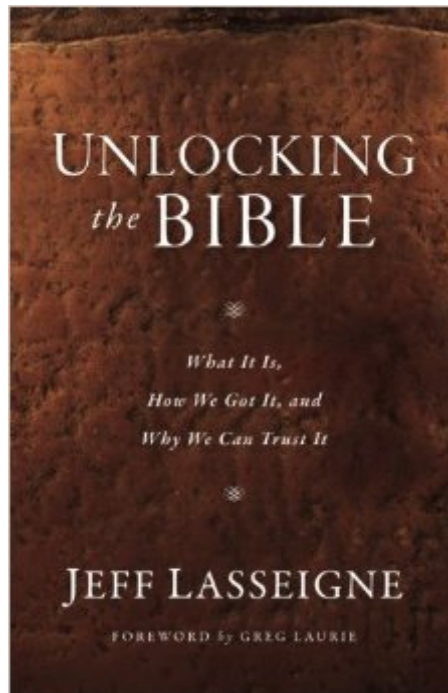


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# Unlocking The Bible: What It Is, How We Got It, And Why We Can Trust It



## Synopsis

How We Got the Bible and Why It Is Reliable The Bible is the bestselling, most read, most beloved, most criticized, most neglected, and most antagonizing book in history. It's also the most misunderstood--sometimes even by those who claim to follow its teachings. So what exactly is it? Who wrote it and how did those writings come together into what we now know as the Bible? And how do we know we can trust what it says? For the curious reader, whether a lifelong Christian, a new believer, or an unconvinced skeptic, *Unlocking the Bible* provides the answers to these questions and more. In easy-to-understand language, it covers the Bible's origin, its transmission throughout history, its trustworthiness, and its significance. It also explains how to read this unique collection of religious texts and outlines how to study and teach it to others.

## Book Information

Paperback: 320 pages

Publisher: Baker Books (September 13, 2016)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0801019176

ISBN-13: 978-0801019173

Product Dimensions: 5.5 x 0.8 x 8.5 inches

Shipping Weight: 11.8 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (6 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #4,397 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #9 in [Books > Christian Books & Bibles > Bible Study & Reference > Criticism & Interpretation](#) #20 in [Books > Christian Books & Bibles > Theology > Apologetics](#) #45 in [Books > Christian Books & Bibles > Bible Study & Reference > Bible Study](#)

## Customer Reviews

In a world of Christian literature that can boast a multitude of volumes on bibliology, you might think to yourself, "What? Another one?" And from the title of this volume "Unlocking the Bible: What It is, How We Got It, and Why We Can Trust It" - you might think that this is just another rehash of material in defense of the Bible. And, in a way, it is a bit of that. But, it is more than that. Yes, there is a chapter on "How We Got the Bible" and one on "Why We Can Trust the Bible," the obligatory chapters. However, there are also chapters on "Understanding the Old Testament and New Testament." And then there's still more. (More on that in a minute.) The book is written by Jeff Lasseigne, an administrative pastor with

Harvest Christian Fellowship who teaches the midweek Bible Study. It is published by Baker Books. The book has two main sections: "The Big Picture" and "Books of the Bible." Included in "The Big Picture" and, as mentioned previously, he has included separate chapters on "Understanding the Old Testament and New Testament." Interestingly, in between these two chapters he has inserted a chapter on "The Sounds of Silence" which gives historical background on the 400 silent years. It contains excellent historical background leading to the New Testament providing an excellent segue. This is a welcome chapter which is usually not found in books of this category. The big surprise comes in Part 2: "Books of the Bible." It contains a very short study of each book of the Bible. The studies are brief yet informative. These studies are a product of his midweek Bible study class. When you put these elements together, this book is the perfect introductory volume to the Bible. It is ideal for new Christians. Lasseigne has skillfully written the material in a manner that will give new believer a firm grasp on not only what the Bible is, but also what the Bible contains. It is the perfect Bible primer. I highly recommend this book as an entry level volume to the world of bibliology. Pastors, if you're leading a new believer's class, this would be a first-rate text. Disclaimer: This book was provided to me by Baker Books for a fair and honest review.

The Bible can be intimidating. It's big, full of challenging ideas, foreign customs, and, when unlocked and engaged well, serves up priceless gems of wisdom. For those turning to the Bible for the first time, or those who have had close encounters of the random kind and finally want to take a deeper dive, getting a firm grasp on the scope of scripture can be literally overwhelming. Wouldn't it be nice if there were an easy-to-decipher road map of sorts to help make it easier to navigate? That's exactly what "Unlocking the Bible: What It Is, How We Got It, and Why We Can Trust It" (Baker Books) by Jeff Lasseigne. Written in a light-hearted casual conversational style, the book does exactly what its full title promises in two broad sections: "The Big Picture" and "The Books of the Bible." **DEMYSTIFYING GOD'S WORD** Part I starts off with the first chapter sharing important highlights of how the Bible came into being. Chapter two offers insights on why the Bible is trustworthy. Chapters three and five are basic overviews of the Old and New Testaments. Lasseigne offers nice synopsis-level discussions of such things as the Dead Sea scrolls, how the original biblical manuscripts were created and handled, and how early copies were carefully transcribed by hand. For example, he shares that: "The New Testament was written well over 1,900 years ago, and yet we have over 24,000 pieces of manuscript to support it, which is substantial. In fact, the New Testament has far more manuscript

evidence than any other ancient work. By comparison, the thirty-seven plays of William Shakespeare have no surviving original copies and there are missing sections in every one of his works.... Shakespeare's writings are only about four hundred years old, and were all written after the invention of the printing press.... Probably the more interesting section of the book is chapter four where Lasseigne discusses what happened during the 400 year period between the Testaments. He gives a quick scan of the history, politics, and culture of the times, and touches on why the Apocrypha is not considered part of the inspired canon. Providing practical application, chapter six covers how to study the Bible and chapter seven explains how to teach the Bible. Both chapters consist mostly of simple straightforward tips Lasseigne has used successfully over the years. Part II offers nutshell glimpses of each book of the Bible, pointing out significant facts, giving quotes from others related to the book, and additional useful tidbits. While brief, each is pithy and a good place to start a more focused study of a specific Bible book.

A REFERENCE FOR THE REST OF US

The book is folksy and not the least intimidating. It's not aimed at theologians and thankfully free of academic jargon. Rather, this is a perfect reference to put in the hands of new Christians just getting acquainted with the Bible, or more seasoned believers who are just getting involved in teaching a Sunday school class or leading a small group. For the rest of us, it can serve as a useful refresher reference. In fact, the book really is a reference, designed to be dipped into as needed and where needed. To that end, it would have been helpful if the book had included more headings and graphic features (in the vein of a *For Dummies* or *Complete Idiot's Guide*), as well as a more detailed table of contents and/or index, that would facilitate easier browsing. Fortunately, Part II is much more accessible in this way than is Part I. And then there's the odd humor. Each chapter opens with a humorous anecdote, and odd little quips and out-takes pop up at random throughout the book. While adding to the folksy charm of the book, they can also be a little off-putting and distracting. Clearly Lasseigne uses this type of humor when he's teaching in his church -- and they probably work well in a live setting -- but are just a tad annoying when inserted without clear relevance into the book. Overall, the book is a great tool as a reference for Sunday school teachers, new Christians, or as a tool in a class on Bible basics or leader training. It's very accessible and full of great tidbits and tips, delivering on the promise of its title to unlock the Bible.

===NOTE: To comply with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 255: I selected this book to review and received it free from the publisher. I was not required to write a positive review. The opinions I have expressed are my own.===

This was also posted on my award-winning blog, FaithBraised[dot]com.

**SUMMARY:** Hoping to make the Bible a bit less daunting and a lot more understandable, author and pastor, Jeff Lasseigne, sets out to meet those goals in his book, *Unlocking the Bible*. Broken into two main parts, Part 1 answers more general questions about the Bible while familiarizing readers with the history, trustworthiness, New and Old Testaments, studying and teaching of the Bible. Part 2 then delves into each book of the Bible, discovering the uniqueness and qualities found within. Easy to follow, interesting to browse, and referenced for use, this useful book couples nicely with the world's best-selling book, the Bible.

**A PENNY FOR MY THOUGHTS:** Sometimes not knowing where to begin, other times plagued with unanswered questions, and yet other times of complacency, often leads the Bible to being overlooked and not studied. Leaning on his vast knowledge of the Bible, Jeff Lasseigne helps the Bible to become more user-friendly and understandable. While Part 1 was interesting, Part 2 was where I actually learned some new information about each book. As a compact reference guide, it would work well paired with a Bible and used in a Bible study, given to new believers, or studied in various ministry groups as a learning tool or review option. A copy belongs with each Bible to help unlock it and bring it to life.

**RATING:** 4.5 (out of 5) pennies\*I received a complimentary copy of *Unlocking the Bible* from Baker Books for my honest review\*

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