

The  
LIGHT *of*  
TRUTH

Early Proof Texts of the Gospel Record

Leader and Student Guide

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In the Bible, the Apostle Paul prayed that Christians would  
“give thanks to the Father who has qualified you to share in the  
inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light.”

—Col. 1:12

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Christianity, as the Kingdom of Light, bears witness to the truth. *The Light of Truth* video takes us back in history as God plans for His saint’s encouragement today. He did this, in part, by saving first and second century documents of our faith. We find that they were not only preserved for us but that they exist today in museums and libraries throughout the western world. Our study is not simply an interesting walk through time. It is crucial for us to know for spiritual wisdom and understanding so that we may walk in a manner worthy of the Lord.

*The Light of Truth*, that the Bible is trustworthy, is paramount to our Christian witness. We can only make Jesus known and treasured by others if we are strongly rooted in the facts of God’s sovereign plan to reveal his will through His Holy Spirit and His Word.

*The Light of Truth* lecture tells the amazing story of Christian archeologists, scholars, soldiers and philanthropists who went to the Near and Middle East during the great age of discovery in the last century and found the most ancient New Testament records that our libraries and museums possess today.

**DVD Video: 80 minutes that can be divided into two, three or four sessions.**

**Part One – The Impact of the Church and Our Ancient Record Finds**

**Part Two – How Biblical Scholars Work, Oxyrhynchus and Why Dig?**

**Part Three – Textual Evidence, Patristic Writings and the Gospel Record**

**Part Four – The Gospel Record and Comparisons with Ancient Writings**

Note: The Discussion Notes pages can be copied in order to provide attendees with a worksheet for each session.

# THE LIGHT OF TRUTH

## SMALL GROUP LEADER'S GUIDE

### INTRODUCTION

The Apostle Paul wrote to the Colossians and encouraged them to “be filled with the knowledge of (God’s) will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God.” Col. 1:9-10

He further prayed that they would “give thanks to the Father who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light.” Col. 1:12

This study is about the truth of the kingdom of light. We, Christians, are qualified to share in Christ’s inheritance. Part of that inheritance is the working of all things according to His will. We should never doubt that God is totally for us in Christ Jesus. Amongst all the stress and evil that befalls us, God is loving and purifying us toward our inheritance of eternal life.

Christianity, as the Kingdom of Light, bears witness to the truth. *The Light of Truth* takes us back in history as God plans to save first century documents of our faith. We find that they were not only preserved for us but that they exist today in museums and libraries which are open to us. Our study is not simply an interesting walk through time. It is crucial for us to know for spiritual wisdom and understanding, so that we may walk in a manner worthy of the Lord.

For us, Christianity is not a game or a therapy. It is the worldview of enlightened and courageous humanity. We must strengthen ourselves for the days ahead that the Apostle Paul warned were coming. So many who are in church today are running on rootless emotionalism. They live their lives as though their faith was a therapeutic option. They act as though the Bible is a book of platitudes and life lessons equal to many other books. This weak worldview does not define reality. The reality is that God has a plan for us in these last days of our earthly inheritance. It is to magnify Jesus Christ; to do whatever we, peacefully, can to make Jesus known and treasured. *The Light of Truth* that the Bible is trustworthy is paramount to that reality. We can only make Jesus known and treasured by others if we are strongly rooted in the facts of God’s sovereign plan to reveal his will through His Holy Spirit and His Word.

May you find knowledge, wisdom and understanding that you have never known before as you hear the stories of how God has planned for His Word, the Bible, to be planted in mankind’s hearts as the *Light of Truth*.

*The Light of Truth* lecture tells the amazing story of Christian archeologists, scholars, soldiers and philanthropists who went to the Near and Middle East during the great age of discovery in the last century and found the most ancient New Testament records.

Watch the video: 80 minutes that can be divided into as many as four sessions and discuss the content as the Lord leads you.

# DISCUSSION TOPICS

## **Part One      video: 00:00 – 20:00**

1. The letter from Governor Pliny to Roman Emperor Trajan and the persecution of the early church.
2. The reasons that the church grew so rapidly in the first century
3. The geographical, archeological and Papyrological Record
4. 19<sup>th</sup> Century Critics

## **Part Two      video: 20:00 – 39:00**

5. Oxyrhynchus and papyri discovery
6. The “Indiana Jones” of papyri
7. The Scopes-Monkey Trial
8. The Beatty Papyri

## **Part Three    video: 39:00 – 1:00:00**

9. Textual evidence
10. Patristic writing
11. Technology as an aid
12. The Gospel record in our hands

## **Part Four    video: 1:00:00 – 1:17:30**

13. How to read the Gospel papyri
14. Where the most ancient New Testament documents are located today
15. Comparison of the Gospel record with other ancient documents
16. Chart of the English Bible

# DISCUSSION NOTES

*The Light of Truth* tells the amazing stories of Christians who went to the Middle East during the last century and found the most ancient New Testament records!

Note for yourself:

## **Part One**

A. The implications of the letter from Pliny to Trajan and the persecution of the early church in the Roman Empire

B. The reasons that the church grew so rapidly in the first century

C. The first three ways that worthy scholars find historical truth

D. Why documents were so well preserved?

E. 19<sup>th</sup> Century Critics; The Christ of \_\_\_\_\_  
rather than the Jesus of \_\_\_\_\_.

## **Part Two**

F. The story of the Oxyrhynchus Papyri and what it means

G. Luxor and Huleatt's great find

H. The Scopes-Monkey Trial and why

I. Alfred Chester Beatty's journey and his treasure

## **Part Three**

J. Textual Evidence

K. The early church fathers and their messages to the church

L. Technology aids scholarship with microscopes and computers

M. Where the most ancient Gospel records are housed today

## **Part Four**

N. How to read more textual evidence

O. P-64 and the earliest codices (book form/back and front of paper

P. The entire New Testament by when?

Q. Comparison of ancient writings tells us what?

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to bring it to Christians today, please see  
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W. Michael McCormack  
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