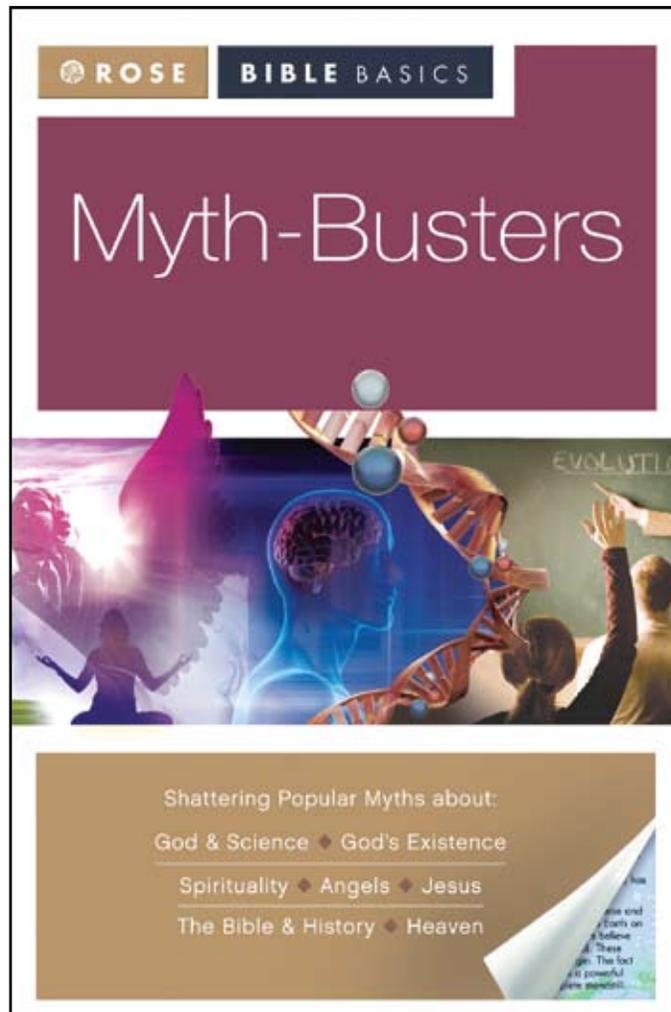




ROSE

BIBLE BASICS

MYTH BUSTERS STUDY GUIDE



A FREE downloadable version of this study guide is available at rose-publishing.com. Click on “News & Info,” then on “Downloads.”

The leader guide covers each chapter of this book and includes teaching tips, additional resources, and answer keys for the study guide worksheets.

The study guide includes a reproducible worksheet and/or discussion questions for each chapter.

What participants will gain from this study:

- Be encouraged to grow in confidence in their faith.
- Find out why evolution faces a radical challenge from Intelligent Design, and how scientific discoveries point to a Creator.
- Be able to answer common objections to God’s existence, biblical reliability, and Jesus’ resurrection.
- Learn the difference between true biblical teachings and the destructive ideas of “pop spirituality” teachers, like Eckhart Tolle, Deepak Chopra, and *The Secret*.
- Learn how to answer skeptics’ objections to the reliability of the Gospels.
- Know what the Bible teaches—and doesn’t teach—about angels, heaven, and the afterlife.

LEADER GUIDE

Spend time in prayer before each study session and pray for each participant.

CHAPTER 1: MYTHS ABOUT GOD & SCIENCE

Main Idea

The natural world displays complex design pointing to a Creator.

Teaching Tips

Introduce participants to the purposes of this study. Ask them what they hope to gain from the study or why they joined the study.

Participants may come to this study with doubts, disagreements, and lots of questions. Create an environment where participants feel safe to ask questions and share their doubts. Do this by maintaining a relaxed, open environment in which questions are welcomed and accepted without negative judgment. Share how you personally have resolved the issue, but allow God to work in other people's minds and hearts in his own way.

This chapter may be confusing for some participants. Do not expect them to learn everything in one session. Focus on the main concepts you want them to grasp, such as:

- Darwinian evolution is not a proven fact; it cannot explain life's origins or all biological systems.
- Design in the natural world can be detected.
- Design points to an intelligent Creator.

Digging Deeper

Check out the authors' book *Understanding Intelligent Design: Everything You Need to Know in Plain Language* by William Dembski and Sean McDowell (Harvest House: 2008).

Answers to Evolution and *Creation and Evolution* pamphlets, available at www.rose-publishing.com.

For video segments to show, check out the documentary *Where Does the Evidence Lead: Exploring the Theory of Intelligent Design* (Illustra Media: 2004; 60 min.) www.illustramedia.com.

There Is a God: How the World's Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind by Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese (Harper One: 2008).

Worksheet Key

(1) f (2) c (3) a (4) b (5) e (6) d (7) g (8) h

CHAPTER 2: MYTHS ABOUT GOD’S EXISTENCE

Main Idea

God exists and has revealed himself through creation, moral conscience, and the Bible.

Teaching Tips

Start the conversation by asking participants to respond to this quote from atheist Sam Harris:

“There is, in fact, no worldview more reprehensible in its arrogance than that of a religious believer: *the creator of the universe takes an interest in me, approves of me, loves me, and will reward me after death.... Everyone who disagrees with me will spend eternity in hell.* An average Christian, in an average church, listening to an average Sunday sermon has achieved a level of arrogance simply unimaginable in scientific discourse.” (*Letter to a Christian Nation* by Sam Harris; paperback ed., Random House: 2006, 2008; p. 74.)

Ask participants: What does this writer find objectionable about Christianity? Do you think most atheists and/or agnostics would agree with this writer’s statement?

This chapter contains more material than can be covered in a typical session, so pick only four topics and focus on those. The discussion questions provided correspond to the 10 Q&A in this chapter. Use the discussion questions that relate to the topics you’ve selected.

Digging Deeper

www.BeThinking.org has short, easy-to-understand articles that can be printed out and made available to participants who want to learn more about a specific topic.

(There is no worksheet provided for this chapter.)

CHAPTER 3: MYTHS ABOUT SPIRITUALITY

Main Idea

The central claims of pop spirituality directly contradict the good news of the gospel.

Teaching Tips

Show the trailer to the movie *The Secret* (www.theseecret.tv). Ask participants: What claims is this promotion making? What do you notice about this promotion and this kind of “spirituality” that is appealing to people?

Have participants practice interpreting the meaning of Scripture in its context. Read this excerpt from Tolle’s book *A New Earth*:

“Blessed are the poor in spirit,” Jesus said, “for theirs will be the kingdom of heaven.” [Matthew 5:3] What does “poor in spirit” mean? No inner baggage, no identifications. Not with things, nor with any mental concepts that have a sense of self in them. And what is the “kingdom of heaven”? The simple but profound joy of Being that is there when you let go of identification and so become “poor in spirit.” (*A New Earth* by Eckhart Tolle; Plume, 2005; p. 43.)

Provide several Bible dictionaries for participants to look up “kingdom of heaven,” and Bible commentaries on Matthew 5 to explore what “poor in spirit” meant in Jesus’ time. Then ask participants: What are the differences between what Tolle says about these terms and the biblical meaning of these terms? Why is it important to understand what the biblical texts mean in their context?

Digging Deeper

For further study, see the resources listed at the end of the chapter.

Worksheet Key

(1) Myth (2) Myth (3) Truth (4) Myth (5) Myth (6) Myth (7) Truth (8) Myth

CHAPTER 4: MYTHS ABOUT ANGELS

Main Idea

Angels are God's messengers, but we must remember that God wants us to seek and worship him alone, rather than looking to his angels.

Teaching Tips

Open the session by looking at popular depictions of angels. To show participants different examples, find pictures of angels from the Internet, books, or figurines, etc. (For example: a child-like cherub, warrior angel, angels from Renaissance art, Christmas tree-top angel, abstract angel painting, etc.) Ask participants: What do each of these representations say about what angels are like and what they do? As you teach the lesson, help participants to recognize the difference between these popular ideas of angels and what the Bible says about angels.

Some participants may strongly disagree with this chapter based on their personal experience or the experiences of people they know. Be sensitive to that. Don't put down people's experiences. But *do* use the Bible to help participants understand those experiences in light of Scripture. Stress the importance of examining God's Word to see if those claims or beliefs are the truth (Acts 17:11).

The question *Can a Christian be demon possessed?* may arise during group discussion or teaching time. If it does, explain these things: (1) The difference between demon possession and demon oppression; (2) That believers are indwelt by the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:9–11, 1 Cor. 3:16, 6:19); and (3) As children of God we have overcome false spirits and do not need to fear them (1 John 4:4).

Digging Deeper

For further study, see the resources listed at the end of the chapter.

Some angel communication practices involve New Age practices and can lead to overt occult activity. See *10 Questions & Answers on Magic, Spells & Divination* pamphlet available at www.rose-publishing.com.

Worksheet Key

(1) humans (2) angels, God (3) God (4) Angels (5) humans and angels, God (6) God, angels, humans
(7) God, angels, angels

CHAPTER 5: MYTHS ABOUT JESUS

Main Idea

The New Testament accurately tells us about Jesus' life, ministry, death, and resurrection.

Teaching Tips

There may not be enough time to cover all the topics in this chapter, so encourage participants to pick a few topics that most interest them, and spend the majority of the class time focusing on those topics. Or, if you prefer, choose the topics yourself before the session and focus on those.

To get the conversation started, play a clip of *The Da Vinci Code* movie where references to the *Gospel of Mary Magdalene* are made (approximately 60 minutes into the movie). Ask participants: What claims or assumptions are the characters making about Jesus? About the Gospels? About Christianity?

Digging Deeper

For a video segment to show during this session check out the DVD *The Real Jesus: A Defense of the Historicity & Divinity of Christ* (The Apologetics Group: 2008).

For more on specific topics mentioned in this chapter see *Gospels: "Lost" & Found* which discusses the Gnostic gospels, and *50 Proofs for the New Testament* which explains archeological finds, both available at www.rose-publishing.com.

Worksheet Key

(1) d (2) False (3) c (4) False (5) a

CHAPTER 6: MYTHS ABOUT THE BIBLE

Main Idea

We can be confident that our Bible today is faithful to the original manuscripts.

Teaching Tips

Some participants may have strong feelings about this topic. If you have a disruptive participant remember these things: (1) Don't get angry; It will only escalate tensions and become personal; (2) Tell the participant that you appreciate his/her input and participation; (3) Don't start a debate between you and the participant; Rather, open up the discussion with the group and ask for other participants' input; (4) See it as a teaching moment; By your example, you can show the group how to have a respectful conversation.

During the session have participants read these key passages: John 21:24–25; Luke 1:1–4; John 20:30–31; 1 Cor. 15:3–7; 2 Peter 1:20–21; 2 Tim. 3:16. Ask participants: What do these passages tell us about how the New Testament writers viewed their own writings? What do these passages tell us about how the writers viewed the Old Testament?

Digging Deeper

To go into more detail about the topics in this chapter, see the author's book, *Misquoting Truth* by Timothy Paul Jones (InterVarsity Press: 2007).

Download the FREE twelve-slide PowerPoint® on the Gnostic *Gospel of Judas* from www.rose-publishing.com (key word: "Gospel of Judas") to illustrate the kind of content in the Gnostic gospels. (If you do not have a computer and projector available, print out the individual slides and give copies to participants.)

Worksheet Key

(1) False (2) True (3) c (4) c (5) False

CHAPTER 7: MYTHS ABOUT HEAVEN

Main Idea

Heaven is at the heart of God's plan for creation; It's all we ever dreamt and more.

Teaching Tips

The issue of near-death experiences may arise during group discussion or teaching time. If it does, remind participants:

- (1) It is difficult to know what is happening in the unconscious mind during medical/physical trauma, so we should not be quick to rely on every near-death experience story;
- (2) Always compare personal testimonies against what Scripture says; and
- (3) Focus on what we *do* know about heaven that has been revealed in the Bible.

Digging Deeper

“What Will Heaven Be Like?” by Peter Kreeft (6/1/03), available at www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2003/juneweb-only/6-2-51.0.html

Surprised by Hope: Rethinking Heaven, the Resurrection, and the Mission of the Church by N.T. Wright (Harper One: 2008).

Journey into the Light: Exploring Near-Death Experiences by Richard Abanes (Baker: 1996).

Worksheet Key

(1) False (2) False (3) e (4) c (5) True

FEEDBACK

To improve future studies, be sure to get feedback from the group about teaching style, meeting location, discussion time, material covered, length of study, and group size. Choose a method that best suits your group: Anonymous evaluation sheet, e-mail response or questionnaire, open discussion. (See the feedback questions at the end of the study guide.)

Note: The inclusion of a work or website does not necessarily mean endorsement of all its contents or of other works by the same author(s).

STUDY GUIDE

The study guide which begins on the following page includes a reproducible worksheet and/or discussion questions for group discussion or personal reflection.

MYTHS ABOUT GOD & SCIENCE

Worksheet

Match the key terms with their definitions.

1. _____ Intelligent Design
 2. _____ Specified Complexity
 3. _____ Microevolution
 4. _____ Macroevolution
 5. _____ Methodological Naturalism
 6. _____ Natural Selection
 7. _____ Irreducible Complexity
 8. _____ Naturalism
- a. Small-scale evolution in which organisms adapt to their environment.
 - b. The supposed evolutionary process that produces entirely new species.
 - c. Something that is hard to reproduce by chance and matches an independently given pattern. This is a scientific method for detecting design.
 - d. The process by which nature “selects” the fittest organisms to survive. In Darwinian evolution this an unguided material process that gives no evidence of purpose or design.
 - e. The method in which science is the search for naturalistic explanations of the world. This limits science to purely material explanations.
 - f. The study of patterns in nature that are best explained as the result of intelligence.
 - g. This describes a system where if one part is missing the entire system cannot function. Evolution could not develop a system like this.
 - h. The worldview that sees the universe as a self-contained system of matter and energy that operates by unbroken natural laws, thus everything in the universe is the result of chance and necessity, not the purposeful design by God.

Discussion Questions

1. What arguments for ID do you find most convincing?
2. What are some examples of the naturalism worldview in pop culture, education, and the media?
3. Does ID prove the existence of the Christian God as revealed in the Bible? Why or why not?
4. How important is it for Christians to know what they believe about evolution? Can someone be a Christian and believe in evolution?
5. What questions do you still have about this topic and would like to learn more about?

MYTHS ABOUT GOD'S EXISTENCE

Discussion Questions

1. What do the terms *atheism* and *agnosticism* mean?
In your experience, are most of the people who don't believe in God atheists or agnostics?
How do you typically react when you hear people deny God's existence?
2. What are some reasons people say they have for not believing in God?
Do you find the arguments for God's existence convincing?
3. Why is it so difficult to live as a moral relativist? Give some examples (hypothetical or real) where it's clearly not best to claim that *all* moral values are really just made up by humans.
4. Do you think there is a *cultural* conflict in society between science and Christianity, or an *actual* conflict—or both?
Why or why not?
5. Often we hear claims in the media that science has discovered the explanation for why we are happy, why we fall in love, why praying helps, and even why we believe in God. What are some reasons people look to science to explain their lives?
What do you do when scientific explanations and biblical explanations appear to be different?
6. When we see evil in the world, it's easy to doubt God's goodness. What do you do when you doubt?
How would you help a friend who is doubting?
7. What are the biggest challenges to seeking justice today?
Read Luke 4:18. What are some ways you have seen God use people to bring "good news" to the poor and freedom to the oppressed?
8. How important is it to your faith that the Bible accurately record historical events?
Do you feel confident to defend the reliability of the Bible? Why or why not?
9. How would you explain to a naturalist (someone who believes that only physical things exist) what a soul is?
According to John 3:16 what is required of someone to have eternal life? Is there anything else people need to do to be saved?
10. Are all meanings and purposes in life equally as good for someone to have?
How does having a meaning and purpose that aligns with the God's purposes change one's life?

MYTHS ABOUT SPIRITUALITY

Worksheet

Circle “Myth” or “Truth” for each statement.

- | | | |
|--|------|-------|
| 1. There is no separation between you and God. | Myth | Truth |
| 2. You determine your own purpose in life. | Myth | Truth |
| 3. God is the ultimate standard of right and wrong. | Myth | Truth |
| 4. There are many paths that lead to God which don't require a belief in Jesus Christ. | Myth | Truth |
| 5. Tragedy happens to you because of your imperfect thinking. | Myth | Truth |
| 6. You are the truth just like Jesus is the truth. | Myth | Truth |
| 7. Jesus made it clear that he was God. | Myth | Truth |
| 8. Heaven in the Bible refers to the realm of inner consciousness. | Myth | Truth |

Discussion Questions

1. Why are the teachings of pop spirituality dangerous to a believer's walk with God?
2. Why is it important to understand what Bible verses mean in their context?
3. Suppose a friend asked you, “How can pop spirituality teachers be wrong when they bring peace to so many people?” How would you answer this?
4. Read Colossians 1:9. Where does true spiritual wisdom come from?
5. Read 1 Corinthians 2:6–13. What role does the Holy Spirit have in our spirituality?
6. What does “salvation” mean to pop spirituality teachers, and how is this different than what the Bible teaches that salvation means?

MYTHS ABOUT ANGELS

Worksheet

Fill in the blanks with “angels,” “humans,” or “God.”

1. When believers die, they are raised as glorified _____ with bodies like Christ’s.
2. Fallen _____ can possess people and cause illnesses, but _____ has complete authority over them.
3. Believers should seek spiritual guidance from _____.
4. _____ are spirits without bodies.
5. Both _____ and _____ should glorify and worship _____ alone.
6. As _____’s messengers, _____ will *not* bring new revelation to _____ that contradicts what has been revealed in the Bible.
7. There is no biblical support for the idea that _____ gives some people a special faith in the ministry of _____ so they are more likely to see _____.

Discussion Questions

1. After reading this chapter, what did you learn about angels that you previously didn’t know or misunderstood? What caught your attention the most?
2. Why do you think some people—including Christians—look to angels instead of God for guidance and comfort?
3. How much should we believe about angels based on personal testimony about angel encounters?
4. Many TV shows and movies depict angels differently than the Bible. Is there danger in watching this entertainment? Why or why not?
5. Read 1 Peter 3:22 and Romans 8:37–39. Why don’t believers need to fear fallen angels (demons) or other spiritual powers?

MYTHS ABOUT JESUS

Worksheet

1. What are the “Gnostic Gospels”?
 - a. Gospels based on the book of Matthew
 - b. Writings that portray more accurately who Jesus was
 - c. Writings that include eyewitness testimony about Jesus
 - d. Writings produced in the second and third centuries AD
2. True or False? The first-century historian Josephus does not mention Jesus in his writings.
3. Which is not true about the Buddhist manuscript Notovitch claimed to discover in the 18th century?
 - a. The manuscript was claimed to be discovered in a Buddhist monastery.
 - b. Notovitch claimed the manuscript described how Jesus traveled around India.
 - c. The manuscript that he claimed was discovered in India was actually discovered in Egypt.
 - d. No manuscript has been produced to verify Notovich’s claims that it even exists.
4. True or False? All rabbis in Jesus’ time were required to be married.
5. Which is true about the “Jesus Family Tomb”?
 - a. Joseph and Jesus were common names in the first century.
 - b. Most biblical scholars accept the “Jesus family tomb” theory.
 - c. It provides proof that Jesus and Mary Magdalene were married.
 - d. (a) and (b)

Discussion Questions

1. When you hear challenges to Jesus’ existence or the reliability of the Gospels, how do you usually respond?
2. Why do you think that in recent years more and more people are eager to remake Jesus into a New Age practitioner or an Eastern guru?
3. How would you respond to this objection: “Everyone knows that Jesus didn’t rise from the dead—Christians just believe that on blind faith.”
4. Read 1 Corinthians 15:12–18. Why is Jesus’ resurrection important for our salvation?
5. What is one topic in this chapter that you would like to learn more about?

MYTHS ABOUT THE BIBLE

Worksheet

1. True or False? With reckless abandon, the New Testament writers changed the oral tradition about Jesus.
2. True or False? The sources of the Gospels were likely eyewitnesses of events of Jesus' life.
3. The word *canon*:
 - a. Comes from a Greek word meaning "a group of books."
 - b. Refers to the first four books of the New Testament.
 - c. Comes from a Greek word meaning "measuring stick."
 - d. Refers to the Trinity in the Gospels.
4. Most of the 400,000 variations in New Testament manuscripts:
 - a. Affect doctrinal issues.
 - b. Show the significance of the poor quality of copying.
 - c. Are minor spelling errors and variations of word order.
 - d. Show that the Bible is not reliable.
5. True or False? What matters most is the *age* of the existing manuscripts not their *reliability* when compared.

Discussion Questions

1. Read 2 Timothy 3:14–16. Why is the reliability of "holy Scriptures" important?
2. There have been many attacks on the reliability of the Bible, especially the Gospels. Why do you think this has become so common?
3. Does the fact that we do not have the original manuscripts of the New Testament affect the reliability of the Bible in any way? Why or why not?
4. Does it matter whether the Gospel accounts of Jesus' life are reliable? Why or why not?
5. How has the information from this chapter helped your understanding and trust of the Bible?

MYTHS ABOUT HEAVEN

Worksheet

1. True or False? The physical world is evil, so we must focus on the spiritual which is good.
2. True or False? None of the features of this world will continue in the renewed creation.
3. Which of the following will end in the renewed creation?
 - a. Marriage
 - b. Death
 - c. Work
 - d. All of the above
 - e. (a) and (b)
4. In heaven we will worship God always; This means that we will all:
 - a. Sing hymns day and night.
 - b. Be in church every day.
 - c. Have an attitude of awe, gratitude, humility, and love.
 - d. Be really bored.
5. True or False? Christ is the first example or “firstfruits” of all who will be raised into new life.

Discussion Questions

1. What do you remember learning about heaven when you were growing up?
2. At what times in your life do most reflect on the afterlife? Give an example.
3. In what ways does having a belief in the reality of heaven change the way we live our lives now?
4. How can a person be sure that he or she will go to heaven?
5. What questions do you still have about heaven and would like to learn more about?

FEEDBACK

1.

What did you learn

teachings better?

2.

What was your favorite thing about this study, and why?

3.

How could the meeting location, setting, length, or time be improved?

4.

Did you think the material covered was too difficult, too easy, or just right?

5.

What would you like to see different about the group discussions?

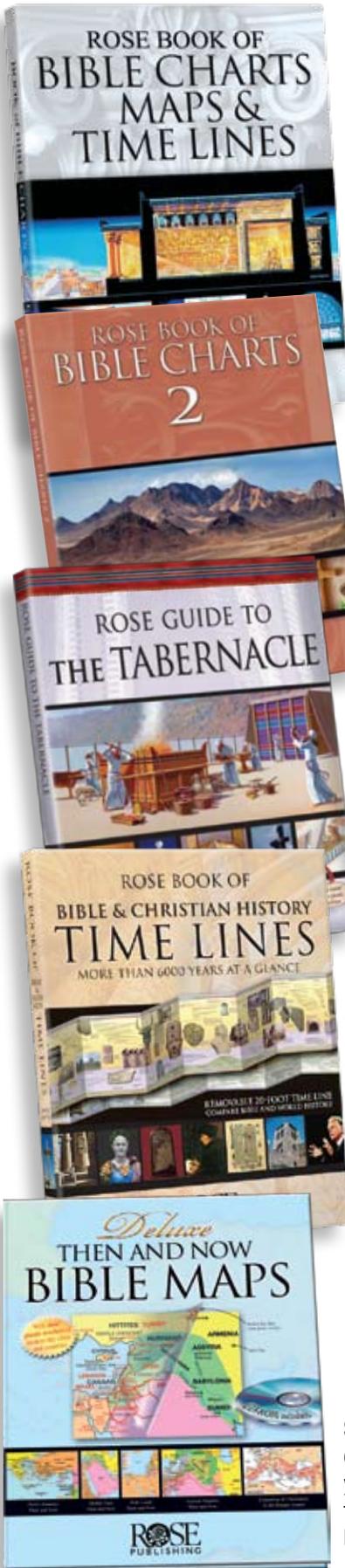
6.

What would you like to see different about the activities?

7.

What topic would you like to learn more about?

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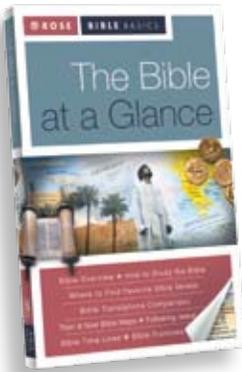
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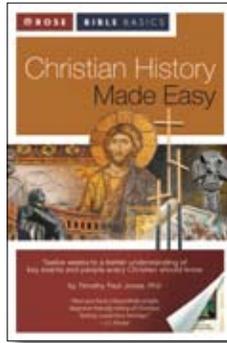
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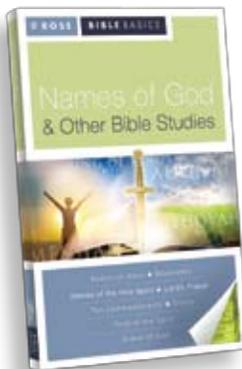
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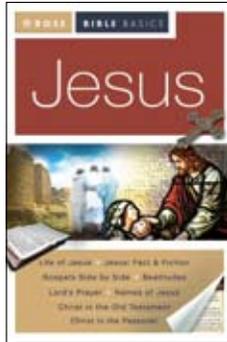
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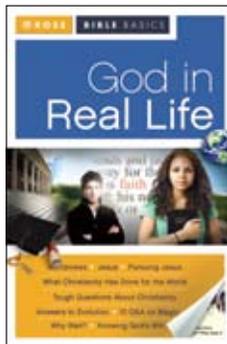
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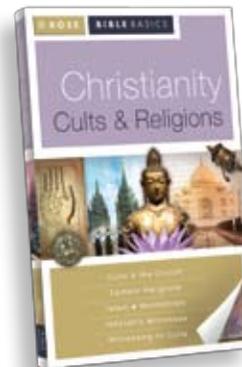
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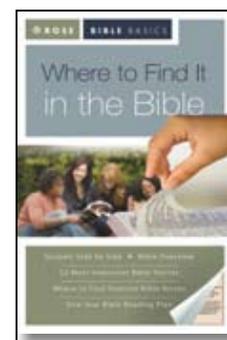
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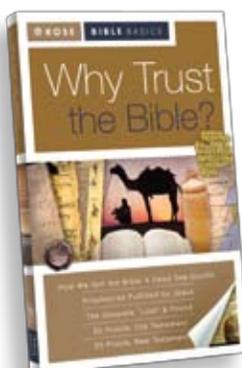
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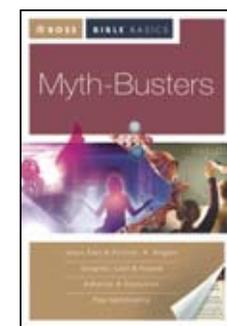
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