

## **QUESTION:**

Why would someone devote so much time researching a book they don't even believe in?

## **RESPONSE:**

The person who asked me this question did not explicitly indicate that s/he was asking it about \*me\* (i.e., WHAT in the WORLD are you THINKING???. Why would you bother writing all those books about the Bible if you DON'T EVEN BELIEVE IN IT???.). So I'm not going to take it personally. ☐ But as it turns out, I do get asked the question a lot.

In another post, soon to be delivered, I'll answer the question (on the assumption it was asked about me). For now, I'd like to take the opportunity that it presents to reproduce here the very beginning (from chapter one, word one!) of my Bible textbook that was published, as I may have noted, yesterday. Again, this book is for 19-20 year old college students. A lot of them want to know why \*they\* should study the Bible. Here is the first part of my book where I raise and respond to that question.

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The Bible is the most commonly purchased, widely read, and deeply cherished book in the history of Western Civilization. It is also the most widely misunderstood, misinterpreted, and misused. These reasons alone make it worth our time to study it. We can begin by considering the importance of the Bible in greater depth.

### Why Study the Bible?

People study the Bible, and should study the Bible, for lots of reasons - religious reasons, historical reasons, and literary reasons.

### Religious Reasons

Most people who study the Bible do so, of course, for religious reasons. Many people revere the Bible as the word of God, and want to know what it can teach them about what to believe and how to live. In this book our study of the Bible will not be in order to promote any particular religious point of view or theology - Baptist, Catholic, Jewish, Lutheran, agnostic, or anything else. We will instead be approaching the Bible from a historical and literary point of view. But even from these alternative points of view, there are solid religious reasons for studying the Bible — even for those people who are not themselves religious or interested in becoming religious. That is because in order to understand our world - and the religious people in it - we need to have a firmer grasp on the book that stands at the heart of the Jewish and Christian religions.

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