

Protestant Churchgoer Views On Bible Stories

A SURVEY OF 1,008 AMERICAN PROTESTANT CHURCHGOERS

Lifeway **research**

Methodology

- The online survey of 1,008 American Protestant churchgoers was conducted September 19-29, 2023, using a national pre-recruited panel
- Respondents were screened to include those who identified as Protestant/non-denominational and attend religious services at least once a month
- Quotas and slight weights were used to balance gender, age, region, ethnicity, education, and religion to more accurately reflect the population
- The completed sample is 1,008 surveys
- The sample provides 95% confidence that the sampling error from the panel does not exceed $\pm 3.2\%$ This margin of error accounts for the effect of weighting
- Margins of error are higher in sub-groups

Definitions

- **Evangelical Beliefs** are defined using the NAE Lifeway Research Evangelical Beliefs Research Definition based on respondent beliefs
- Respondents are asked their level of agreement with four separate statements using a four-point, forced choice scale (strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, strongly disagree). Those who strongly agree with all four statements are categorized as having Evangelical Beliefs
 - The Bible is the highest authority for what I believe
 - It is very important for me personally to encourage non-Christians to trust Jesus Christ as their Savior
 - Jesus Christ's death on the cross is the only sacrifice that could remove the penalty of my sin
 - Only those who trust in Jesus Christ alone as their Savior receive God's free gift of eternal salvation

“Of all the stories found in the Old Testament of the Bible, which one is your favorite?”

Exodus/Moses	13%
Noah	11%
Book of Genesis	10%
David and Goliath	8%
Adam and Eve	5%
Job	4%
Ruth	4%
Joseph	3%
Jonah	3%
Daniel	3%
Esther	2%
David	2%
Book of Psalms	2%
Cain and Abel	2%

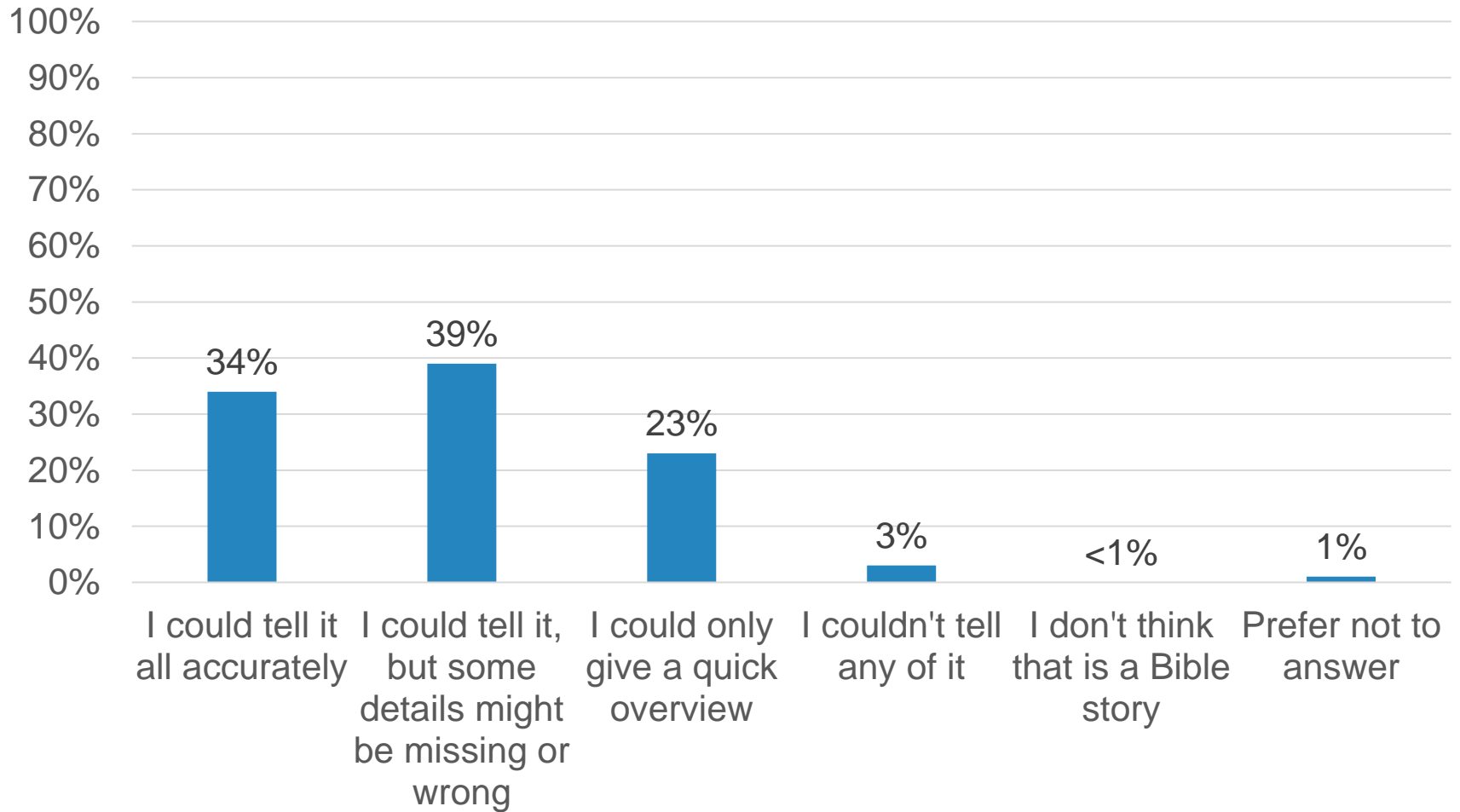
“Of all the stories found in the Old Testament of the Bible, which one is your favorite?” *continued*

Abraham	1%
Elijah	1%
Samson	1%
Not sure/Don't know	3%
None	7%

** 11% gave a response for a New Testament story or book*

Receiving less than 1%: Gideon, Isaiah, Jacob, Jericho, Joshua, Book of Judges, King Solomon, Other Old Testament story or book, prophets, Book of Proverbs, Samuel, Sarah, Sodom and Gomorrah, the Fiery Furnace, Tower of Babel

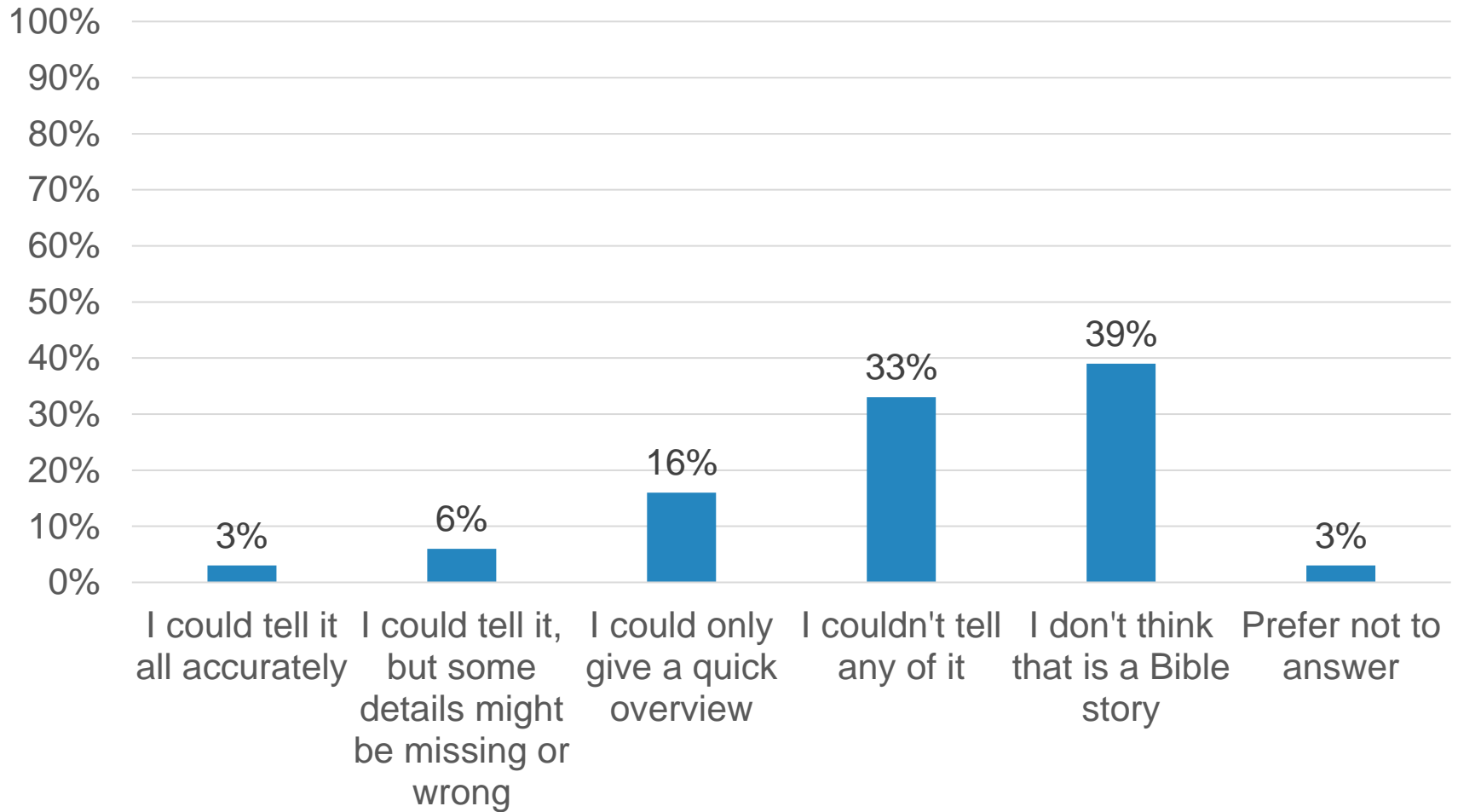
74% say they could tell the story of David and Goliath from memory



Lifeway research

Q: "How much of the story of David and Goliath found in the Bible could you tell from memory? (Select one)" n=1,008

39% do not think the story of Romulus and Remus is a Bible story

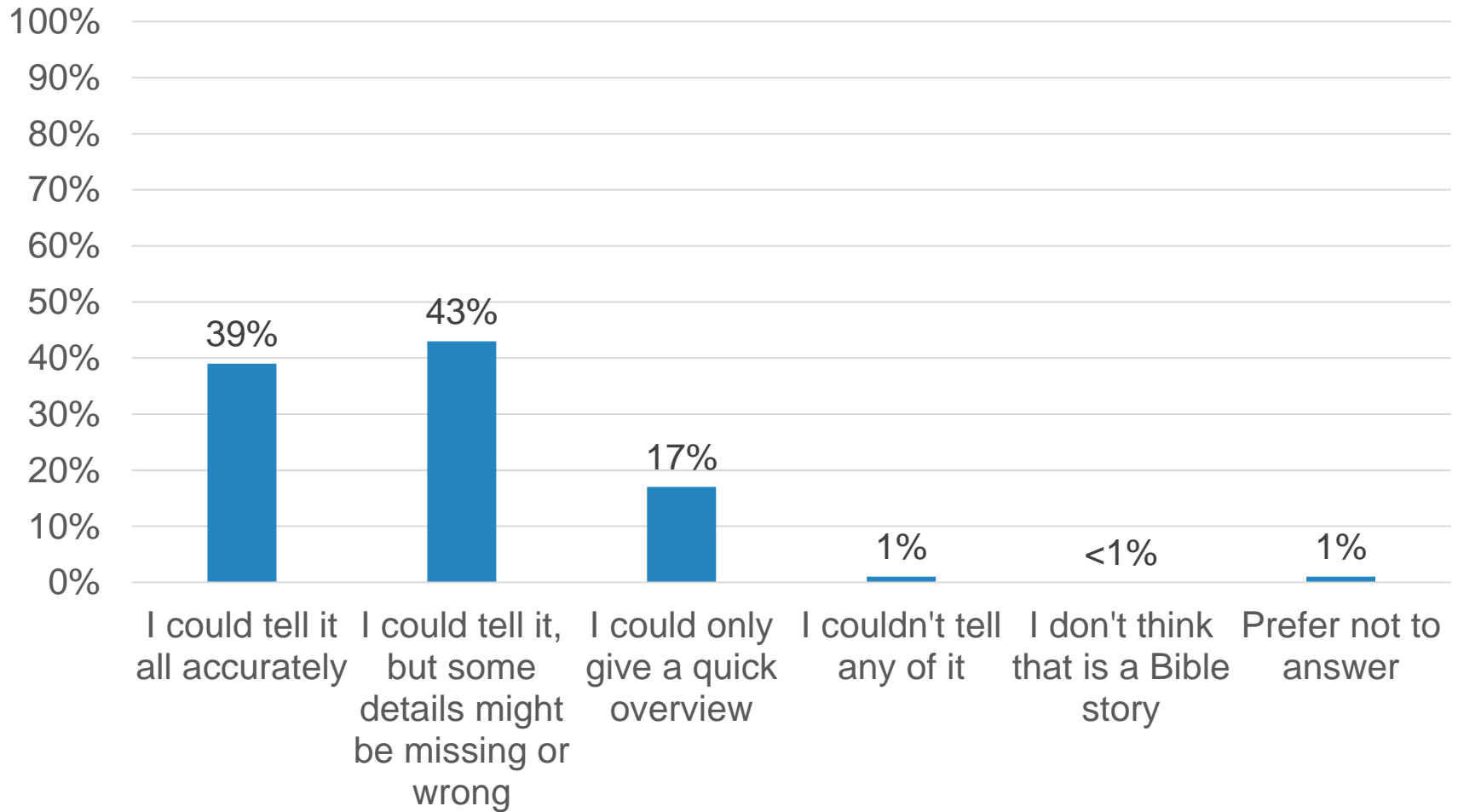


Note: The story of Romulus and Remus is not found in the Bible.

Lifewayresearch

Q: "How much of the story of **Romulus and Remus** found in the Bible could you tell from memory? (Select one)" n=1,008

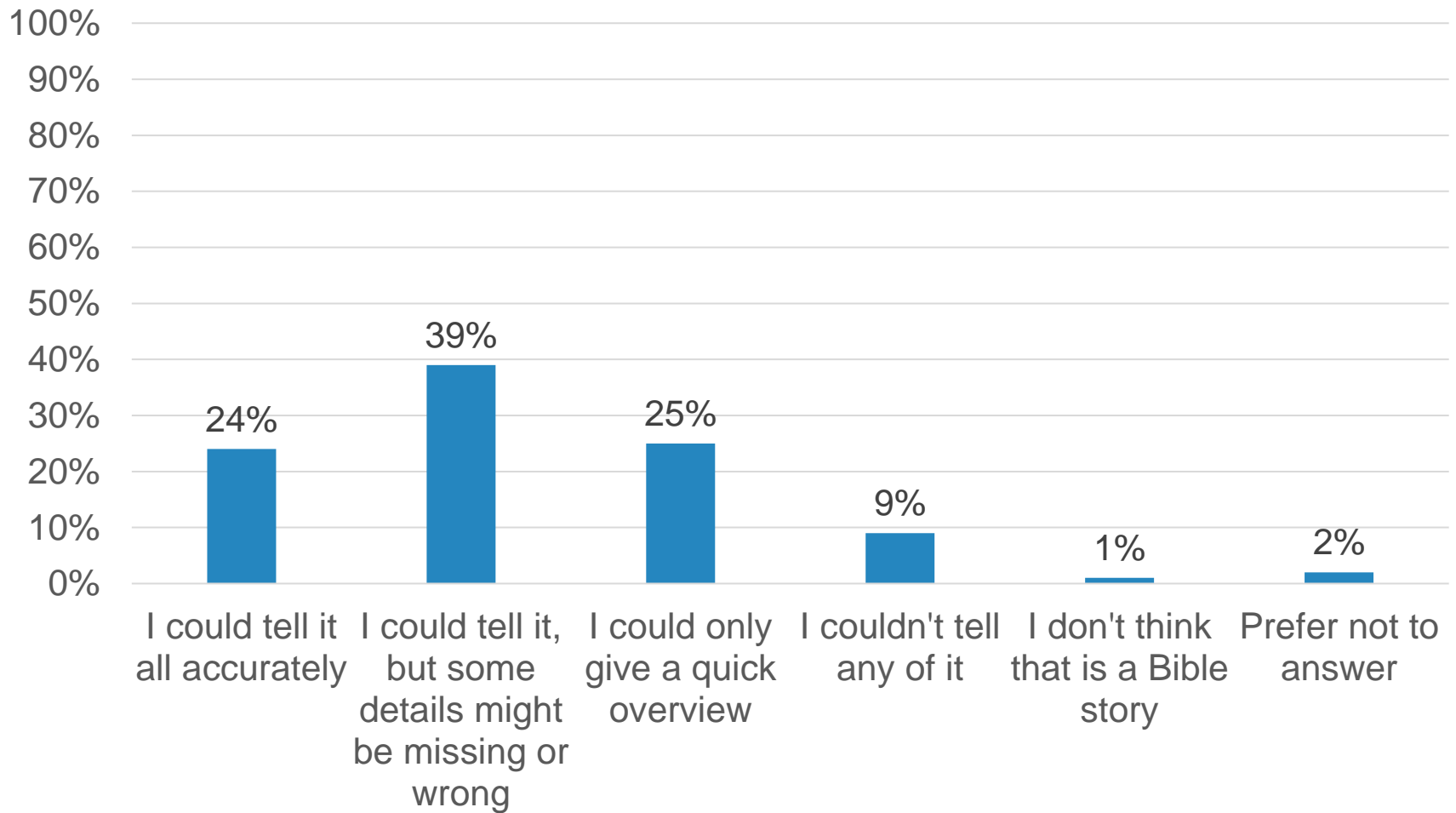
82% say they could tell the story of Noah and the ark from memory



Lifeway research

Q: "How much of the story of Noah and the ark found in the Bible could you tell from memory? (Select one)" n=1,008

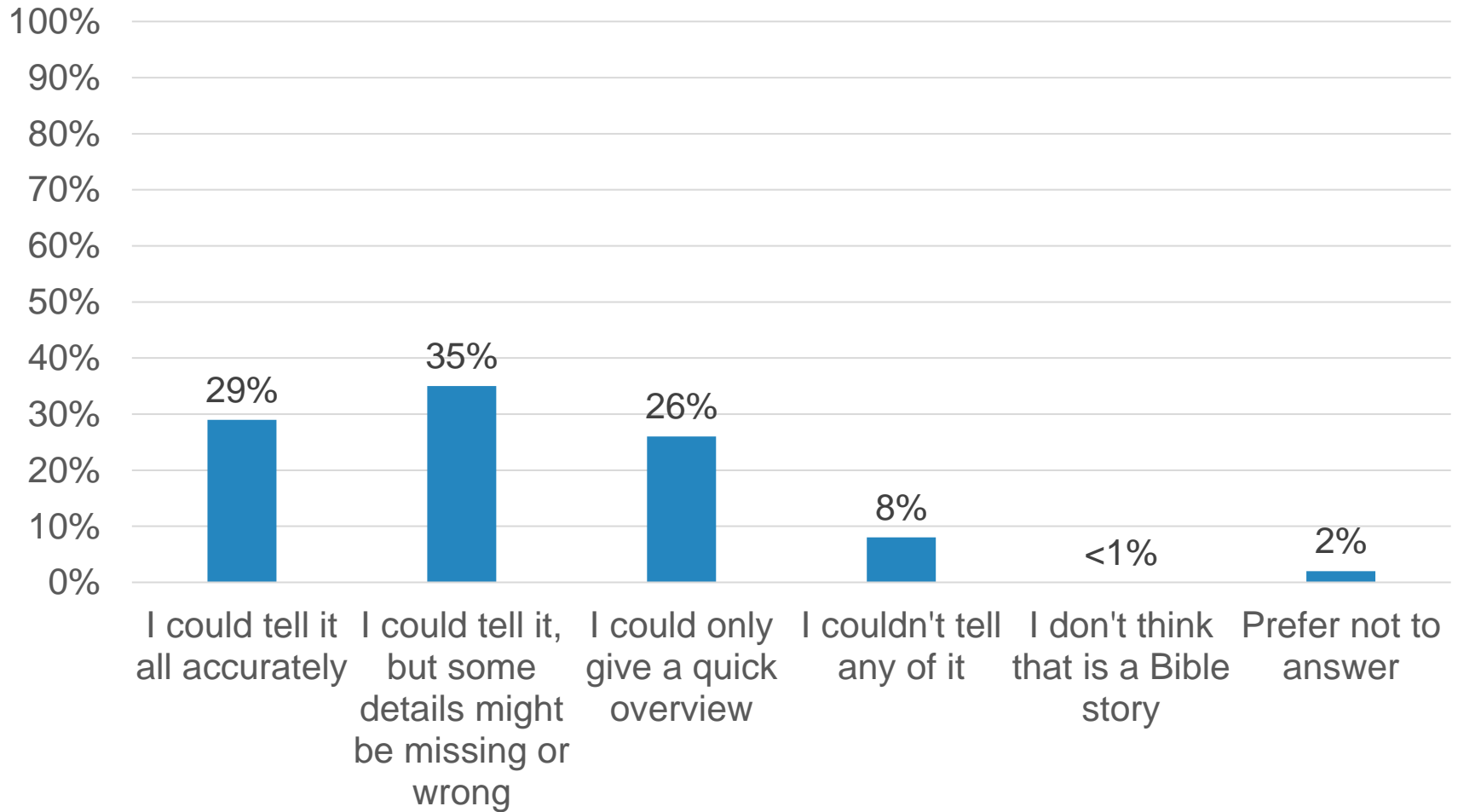
63% say they could tell the story of Daniel and the lion's den from memory



Lifeway research

Q: "How much of the story of Daniel and the lion's den found in the Bible could you tell from memory? (Select one)" n=1,008

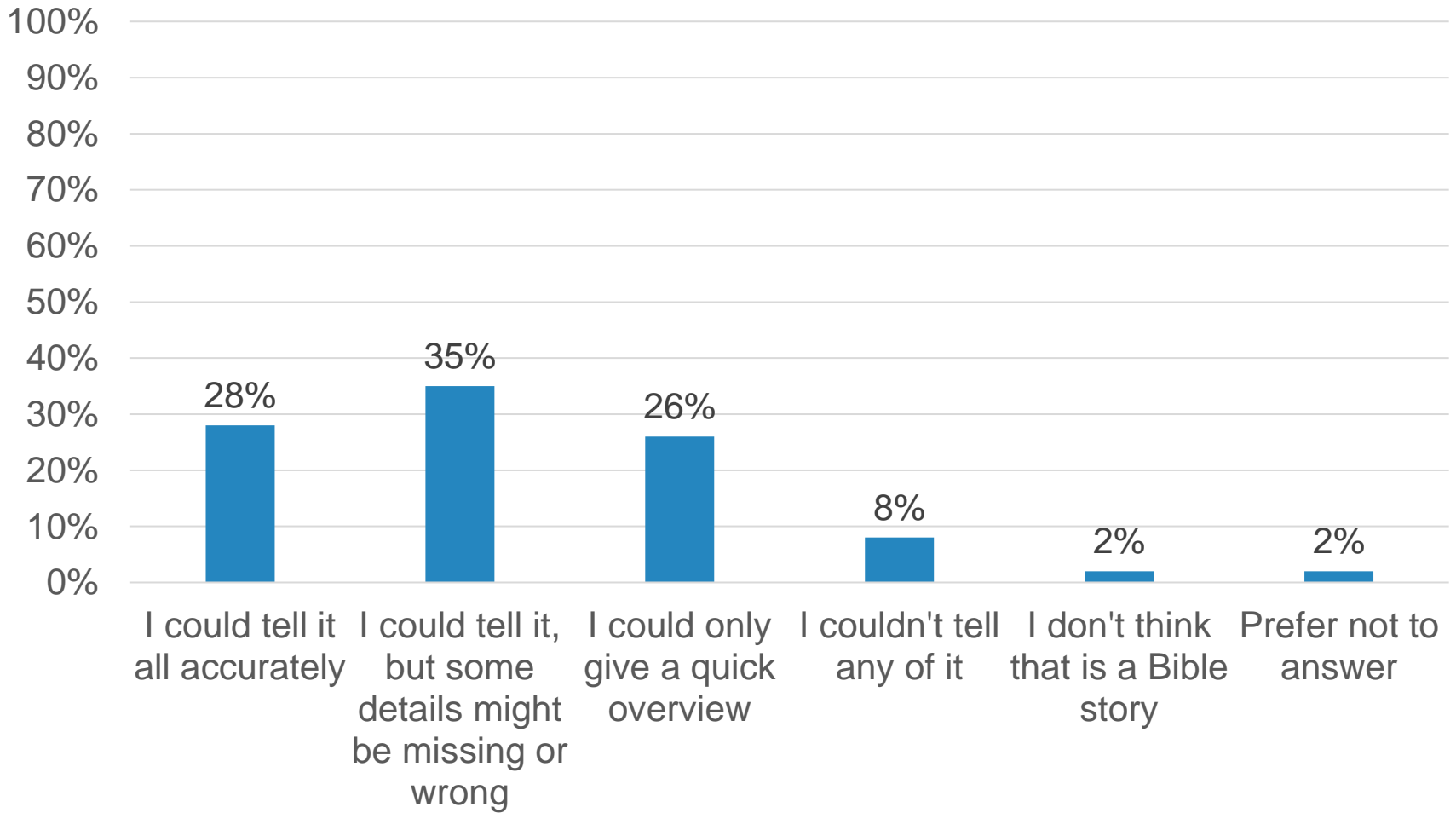
64% say they could tell the story of Abraham being asked to sacrifice Isaac from memory



Lifeway research

Q: "How much of the story of **Abraham asked to sacrifice his son Isaac** found in the Bible could you tell from memory? (Select one)" n=1,008

63% say they could tell the story of Jonah and the big fish from memory



Lifeway research

Q: "How much of the story of **Jonah and the big fish** found in the Bible could you tell from memory? (Select one)" n=1,008

Significant Differences

Gender

Age

Ethnicity

Region

Education Level

Denomination

Worship Service Attendance

Evangelical Beliefs

Significant Differences

Comparisons were made to determine if there are any significant statistical differences among gender, age, ethnicity, region, and education.

GENDER	AGE	ETHNICITY	REGION	EDUCATION
Male	18-34	White	Northeast	High School graduate or less
Female	35-49	African American	Midwest	Some college
	50-64	Hispanic	South	Bachelor's Degree
	65+	Other Ethnicities	West	Graduate Degree

Note: Region is defined by the US Census locations

Significant Statistical Differences

Comparisons were made to determine if there are any significant statistical differences among denomination, worship service attendance, and evangelical beliefs.

DENOMINATION	WORSHIP SERVICE ATTENDANCE	EVANGELICAL BELIEFS
Baptist	1 to 3 times a month	Yes
Methodist	4 or more times a month	No
Lutheran	Not sure	
Presbyterian/Reformed		
Christian/Church of Christ		
Non-denominational		

“How much of the story of David and Goliath found in the Bible could you tell from memory?”

- Females are more likely to select “I couldn’t tell any of it” than males (4% v. 1%)
- Those age 18-34 (7%) are more likely to select “I couldn’t tell any of it” than those 35-49 (2%) and 50-64 (1%)
- Hispanics (42%) are more likely to select “I could tell it all accurately” than African Americans (28%)
- Those in the Northeast are the least likely to select “I could only give a quick overview” (13%)
- Those with a Graduate Degree (43%) are more likely to select “I could tell it all accurately” than those who are High School Graduates or less (31%) or with some college (31%)
- Lutherans (51%) are more likely to select “I could tell it, but some details may be missing or wrong” than Baptists (37%), Methodists (24%), and Presbyterian/Reformed (36%)

“How much of the story of David and Goliath found in the Bible could you tell from memory?” *continued*

- Those who attend a worship service 4 or more times a month (43%) are more likely to select “I could tell it all accurately” than those who attend 1 to 3 times a month (24%)
- Those with evangelical beliefs are more likely to select “I could tell it all accurately” than those without evangelical beliefs (45% v. 23%)
- Those attending churches with worship attendance of 250 to 499 (41%) and 500+ (46%) are more likely to select “I could tell it all accurately” than those with attendance of less than 50 (28%) and 50 to 99 (30%)

“How much of the story of Romulus and Remus found in the Bible could you tell from memory?”

- Those age 50-64 (47%) and 65+ (51%) are more likely to select “I don’t think that is a Bible story” than those 18-34 (19%) and 35-49 (21%)
- Whites (42%) and Other ethnicities (46%) are more likely to select “I don’t think that is a Bible story” than African Americans (27%)
- Those in the Midwest (22%) are more likely to select “I could only give a quick overview” than those in the Northeast (13%) and South (14%)
- Those with a Graduate Degree are the most likely to select “I don’t think that is a Bible story” (57%)
- Presbyterian/Reformed (51%) and Non-denominational (48%) are more likely to select “I don’t think that is a Bible story” than Baptists (34%), Methodists (25%), and Christian/Church of Christ (25%)
- Those who attend a worship service 4 or more times a month (45%) are more likely to select “I don’t think that is a Bible story” than those who attend 1 to 3 times a month (32%)

“How much of the story of Romulus and Remus found in the Bible could you tell from memory?” *continued*

- Those with evangelical beliefs are more likely to select “I don’t think that is a Bible story” than those without evangelical beliefs (46% v. 32%)
- Those attending churches with worship attendance of 250 to 499 (50%) and 500+ (52%) are more likely to select “I don’t think that is a Bible story” than those with attendance of less than 50 (37%), 50 to 99 (29%), and 100 to 249 (40%)

“How much of the story of Noah and the Ark found in the Bible could you tell from memory?”

- Males are more likely to select “I could tell it, but some details might be missing or wrong” than females (47% v. 39%)
- Those age 35-49 (41%) and 50-64 (42%) are more likely to select “I could tell it all accurately” than those 65+ (33%)
- Those who are High School Graduates or less (43%) are more likely to select “I could tell it all accurately” than those with some college (34%)
- Baptists (44%), Presbyterian/Reformed (39%), Christian/Church of Christ (35%), and Non-denominational (41%) are more likely to select “I could tell it all accurately” than Lutherans (21%)
- Those who attend a worship service 4 or more times a month (48%) are more likely to select “I could tell it all accurately” than those who attend 1 to 3 times a month (29%)
- Those with evangelical beliefs are more likely to select “I could tell it all accurately” than those without evangelical beliefs (49% v. 28%)
- Those attending churches with worship attendance of less than 50 (21%) and 50 to 99 (21%) are more likely to select “I could only give a quick overview” than those with attendance of and 100 to 249 (14%) and 500+ (9%)

“How much of the story of Daniel and the lion’s den found in the Bible could you tell from memory?”

- Those age 50-64 (29%) are more likely to select “I could tell it all accurately” than those 18-34 (17%)
- African Americans (15%) are more likely to select “I couldn’t tell any of it” than Whites (8%) and Other Ethnicities (5%)
- Those in the South (26%) and West (28%) are more likely to select “I could only give a quick overview” than those in the Northeast (17%)
- Those with a Graduate Degree (33%) are more likely to select “I could tell it all accurately” than those who are High School Graduates or less (21%) or with some college (21%)
- Non-denominational (32%) are more likely to select “I could tell it all accurately” than Lutherans (8%) and Presbyterian/Reformed (16%)
- Those who attend a worship service 4 or more times a month (32%) are more likely to select “I could tell it all accurately” than those who attend 1 to 3 times a month (14%)

“How much of the story of Daniel and the lion’s den found in the Bible could you tell from memory?” *continued*

- Those with evangelical beliefs are more likely to select “I could tell it all accurately” than those without evangelical beliefs (33% v. 15%)
- Those attending churches with worship attendance of 500+ (33%) are more likely to select “I could tell it all accurately” than those with attendance of less than 50 (20%), 50 to 99 (22%), and 100 to 249 (23%)
- Those attending churches with worship attendance of less than 50 are the most likely to select “I couldn’t tell any of it” (16%)

“How much of the story of Abraham asked to sacrifice his son Isaac found in the Bible could you tell from memory?”

- Those age 50-64 (32%) and 65+ (32%) are more likely to select “I could tell it all accurately” than those 18-34 (22%)
- Whites (30%) and Other Ethnicities (37%) are more likely to select “I could tell it all accurately” than African Americans (21%)
- Those with a Graduate Degree are the most likely to select “I could tell it all accurately” (40%)
- Presbyterian/Reformed (33%) and Non-denominational (37%) are more likely to select “I could tell it all accurately” than Lutherans (15%)
- Those who attend a worship service 4 or more times a month (38%) are more likely to select “I could tell it all accurately” than those who attend 1 to 3 times a month (18%)
- Those with evangelical beliefs are more likely to select “I could tell it all accurately” than those without evangelical beliefs (39% v. 19%)
- Those attending churches with worship attendance of 250 to 499 (39%) and 500+ (38%) are more likely to select “I could tell it all accurately” than those with attendance of less than 50 (21%) and 50 to 99 (26%)
- Those attending churches with worship attendance of less than 50 (14%) are more likely to select “I could tell it all accurately” than those with attendance of and 100 to 249 (14%), 250 to 499 (6%), and 500+ (9%)

“How much of the story of Abraham asked to sacrifice his son Isaac found in the Bible could you tell from memory?”

continued

- Those attending churches with worship attendance of 250 to 499 (39%) and 500+ (38%) are more likely to select “I could tell it all accurately” than those with attendance of less than 50 (21%) and 50 to 99 (26%)
- Those attending churches with worship attendance of less than 50 (14%) are more likely to select “I couldn’t tell any of it” than those with attendance of and 100 to 249 (6%), 250 to 499 (6%), and 500+ (4%)

“How much of the story of Jonah and the big fish asked to sacrifice his son Isaac found in the Bible could you tell from memory?”

- Those age 50-64 (31%) and 65+ (31%) are more likely to select “I could tell it all accurately” than those 18-34 (19%)
- Whites (38%) are more likely to select “I could tell it, but some details might be missing or wrong” than African Americans (30%) and Hispanics (25%)
- African Americans are the least likely to select “I could tell it all accurately” (18%)
- Those in the Northeast (36%) are more likely to select “I could tell it all accurately” than those in the Midwest (24%)
- Those with a Graduate Degree are the most likely to select “I could tell it all accurately” (42%)
- Baptists (27%), Methodists (27%), Presbyterian/Reformed (31%) and Non-denominational (35%) are more likely to select than Lutherans (11%)
- Those who attend a worship service 4 or more times a month (36%) are more likely to select “I could tell it all accurately” than those who attend 1 to 3 times a month (17%)

“How much of the story of Jonah and the big fish asked to sacrifice his son Isaac found in the Bible could you tell from memory?” *continued*

- Those with evangelical beliefs are more likely to select “I could tell it all accurately” than those without evangelical beliefs (38% v. 17%)
- Those attending churches with worship attendance of 500+ (43%) are more likely to select “I could tell it all accurately” than those with attendance of less than 50 (26%), 50 to 99 (21%), and 100 to 249 (27%)
- Those attending churches with worship attendance of less than 50 (12%) and 50 to 99 (12%) are more likely to select “I couldn’t tell any of it” than those with attendance of and 100 to 249 (6%), 250 to 499 (5%), and 500+ (1%)

Protestant Churchgoer Views On Bible Stories

A SURVEY OF 1,008 AMERICAN PROTESTANT CHURCHGOERS

Lifeway **research**