Bible Literacy 2026

A SURVEY OF 2,012 AMERICAN CHRISTIAN CHURCHGOERS

Lifeway Research

Methodology

- The online survey of 2,012 Americans was conducted August 12-29, 2026, using a national pre-recruited panel
- Respondents were screened to include those who identified as Protestant/non-denominational, Catholic, or Orthodox Christian and who attend church in a typical 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 2,012 surveys
- The sample provides 95% confidence that the sampling error from the panel does not exceed ±2.2% This margin of error accounts for the effect of weighting
- Margins of error are higher in sub-groups

Lifeway Research

Acknowledgements

Lifeway Research was assisted by an **Advisory Group** that provided encouragement to pursue this study, influenced its direction, offered ideas and examples, and gave feedback on survey drafts.

Many thanks to each member who contributed to this study:

Jen Wilkin

George Guthrie

John Paul Basham

Andrea Lennon

Ken Braddy

Lyle Larson

Reid Patton

Overall Grades

	Percent
A	9%
B	8%
C	9%
D	9%
F	65%

Ovarall Mean Score: 51

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People of the Bible

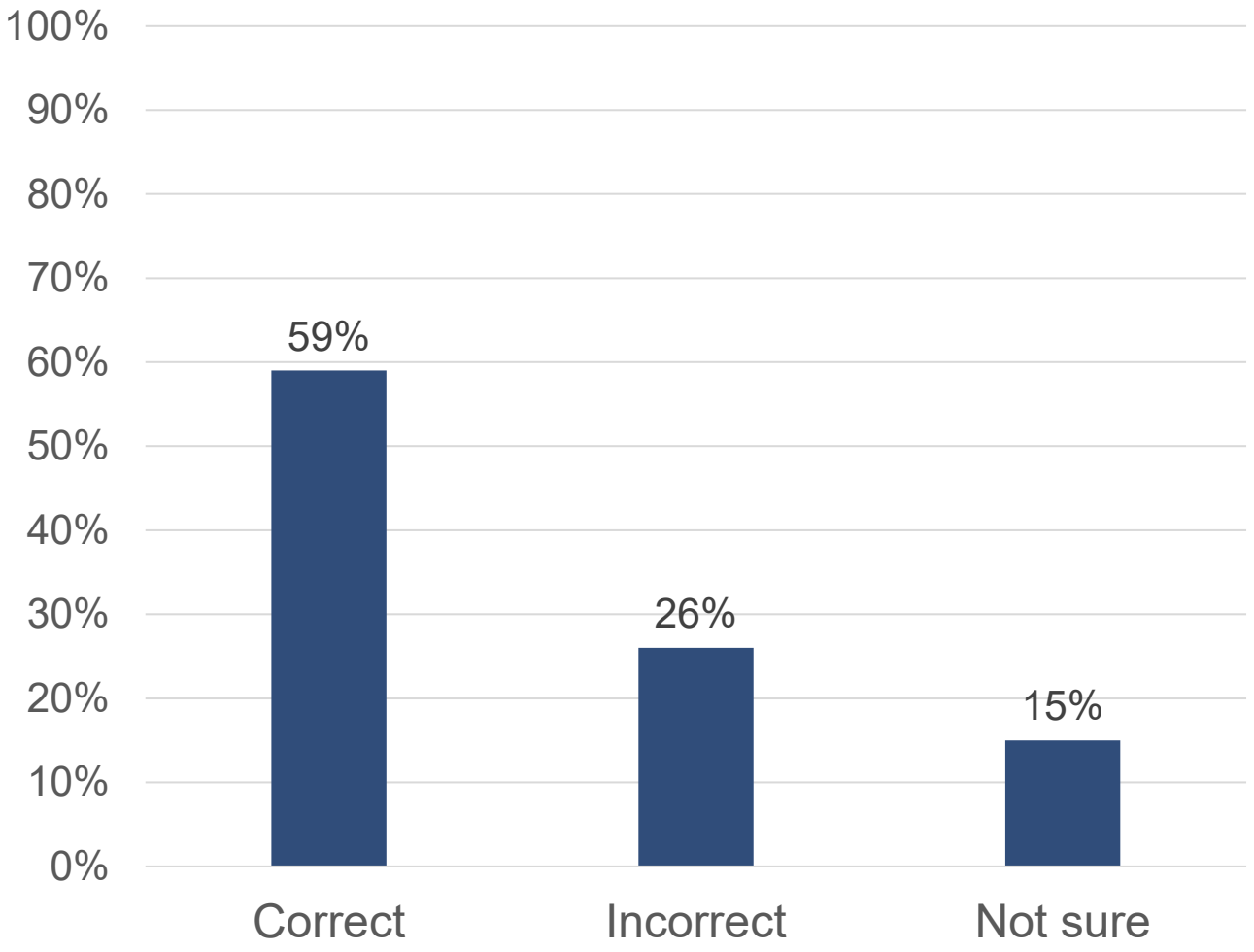
Mean Score 60

A few of the questions on the survey quoted text from the Bible. Instructions and a pulldown menu allowed respondents to view these in their choice of one of five translations:

Christian Standard Bible (CSB)
English Standard Version (ESV)
New International Version (NIV)
King James Version (KJV) *default*
Revised Standard Version (RSV)

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“When Jesus asked, ‘But whom say ye that I am?’ <u>who</u> answered, ‘Thou art the Christ.’?”

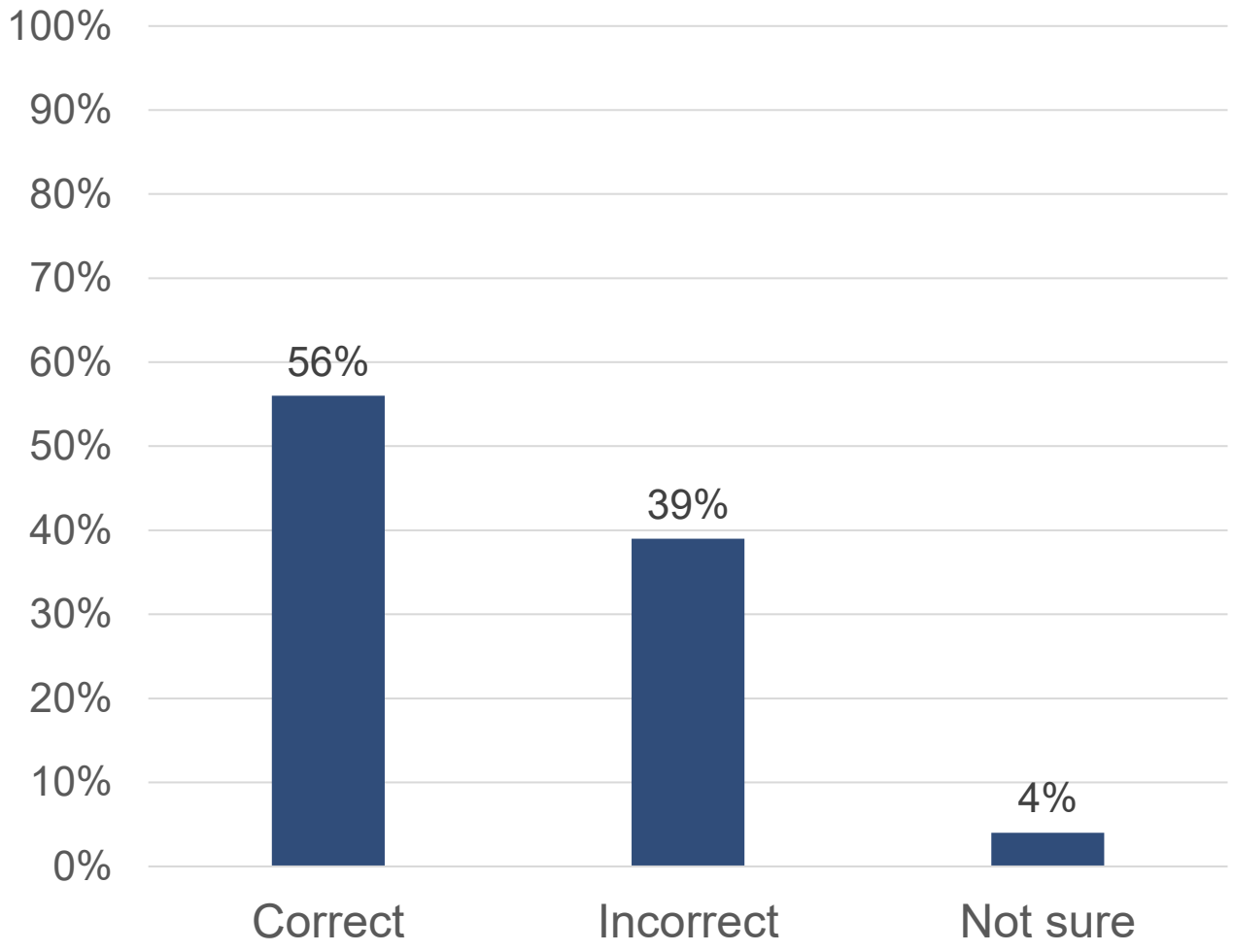


*Correct answer: Peter

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Q22: “When Jesus asked, “But whom say ye that I am?” **who** answered, “Thou art the Christ.”?” n=2,012

“Which one of the following were chosen by Jesus as one of his twelve disciples?”

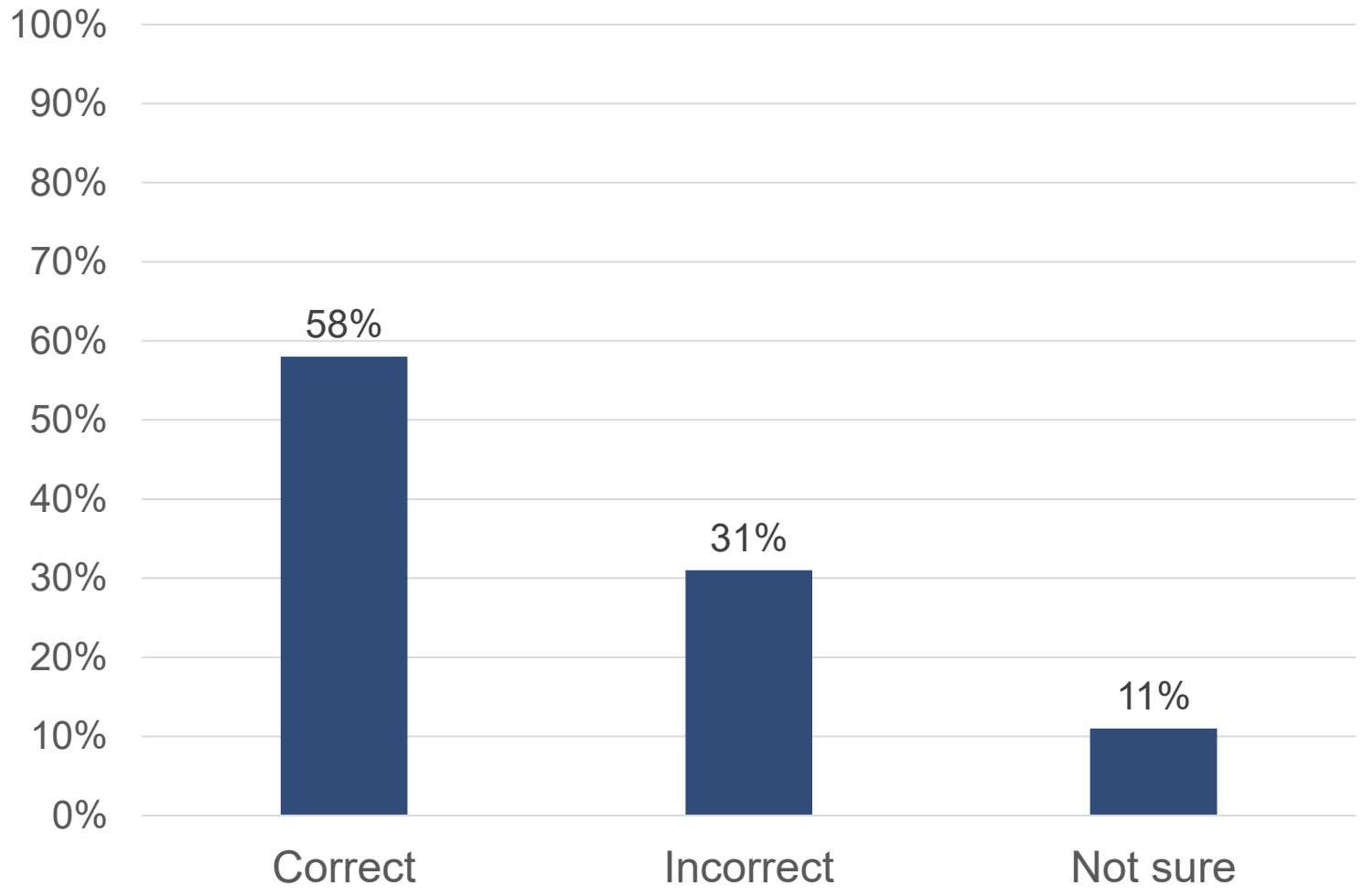


*Correct answer: Matthew

Lifeway Research

Q23: “Which one of the following were chosen by Jesus as one of his twelve disciples?” n=2,012

“Who was the person whom Pontius Pilate released during Jesus’ trial?”

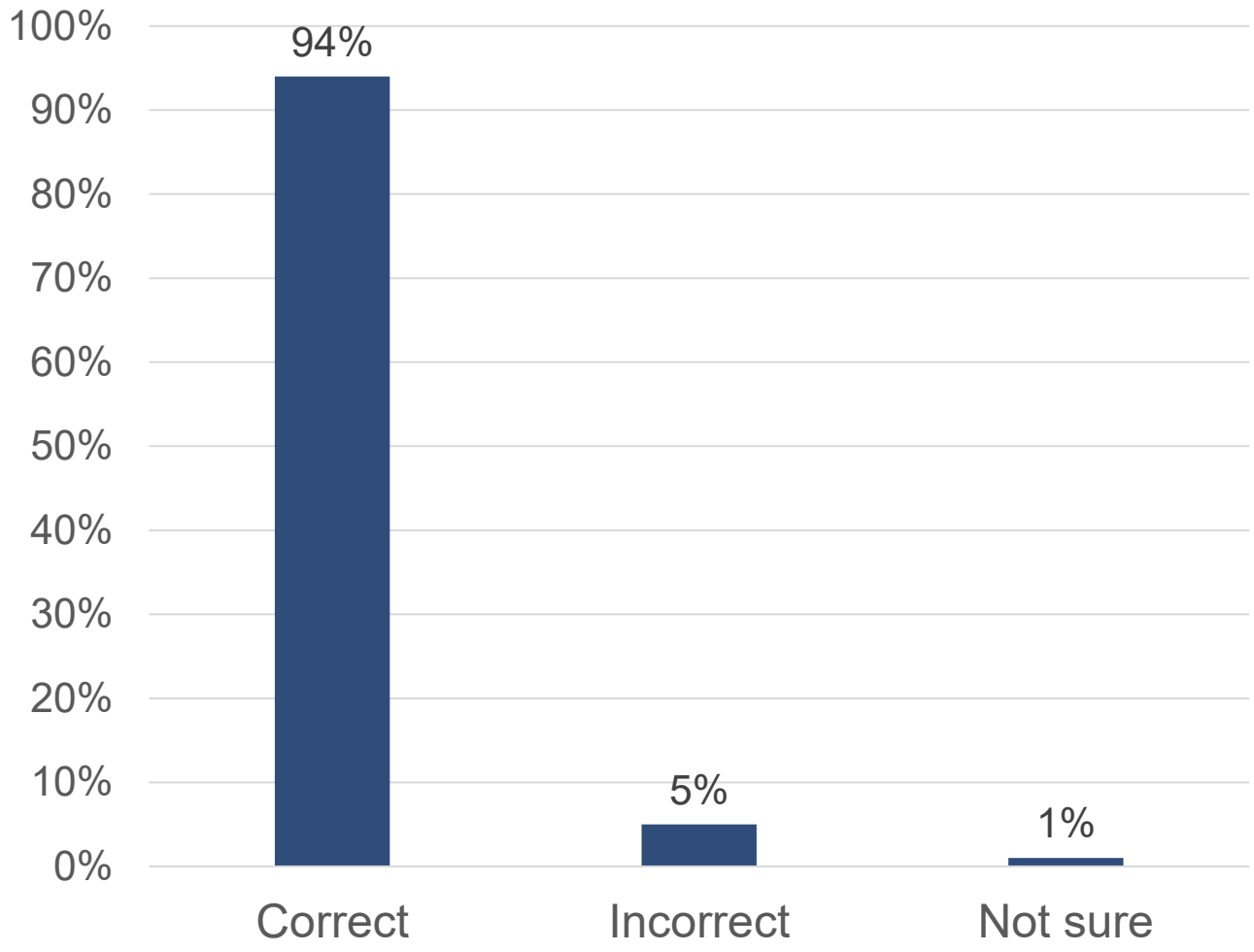


*Correct answer: Barabbas

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Q24: “Who was the person whom Pontius Pilate released during Jesus’ trial?” n=2,012

“Who received the 10 Commandments from God?”

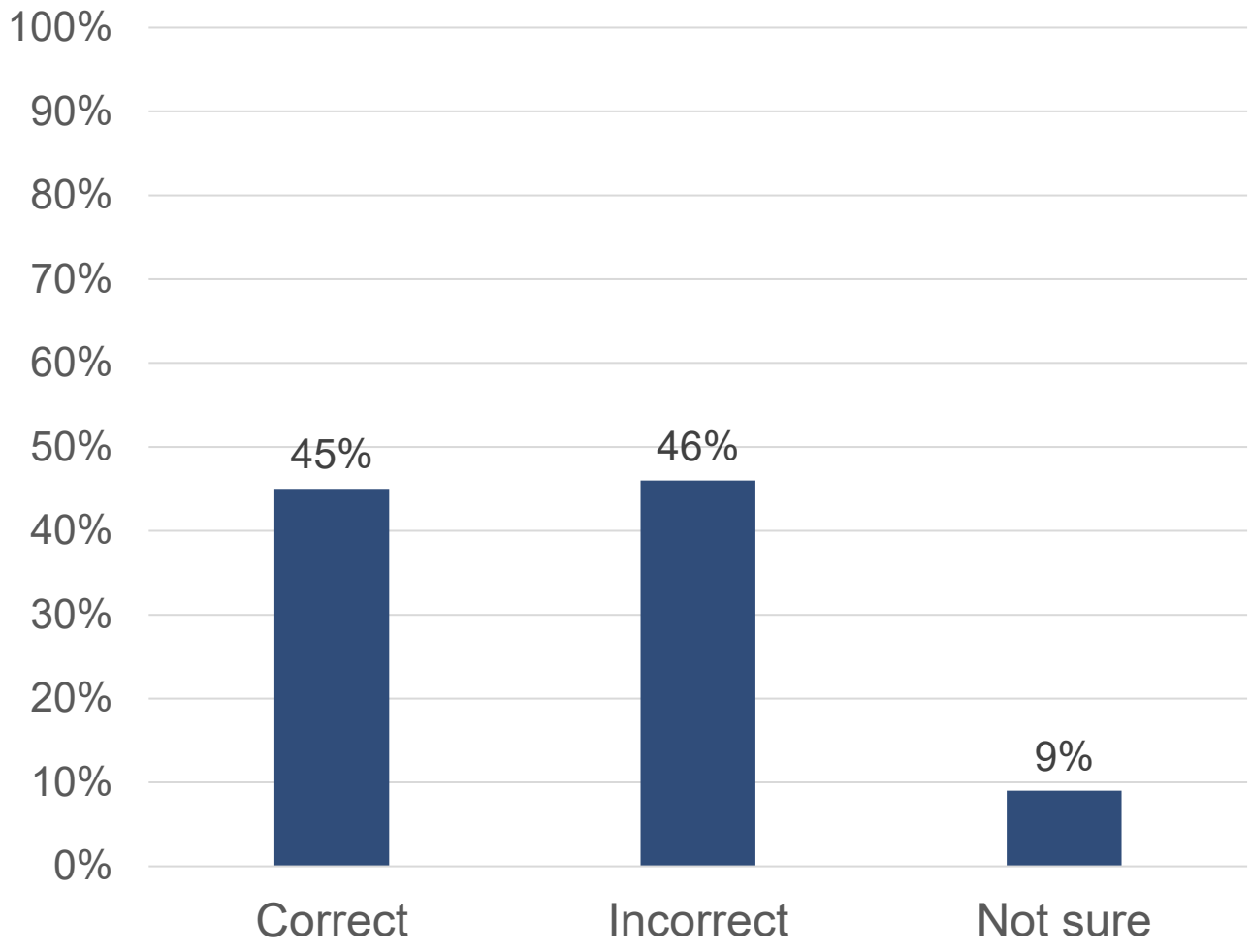


*Correct answer: Moses

Lifeway Research

Q25: “Who received the 10 Commandments from God?” n=2,012

“Who was the first king of Israel?”

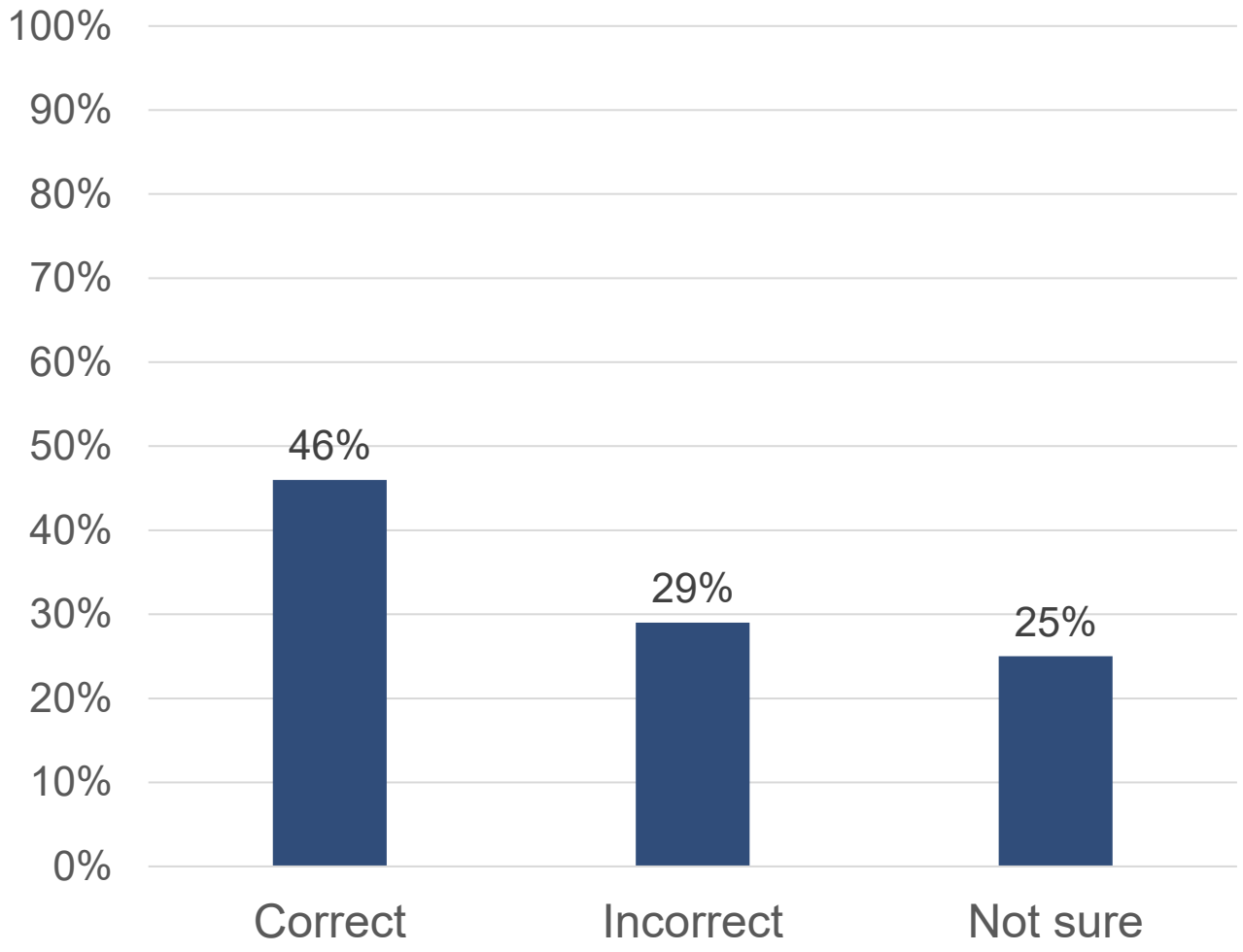


*Correct answer: Saul

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Q26: “Who was the first king of Israel?” n=2,012

“Who interpreted for King Belshazzar the writing on the wall?”



*Correct answer: Daniel

Lifeway Research

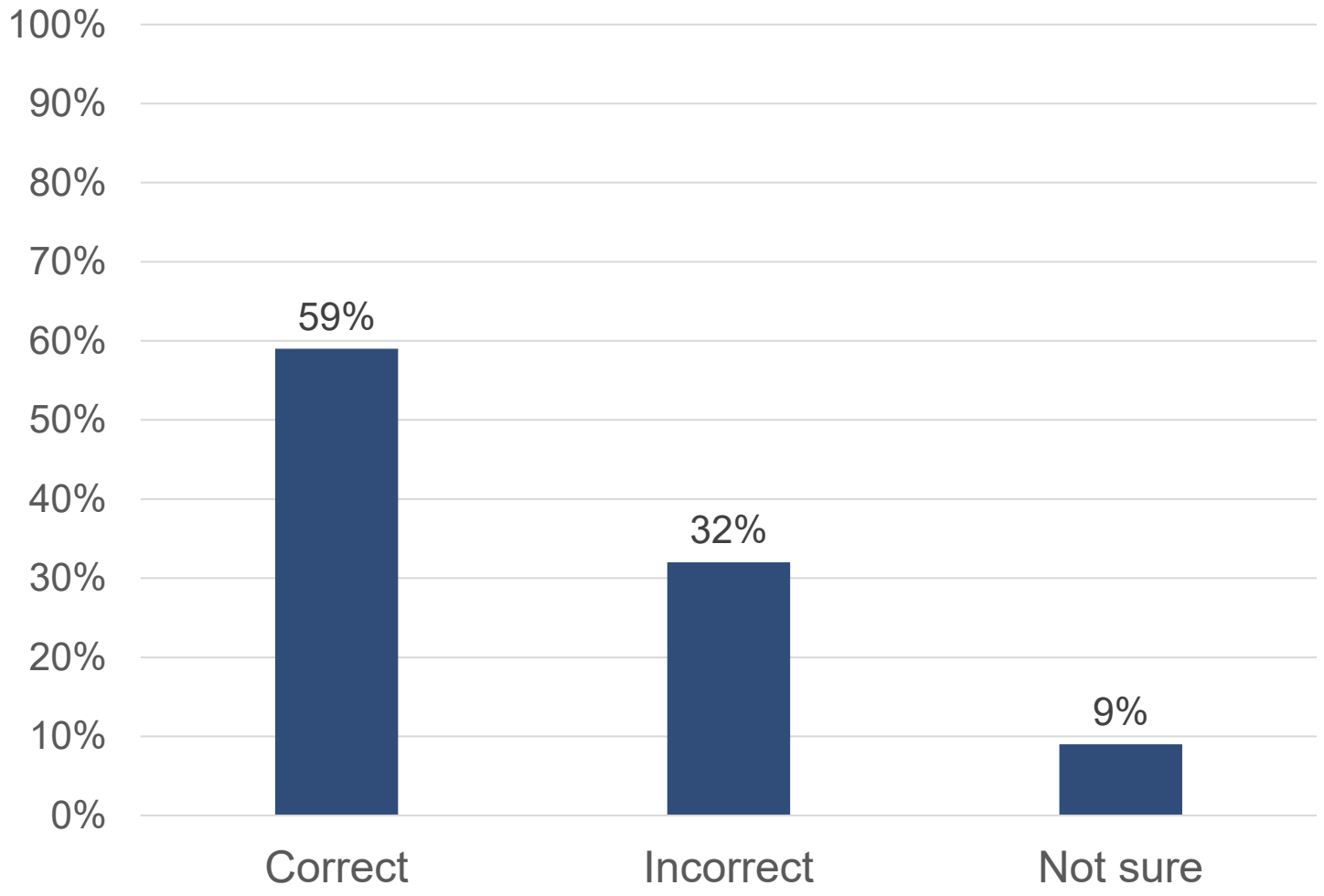
Q27: “Who interpreted for King Belshazzar the writing on the wall?” n=2,012

Which Book of the Bible

Mean Score=51

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“Where in the Bible would you find: the Ten Commandments”

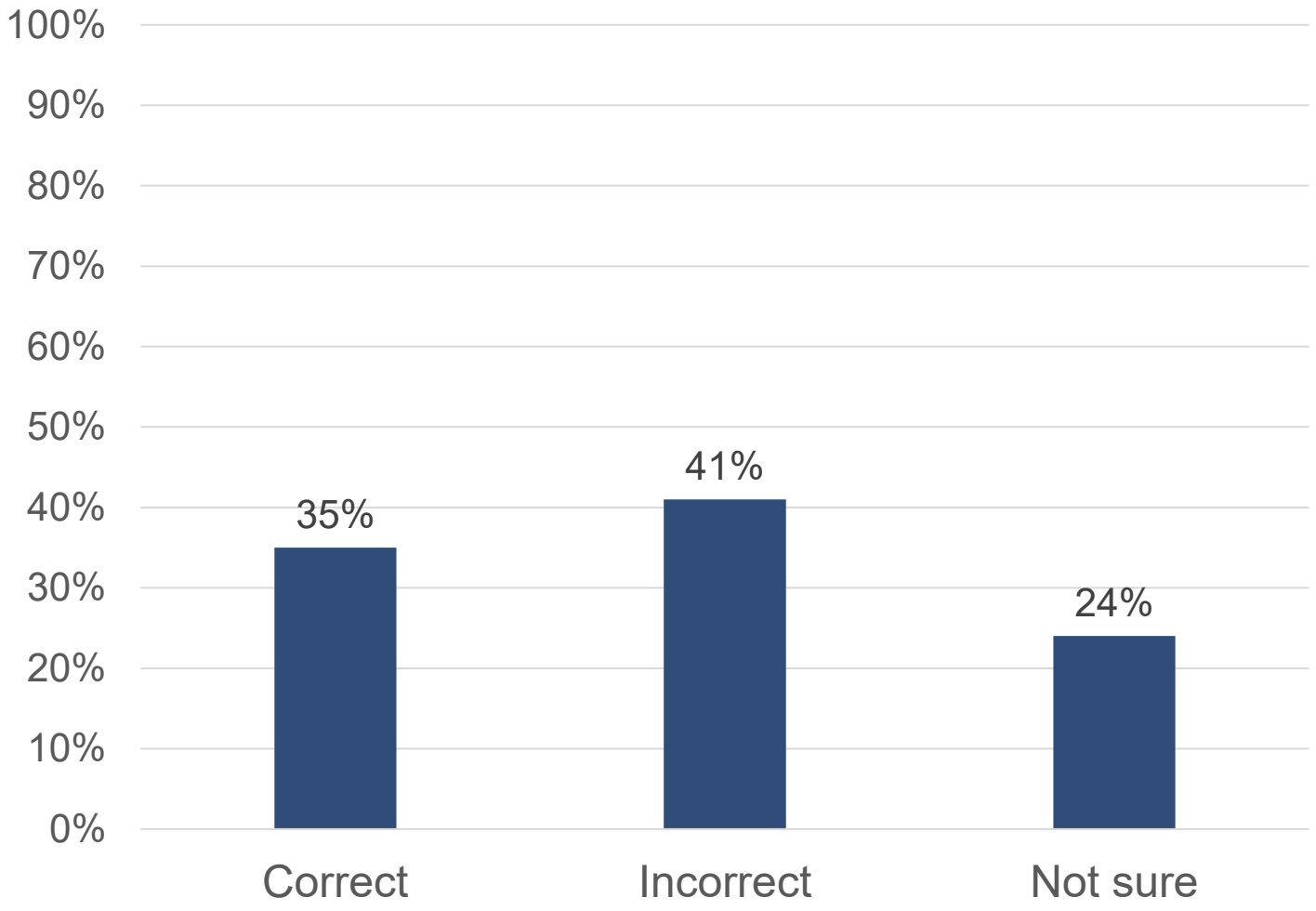


*Correct answer: Exodus

Lifeway Research

Q28: “Where in the Bible would you find: the Ten Commandments” n=2,012

“Where in the Bible would you find: the anointing of the first king of Israel”

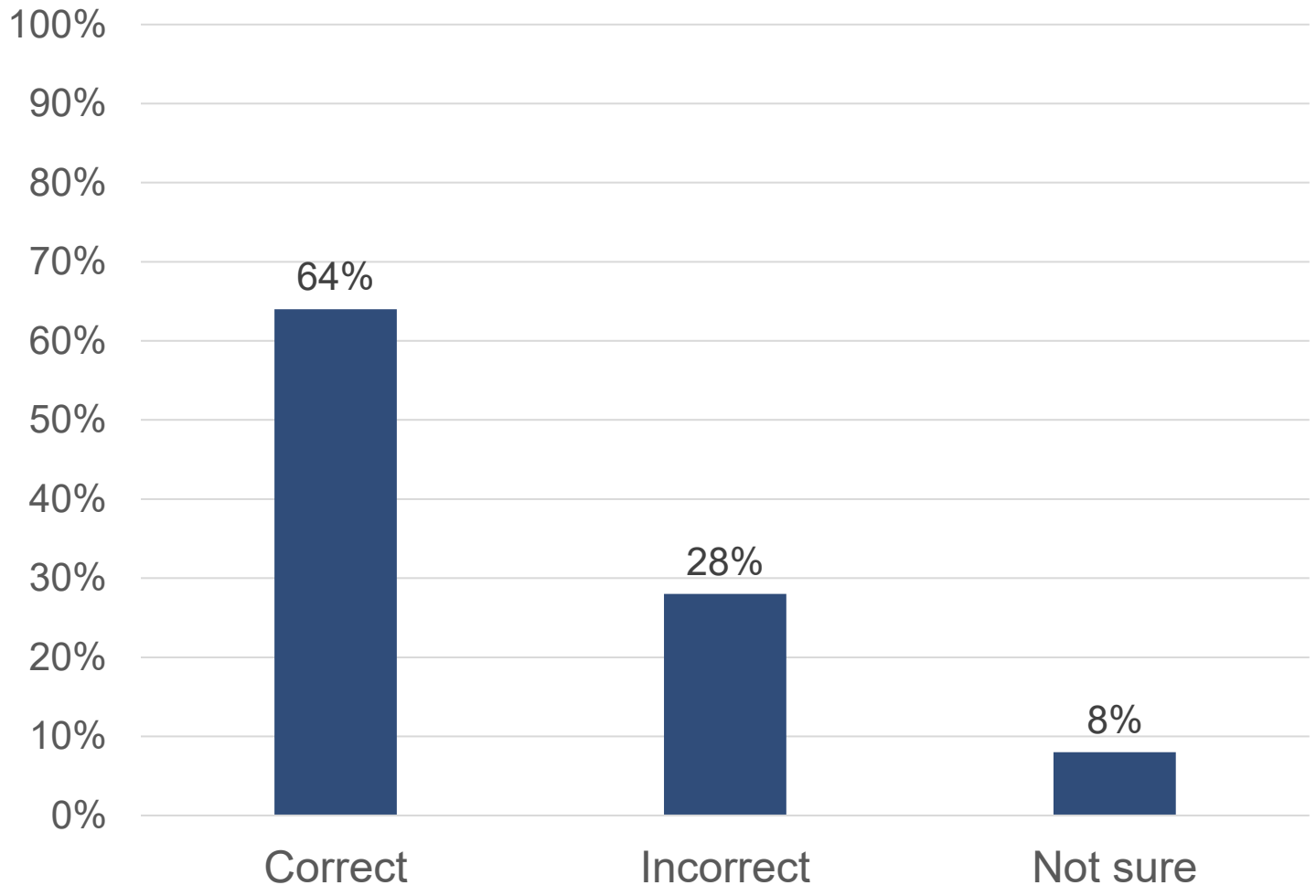


*Correct answer: 1 Samuel

Lifeway Research

Q29: “Where in the Bible would you find: the anointing of the first king of Israel” n=2,012

“Where in the Bible would you find: The Great Flood”

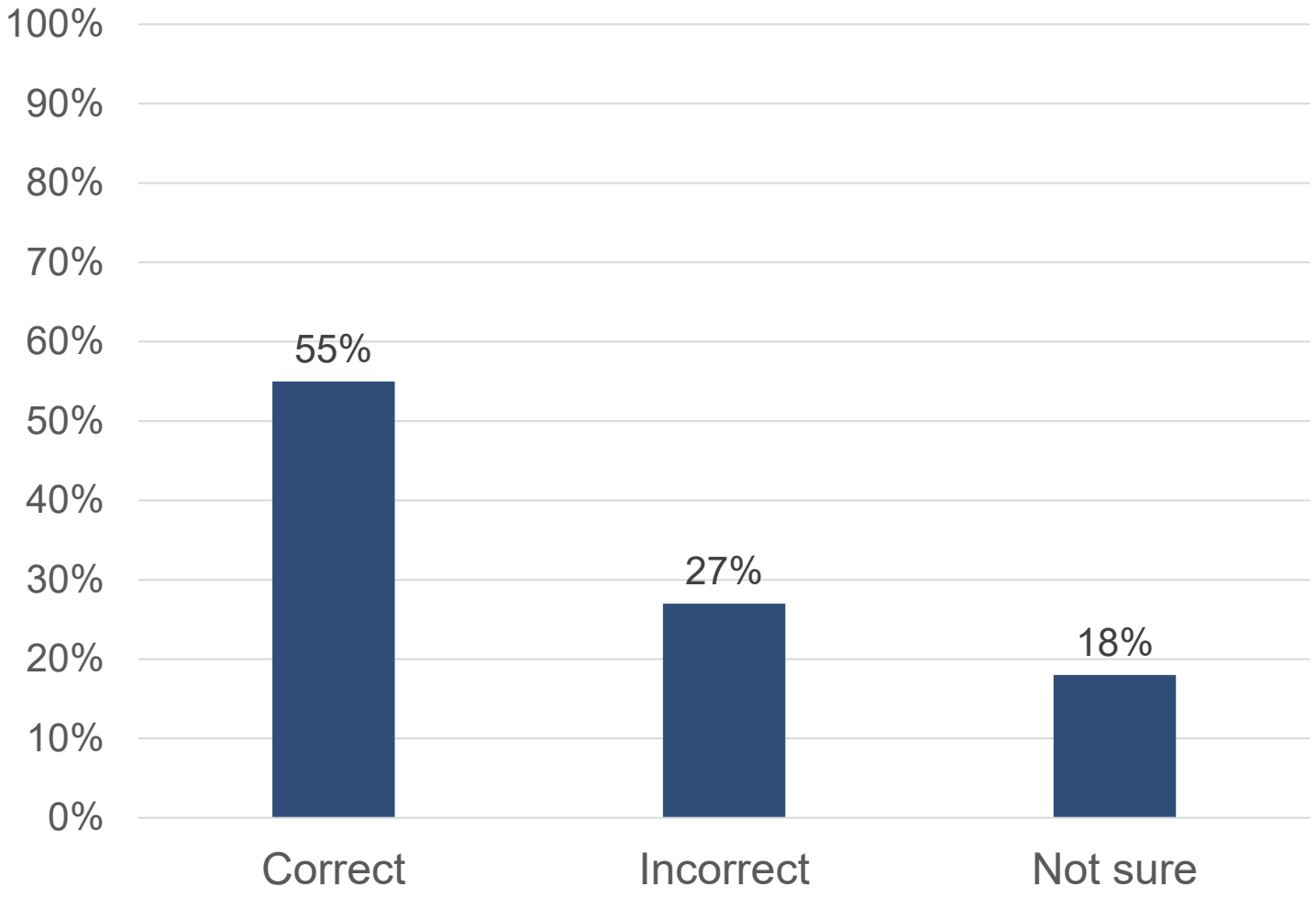


*Correct answer: Genesis

Lifeway Research

Q30: “Where in the Bible would you find: The Great Flood” n=2,012

“Where in the Bible would you find: The Sermon on the Mount”

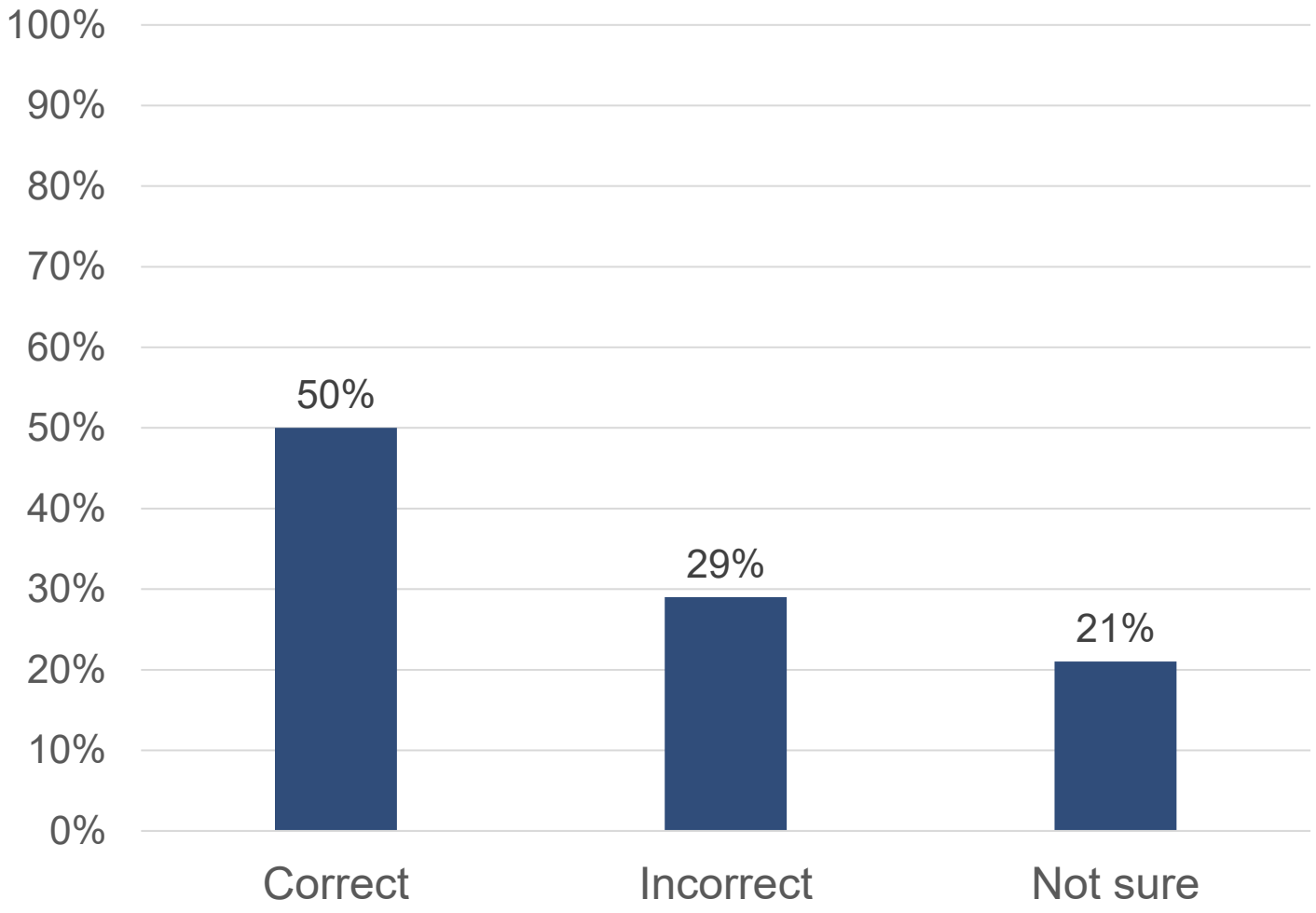


*Correct answer: Matthew

Lifeway Research

Q31: “Where in the Bible would you find: The Sermon on the Mount” n=2,012

“Where in the Bible would you find: The story of the Good Samaritan”

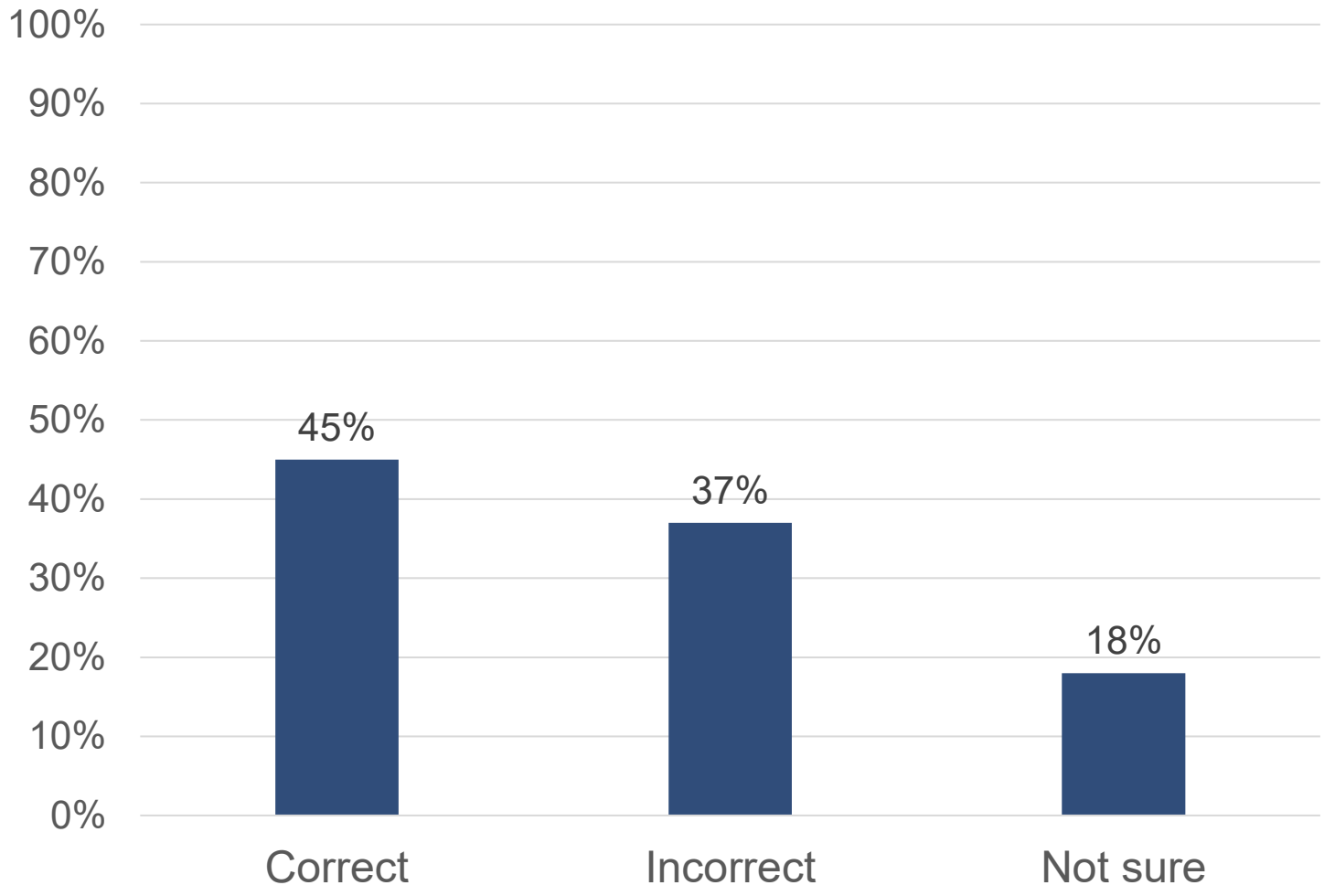


*Correct answer: Luke

Lifeway Research

Q32: “Where in the Bible would you find: The story of the Good Samaritan” n=2,012

“Where in the Bible would you find: The story of Paul’s missionary travels”



*Correct answer: Acts

Lifeway Research

Q33: “Where in the Bible would you find: The story of Paul’s missionary travels” n=2,012

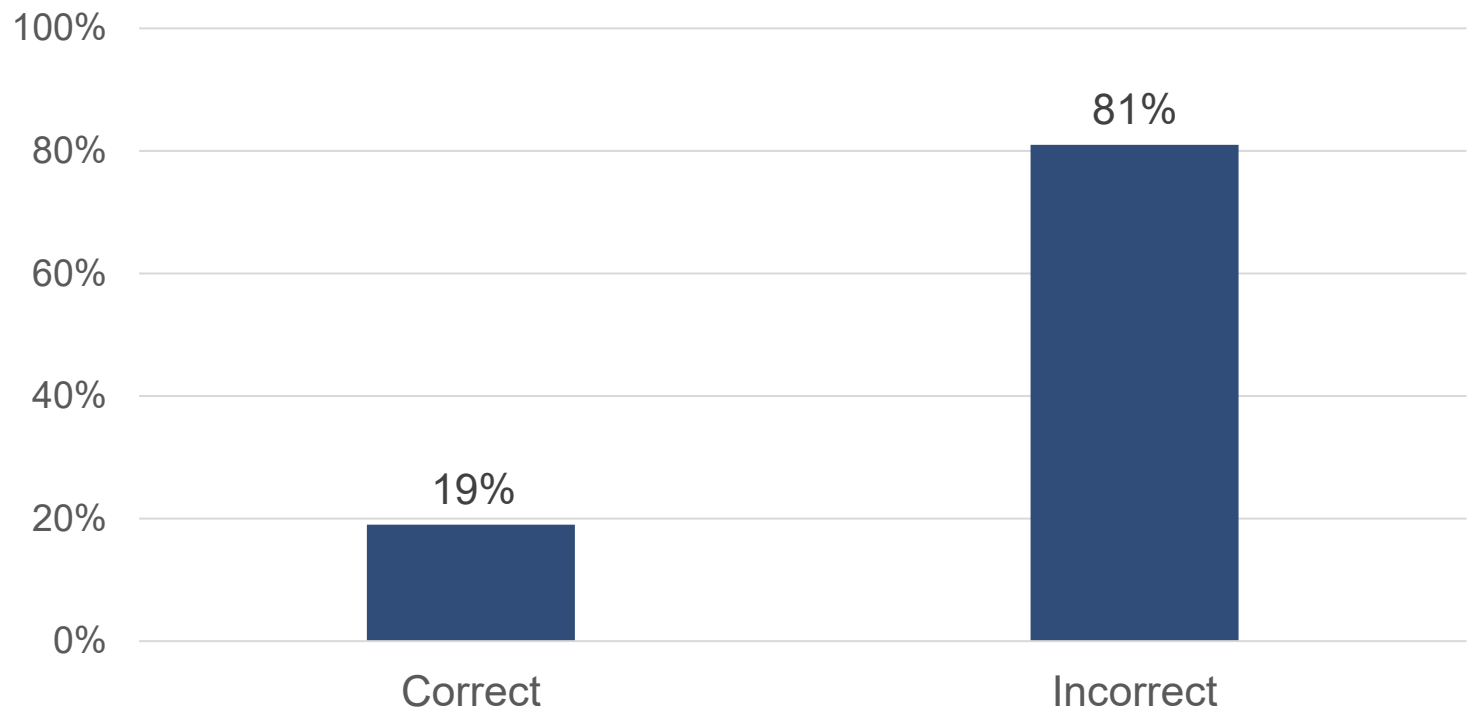
Ordering Events of the Bible

Mean Score=43

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Place 5 biblical events in order (shown here in correct order)

- Jesus is baptized in the Jordan River
- Peter denies that he knows Jesus
- Peter sees vision from God that Gentiles are not unclean
- Paul, Barnabas and Mark are sent out on a mission by the church
- John has a vision on the island of Patmos

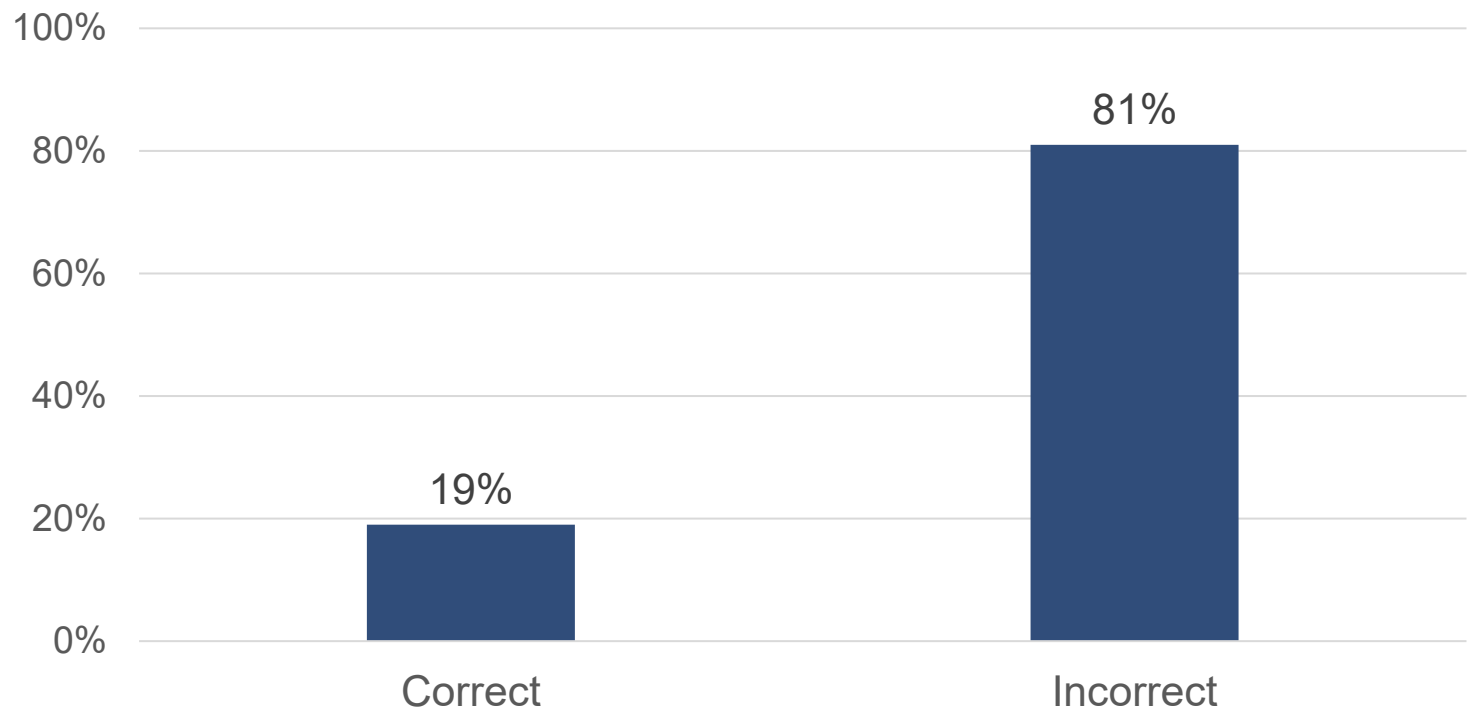


Lifeway Research

Q34: "Place the following biblical events in the order in which they occurred (numbering 1-5)." Displayed in random order. n=2,012

Place 5 biblical events in order (shown here in correct order)

- **Cain kills Abel**
- **Noah builds the ark**
- **Jerusalem falls to the Babylonians**
- **Daniel in the lions' den**
- **400 years of silence from God**

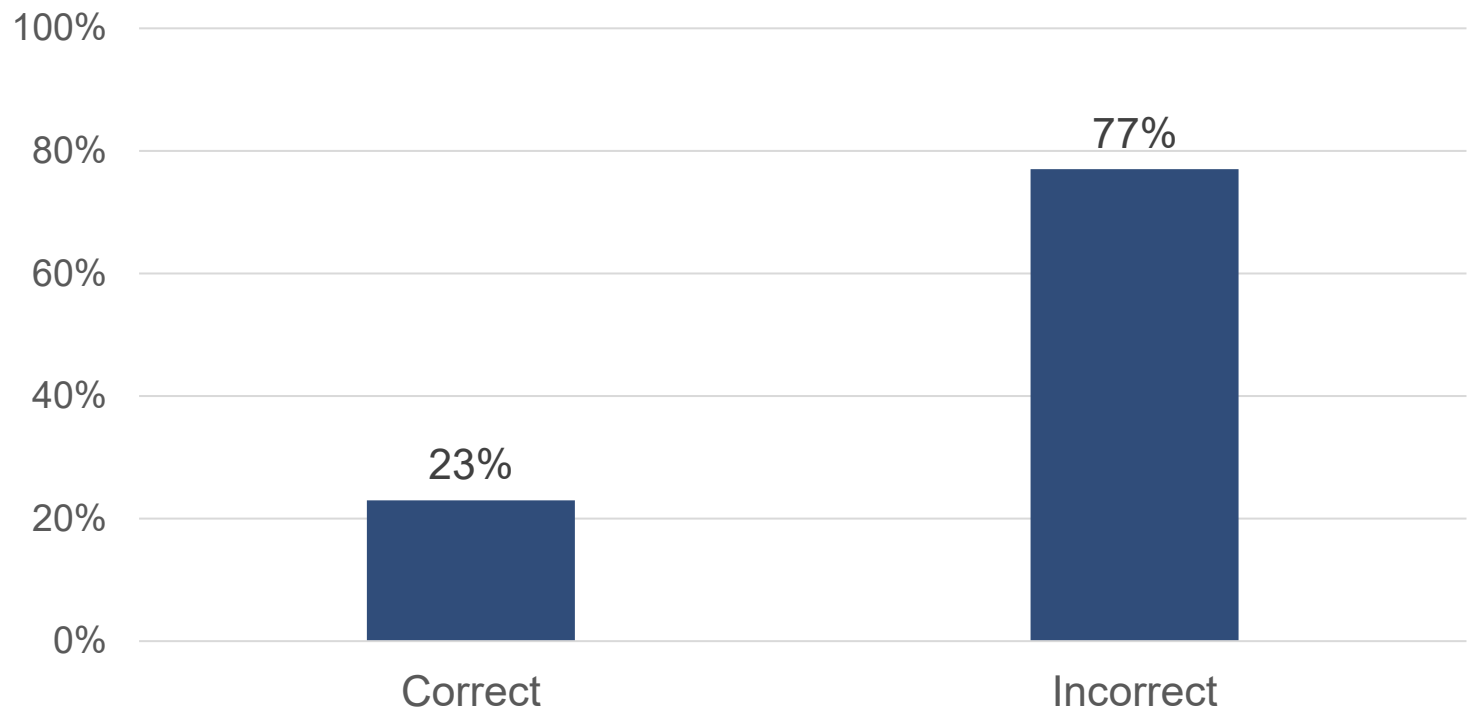


Lifeway Research

Q35: "Place the following biblical events in the order in which they occurred (numbering 1-5)" Displayed in random order. n=2,012

Place 5 biblical events in order (shown here in correct order)

- God's covenant through Noah
- God's covenant with Abraham
- God's covenant through Moses
- God's covenant with David
- God's covenant through Jesus

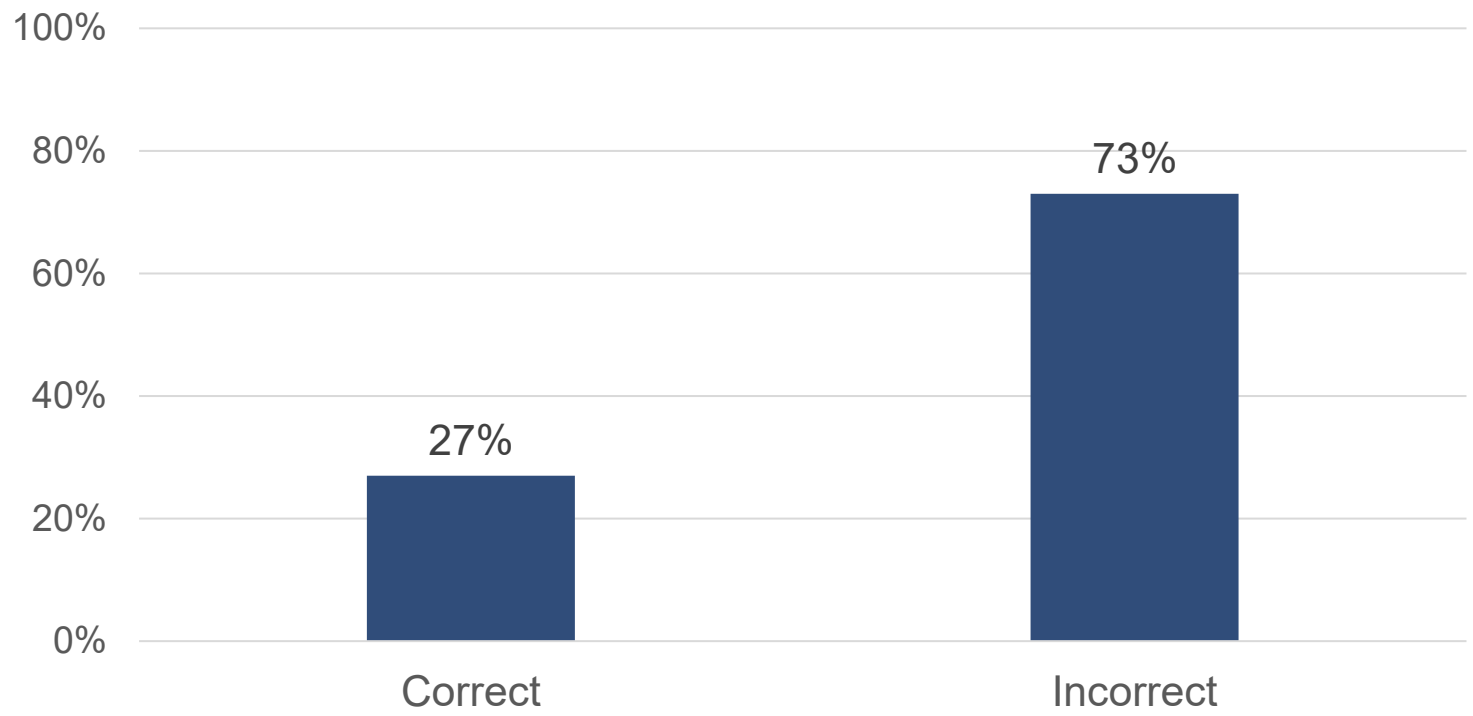


Lifeway Research

Q36: "Place the following biblical events in the order in which they occurred (numbering 1-5)" Displayed in random order. n=2,012

Place 5 biblical events in order (shown here in correct order)

- **Mary's song of thanksgiving**
- **Nicodemus' conversation about rebirth**
- **Peter's denial of Jesus**
- **Paul's arrest in Jerusalem**

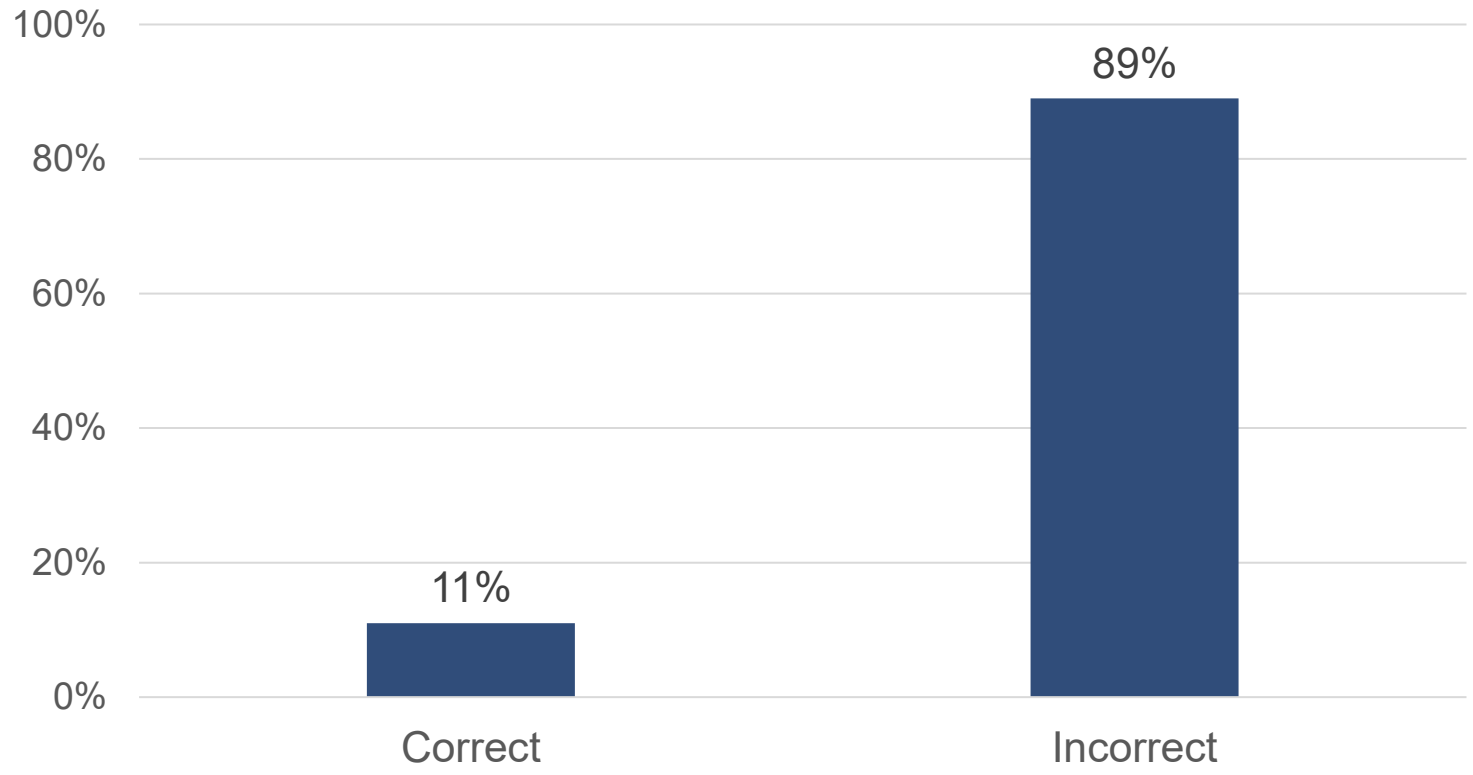


Lifeway Research

Q37: "Place the following biblical events in the order in which they occurred (numbering 1-4)" Displayed in random order. n=2,012

Place 4 biblical events in order (shown here in correct order)

- **Deborah judges Israel**
- **David kills Goliath**
- **Jonah is swallowed by a big fish**
- **Esther delivers Israel**



Lifeway Research

Q38: "Place the following biblical events in the order in which they occurred (numbering 1-4)" Displayed in random order. n=2,012

Fill in the Blank Bible Verses

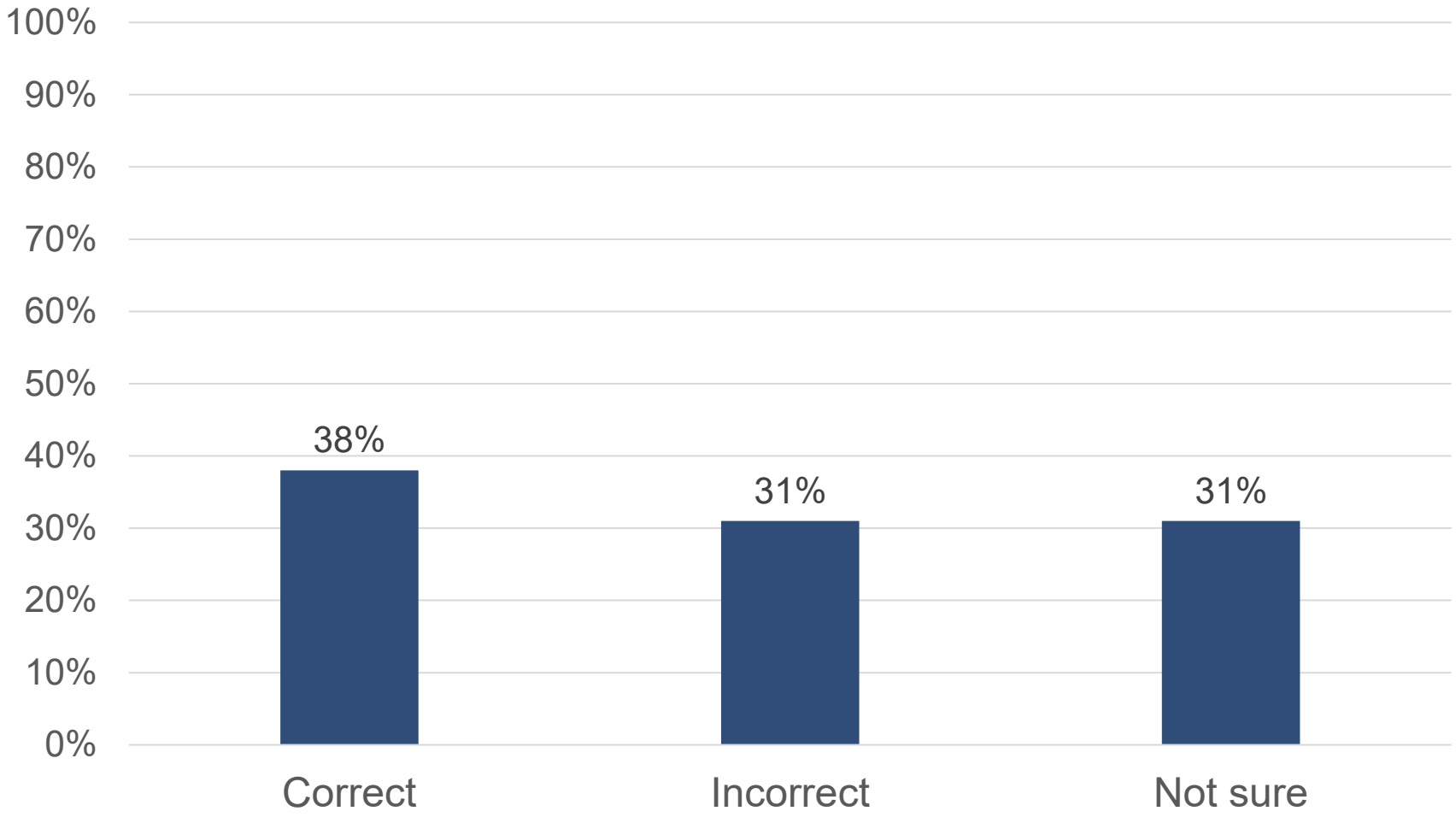
Mean Score=42

A few of the questions on the survey quoted text from the Bible. Instructions and a pulldown menu allowed respondents to view these in their choice of one of five translations:

Christian Standard Bible (CSB)
English Standard Version (ESV)
New International Version (NIV)
King James Version (KJV) *default*
Revised Standard Version (RSV)

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“the God of Abraham, of _____, and of _____”

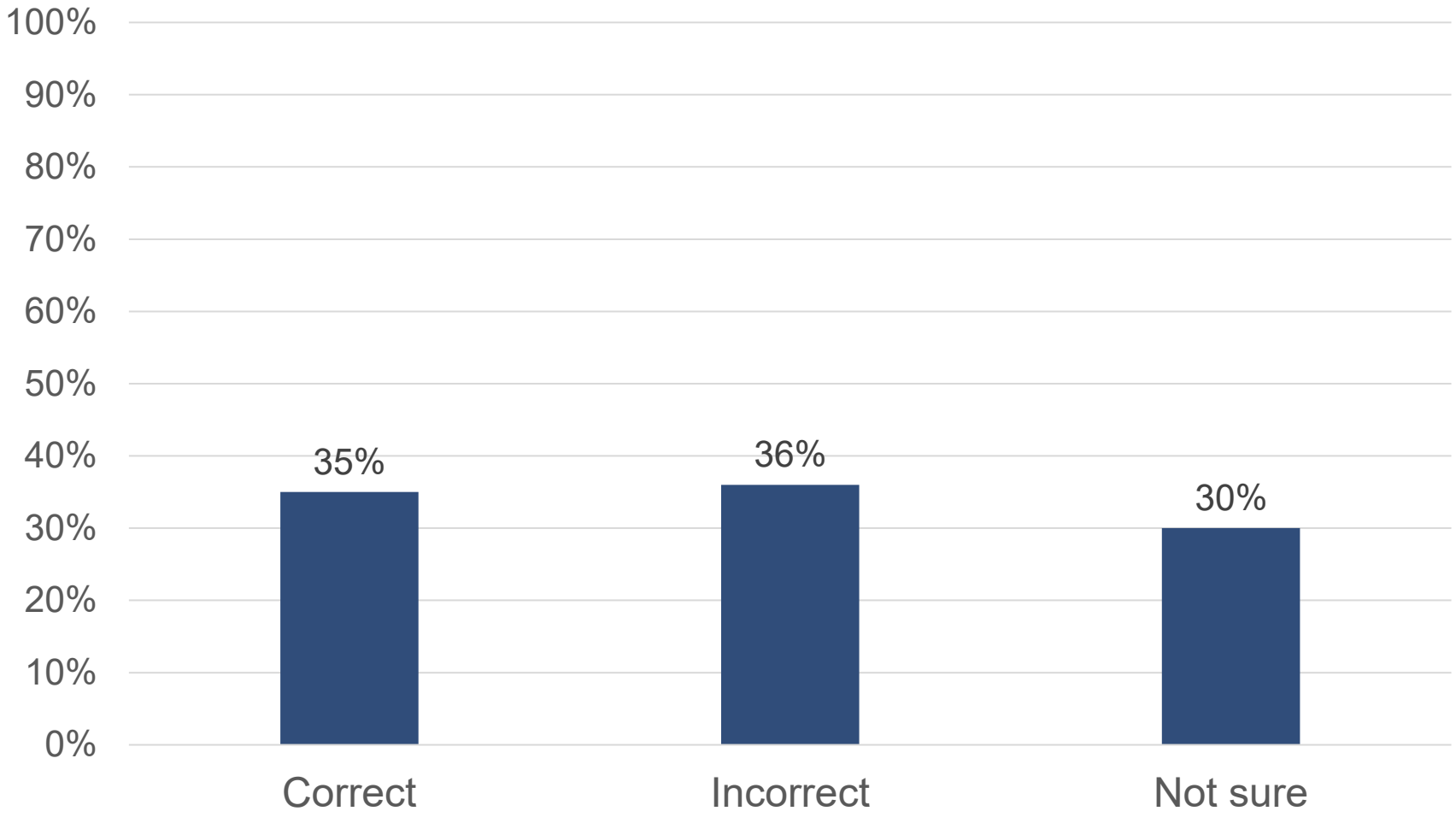


*Correct answer: Isaac, Jacob

Lifeway Research

Q39: ““the God of Abraham, of _____, and of _____ (2 words)” *Example reference not shown Exodus 3:16* n=2,012

“A new commandment I give unto you, That ye_____ _____ _____”

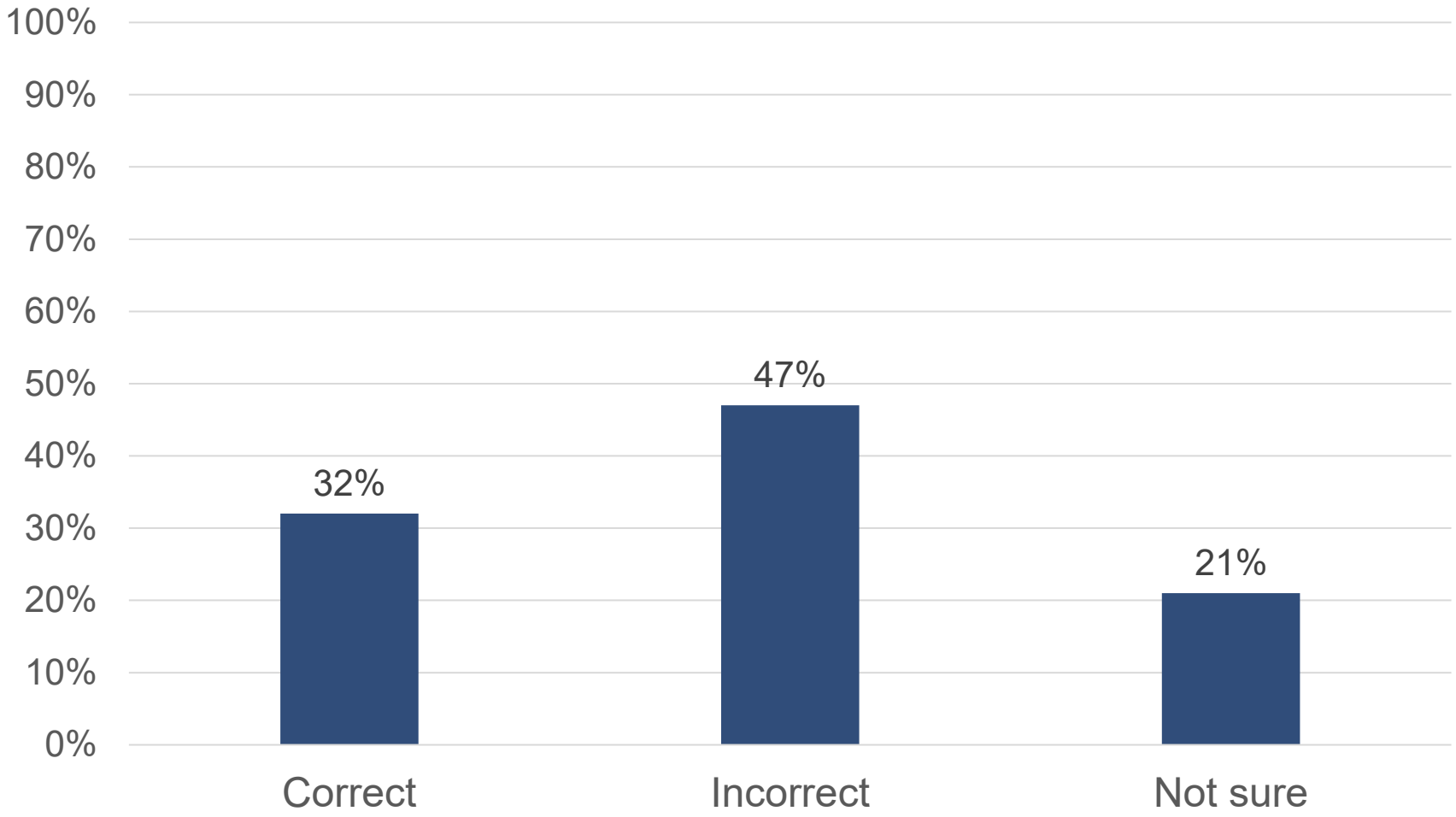


*Correct answer: Love one another

Lifeway Research

Q40: ““A new commandment I give unto you, That ye_____ _____ _____ (3 words)” *Reference not shown John 13:34* n=2,012

“The _____ of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: And the knowledge of the holy is understanding.”

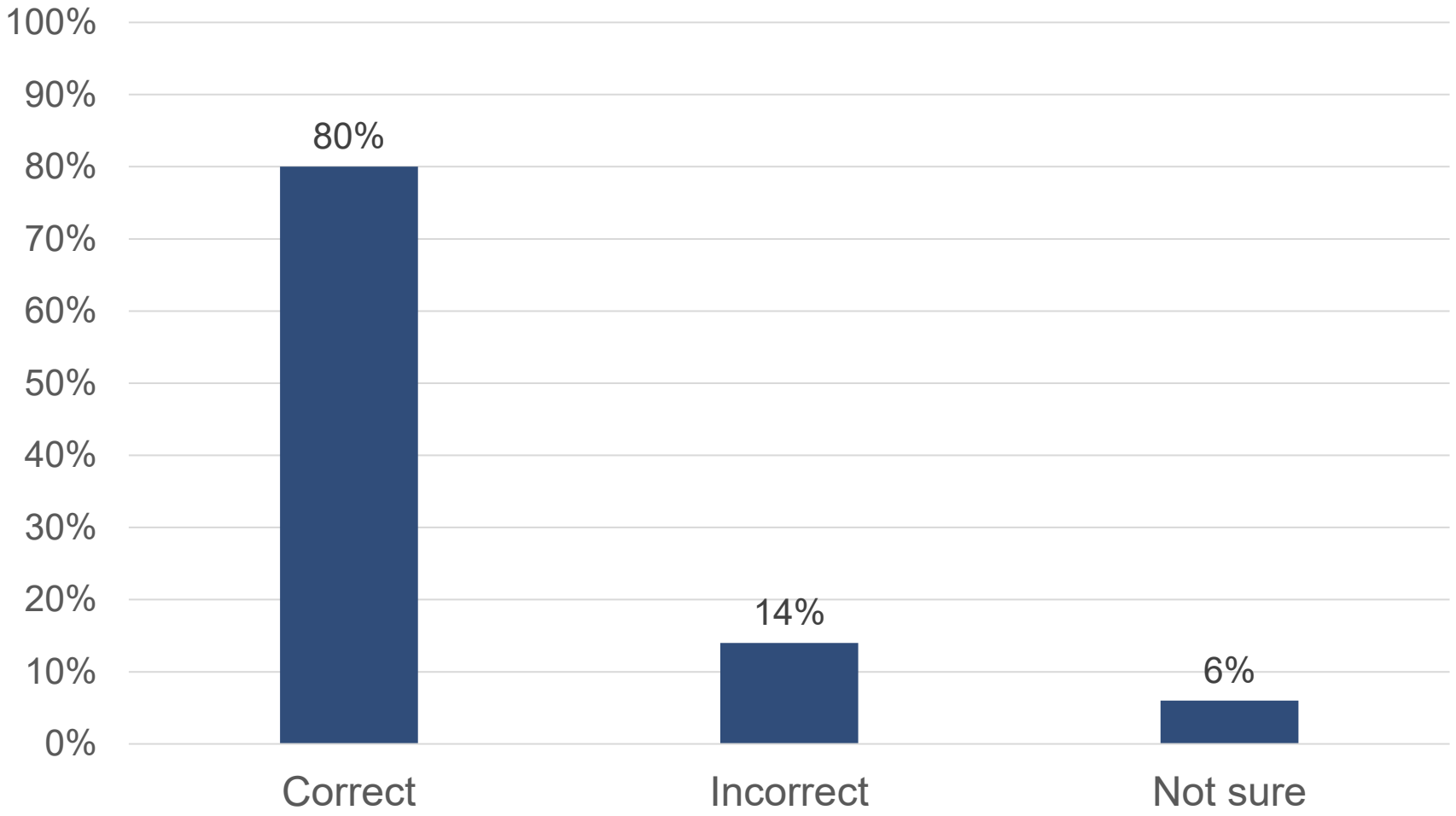


*Correct answer: Fear

Lifeway Research

Q41: ““The _____ of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: And the knowledge of the holy is understanding. (1 word)” *Reference not shown*
Proverbs 9:10 n=2,012

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever _____ in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

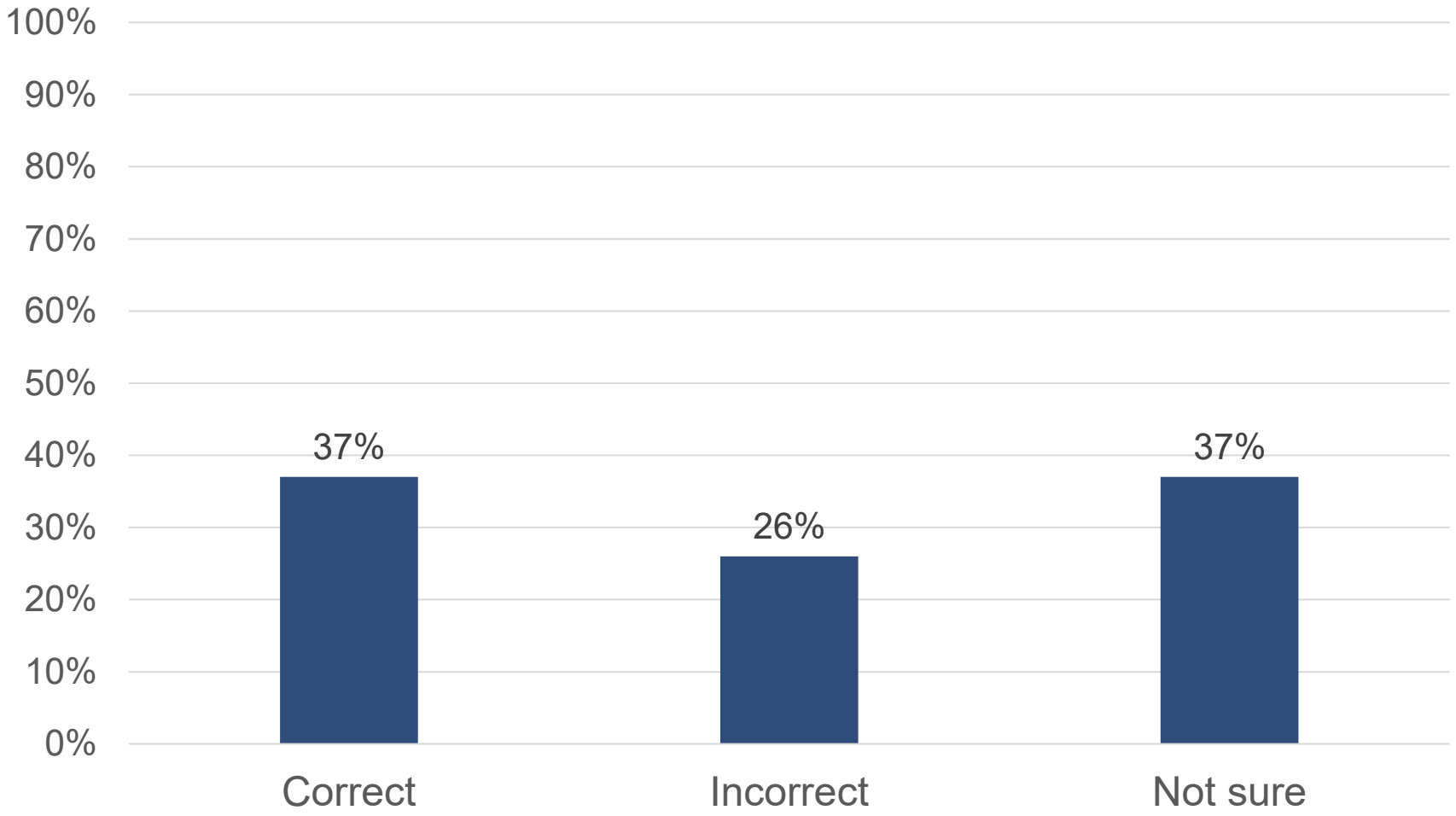


*Correct answer: Believes

Lifeway Research

Q42: “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever _____ in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. (1 word)” *Reference not shown John 3:16* n=2,012

“Jesus saith unto him, “I am the _____, the _____, and the _____: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”

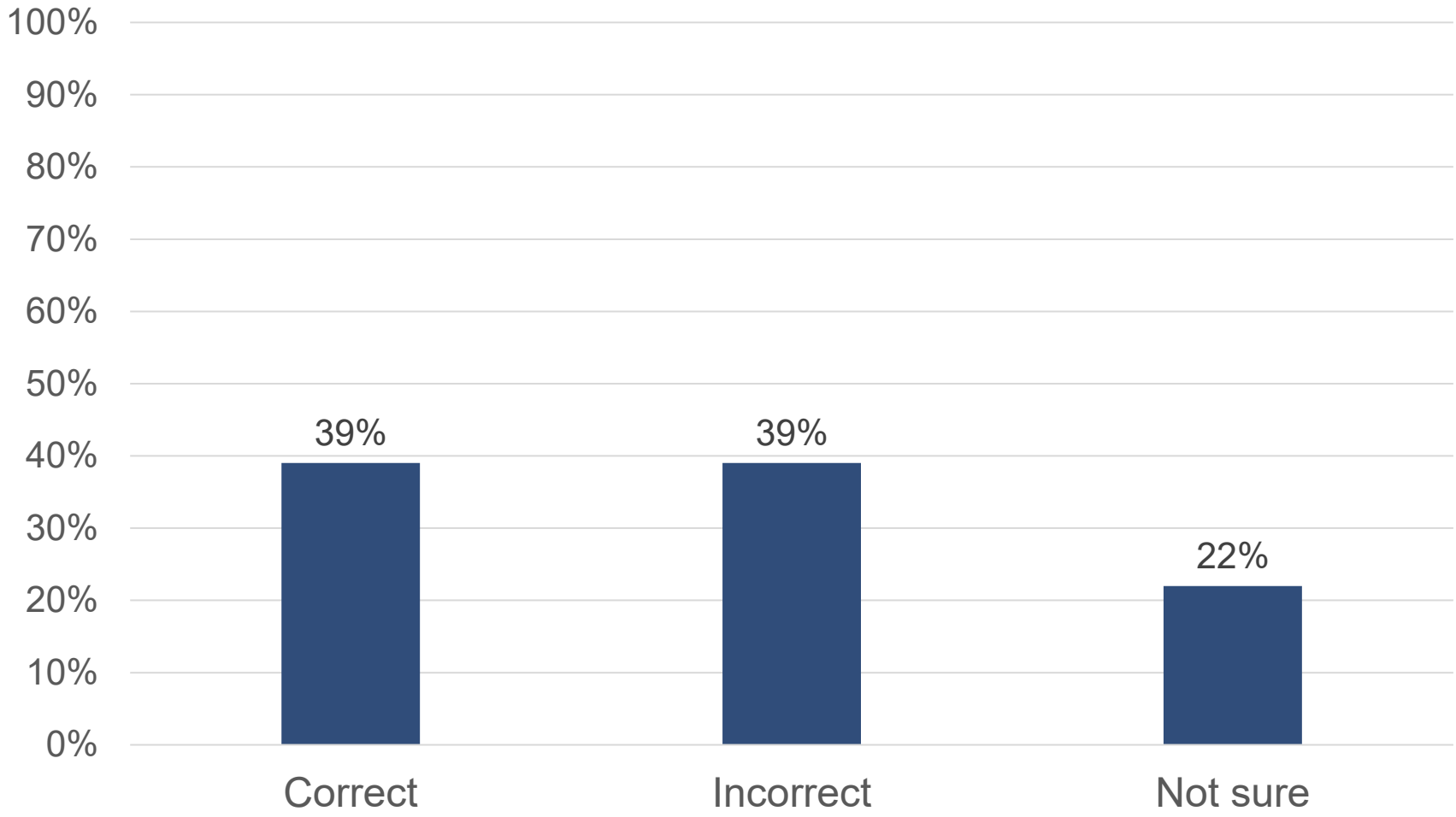


*Correct answer: Way, Truth, Life

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Q43: “Jesus saith unto him, “I am the _____, the _____, and the _____: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. (3 words)”
Reference not shown John 14:6 n=2,012

“I will be your God, and ye shall be ____ _____.”

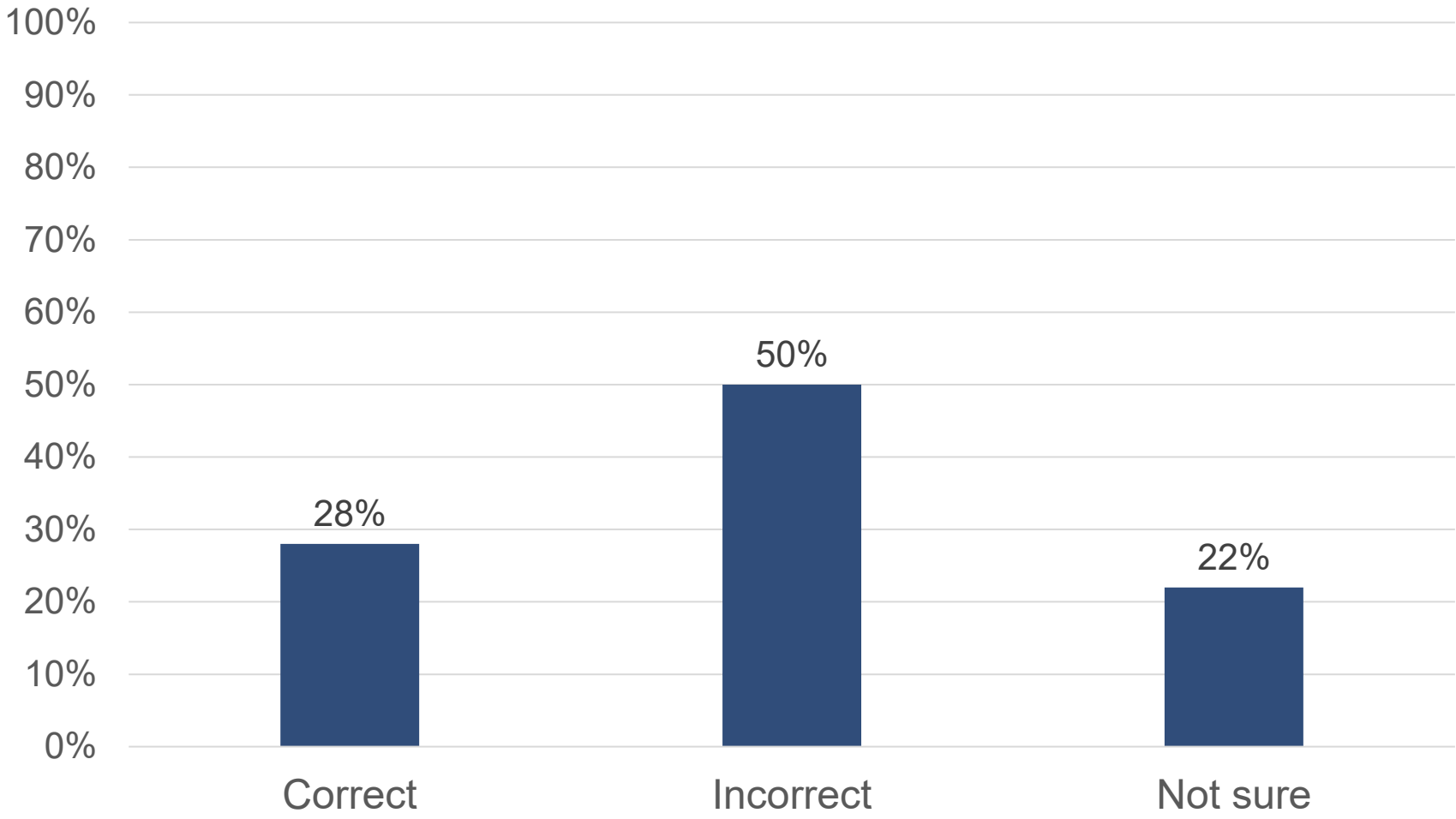


*Correct answer: My people

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Q44: “I will be your God, and ye shall be _____ _____ (2 words)” *Example reference not shown Jeremiah 7:23* n=2,012

“and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to act justly, and to love mercy, and to walk _____ with thy God?”

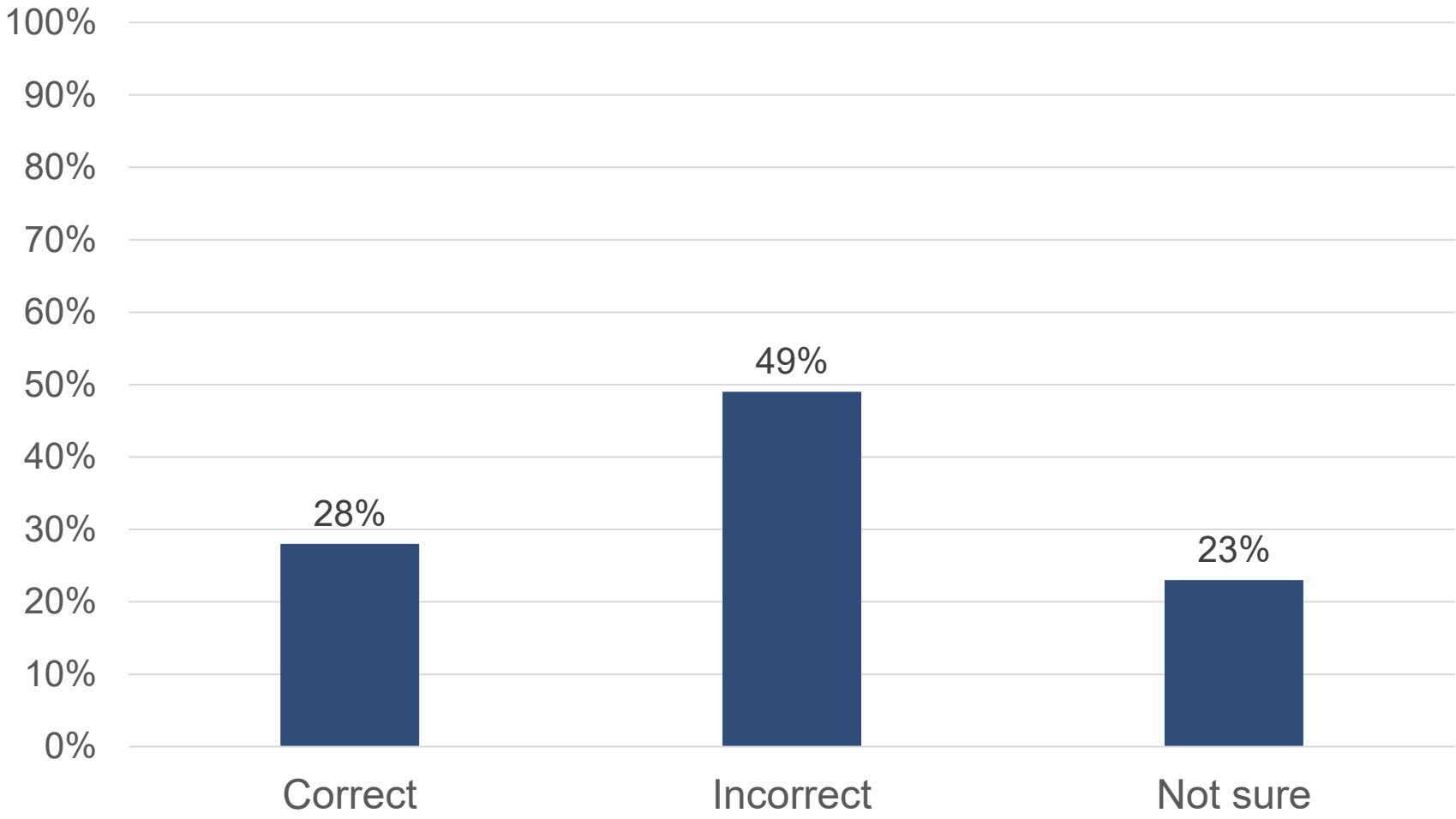


*Correct answer: Humbly

Lifeway Research

Q45: “and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to act justly, and to love mercy, and to walk _____ with thy God? (1 word)”
Reference not shown Micah 6:8 n=2,012

“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is _____ LORD.”

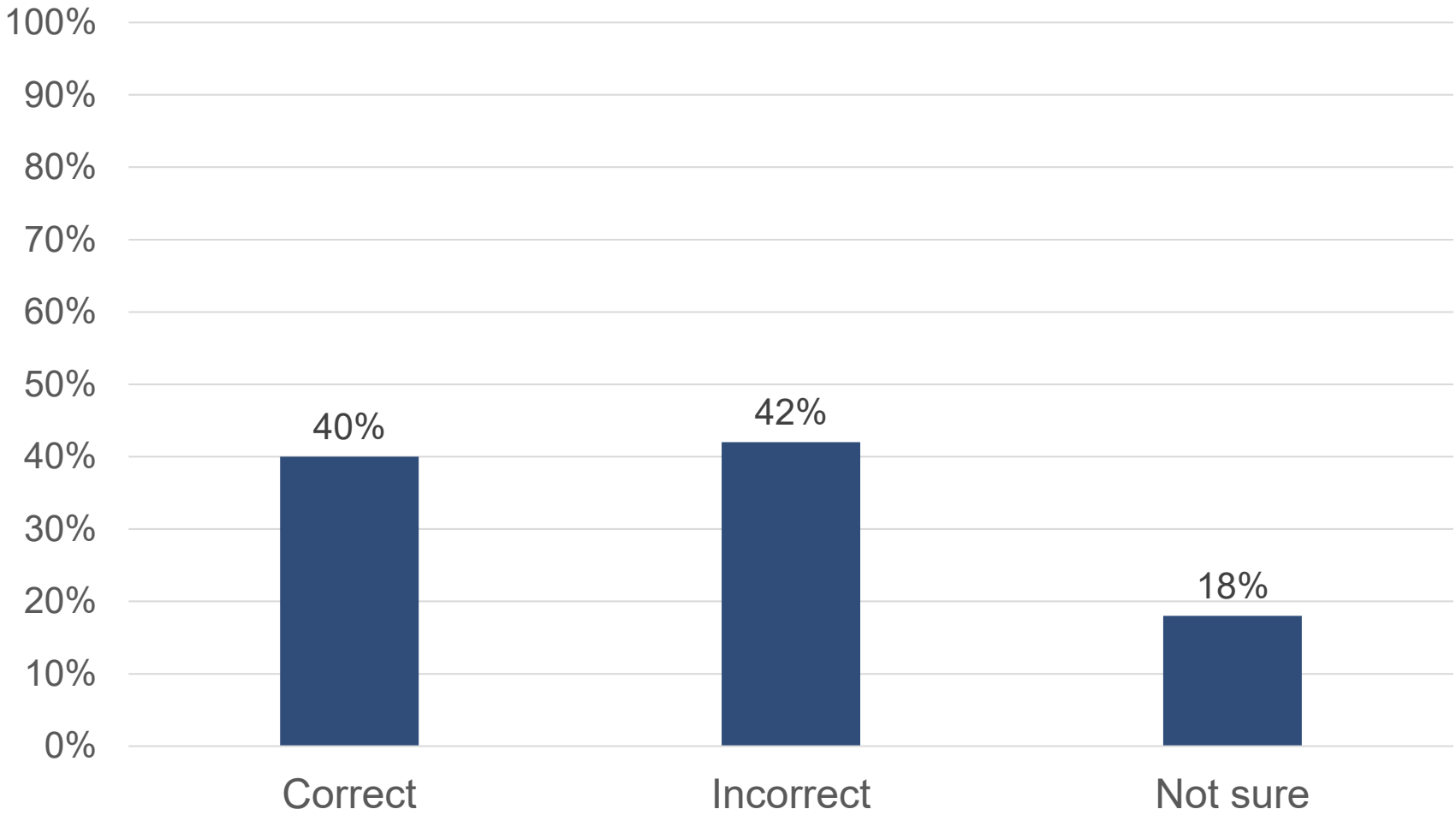


*Correct answer: One

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Q46: “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is _____ LORD. (1 word)” *Reference not shown Deuteronomy 6:4* n=2,012

“For by _____ are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves…”



*Correct answer: Grace

Lifeway Research

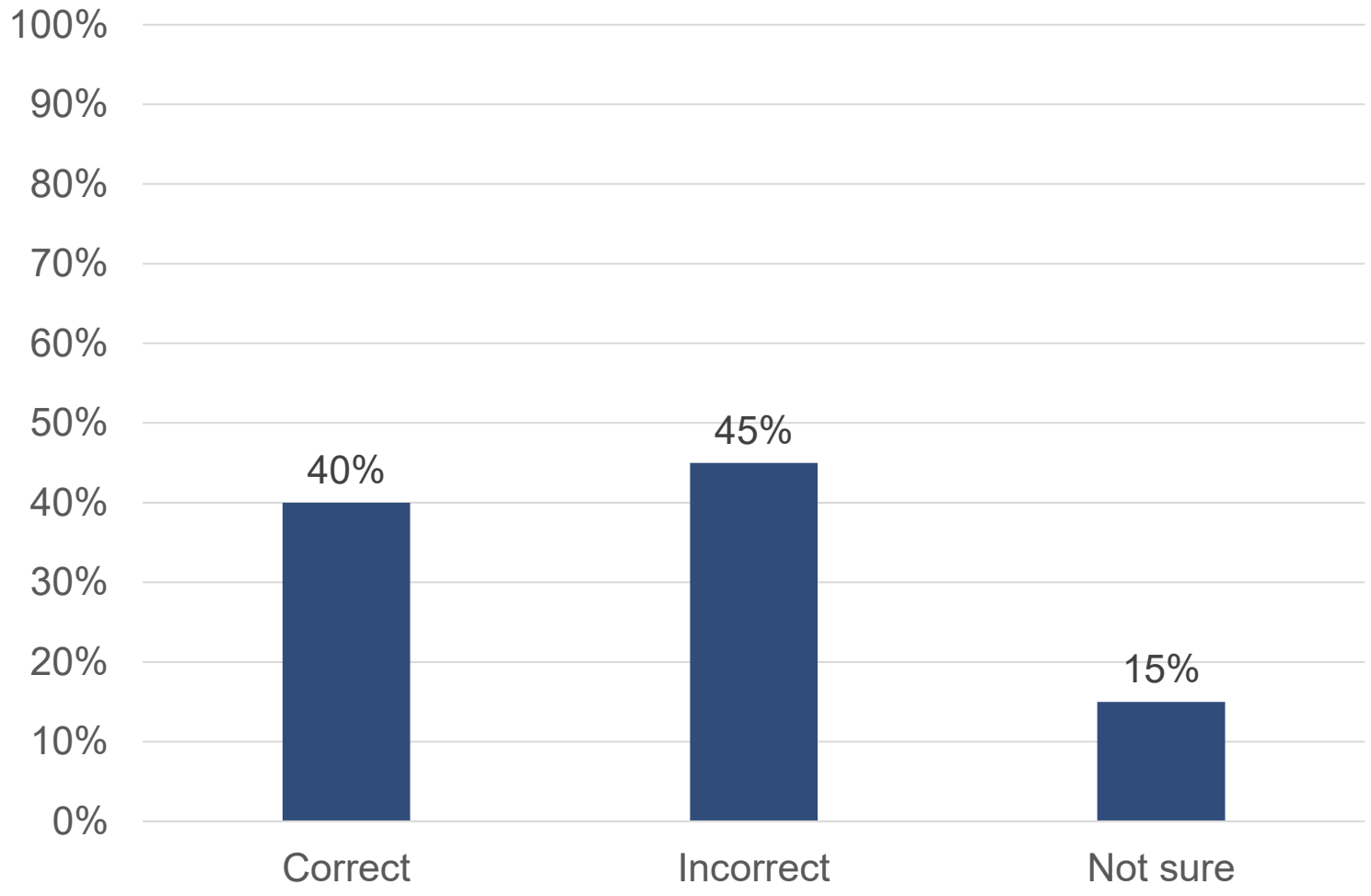
Q47: “For by _____ are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves… (1 word)” *Reference not shown Ephesians 2:8* n=2,012

Which Division of the Bible

Mean Score=40

Lifeway Research

Deuteronomy

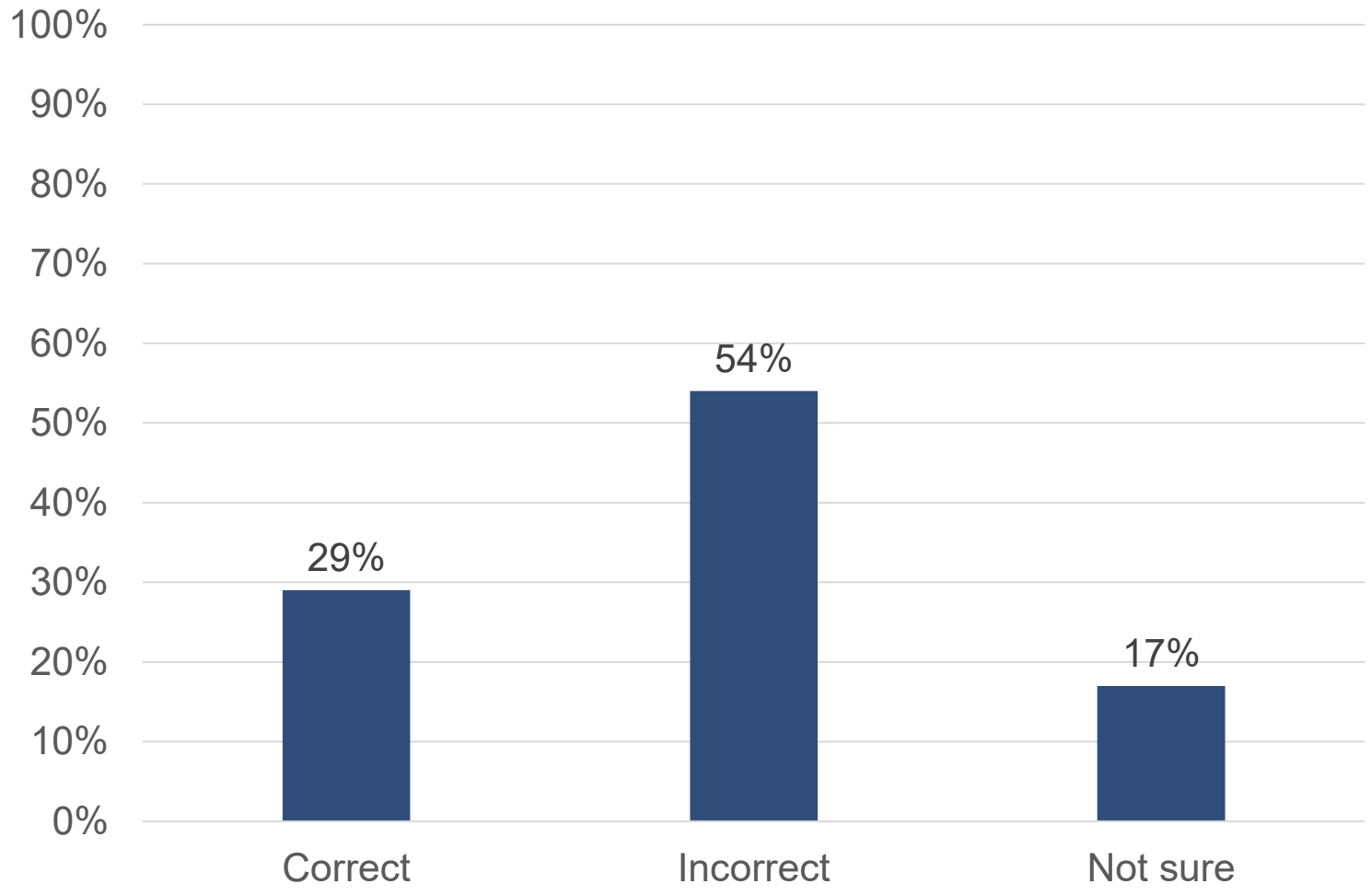


*Correct answer: Law

Lifeway Research

Q48: "For each of the following books of the Bible, select the major division where it fits: **Deuteronomy.**" n=2,012

1 Samuel

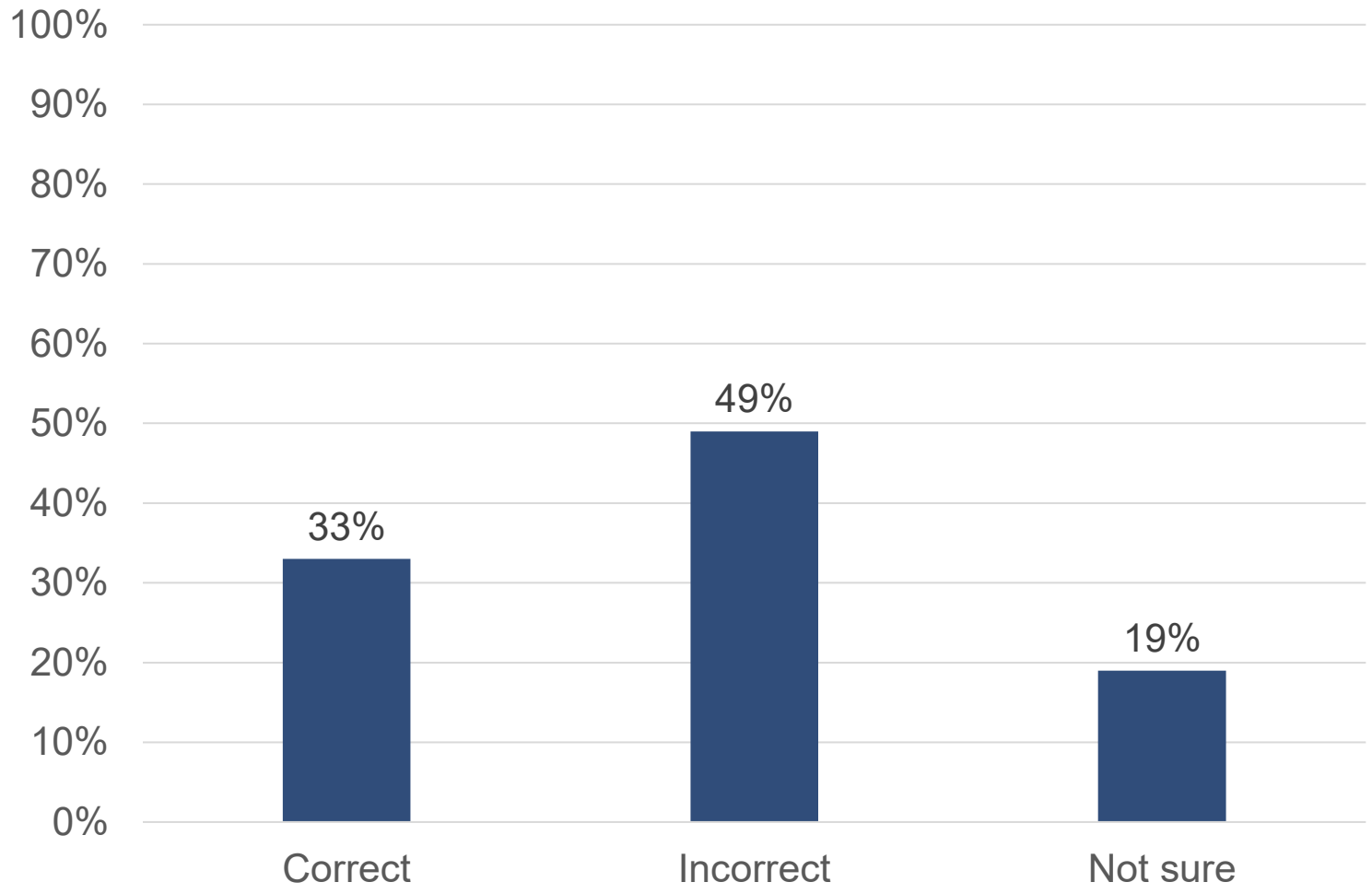


*Correct answer: History

Lifeway Research

Q49: "For each of the following books of the Bible, select the major division where it fits: **1 Samuel.**" n=2,012

Ecclesiastes

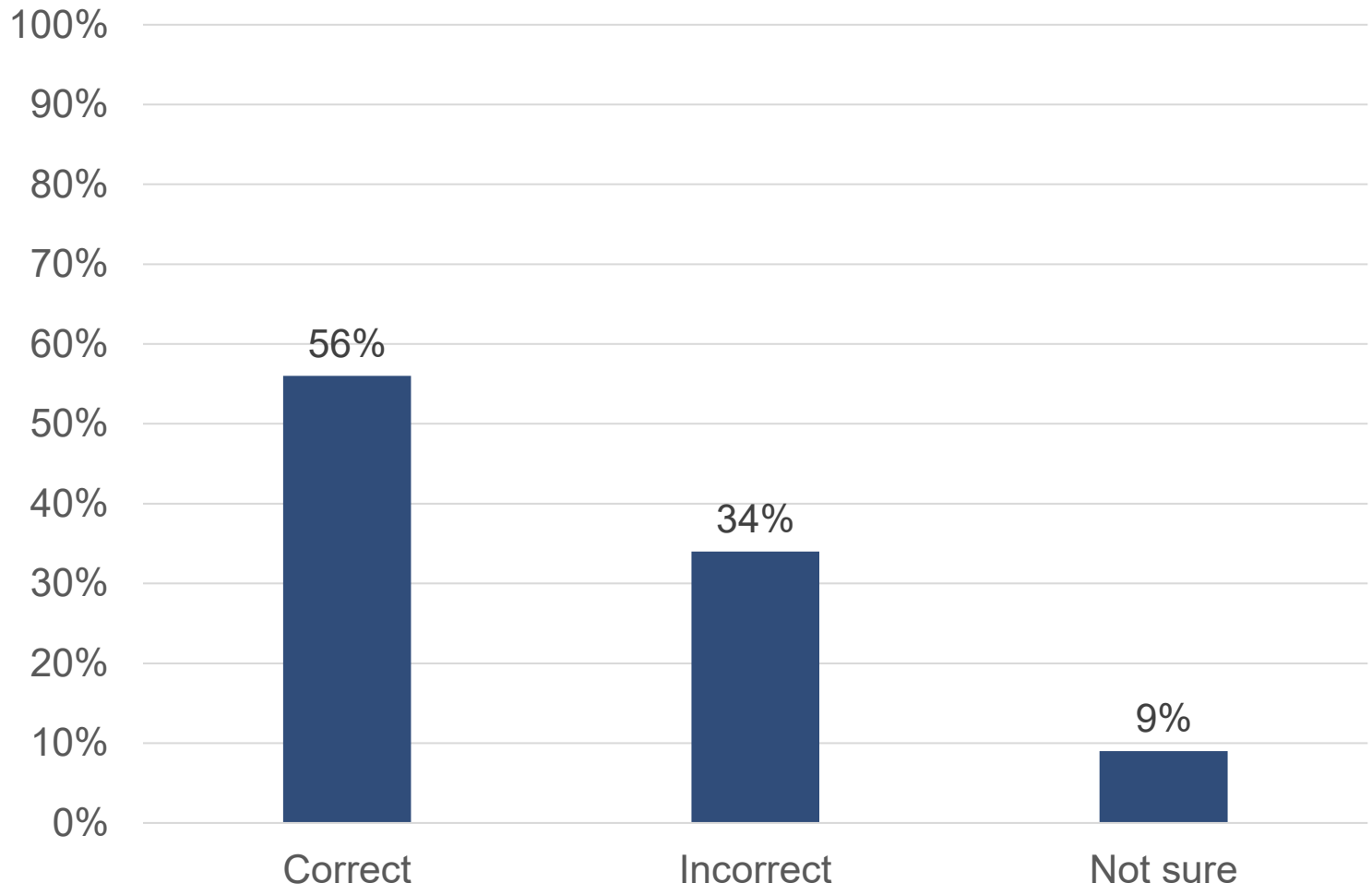


*Correct answer:
Poetry/Wisdom Literature

Lifeway Research

Q50: "For each of the following books of the Bible, select the major division where it fits: **Ecclesiastes.**" n=2,012

Mark

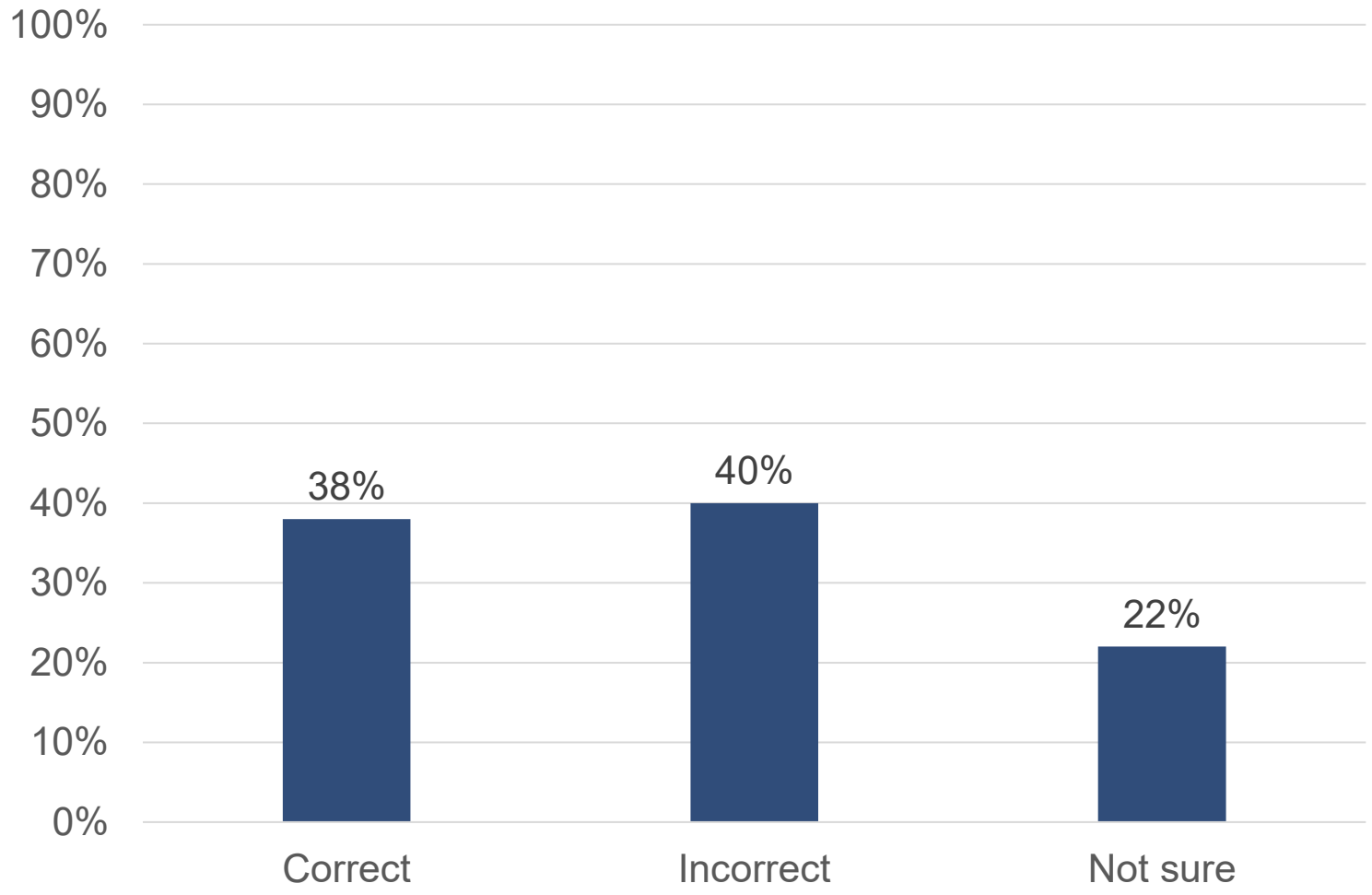


*Correct answer: Gospels

Lifeway Research

Q51: "For each of the following books of the Bible, select the major division where it fits: **Mark.**" n=2,012

Joel

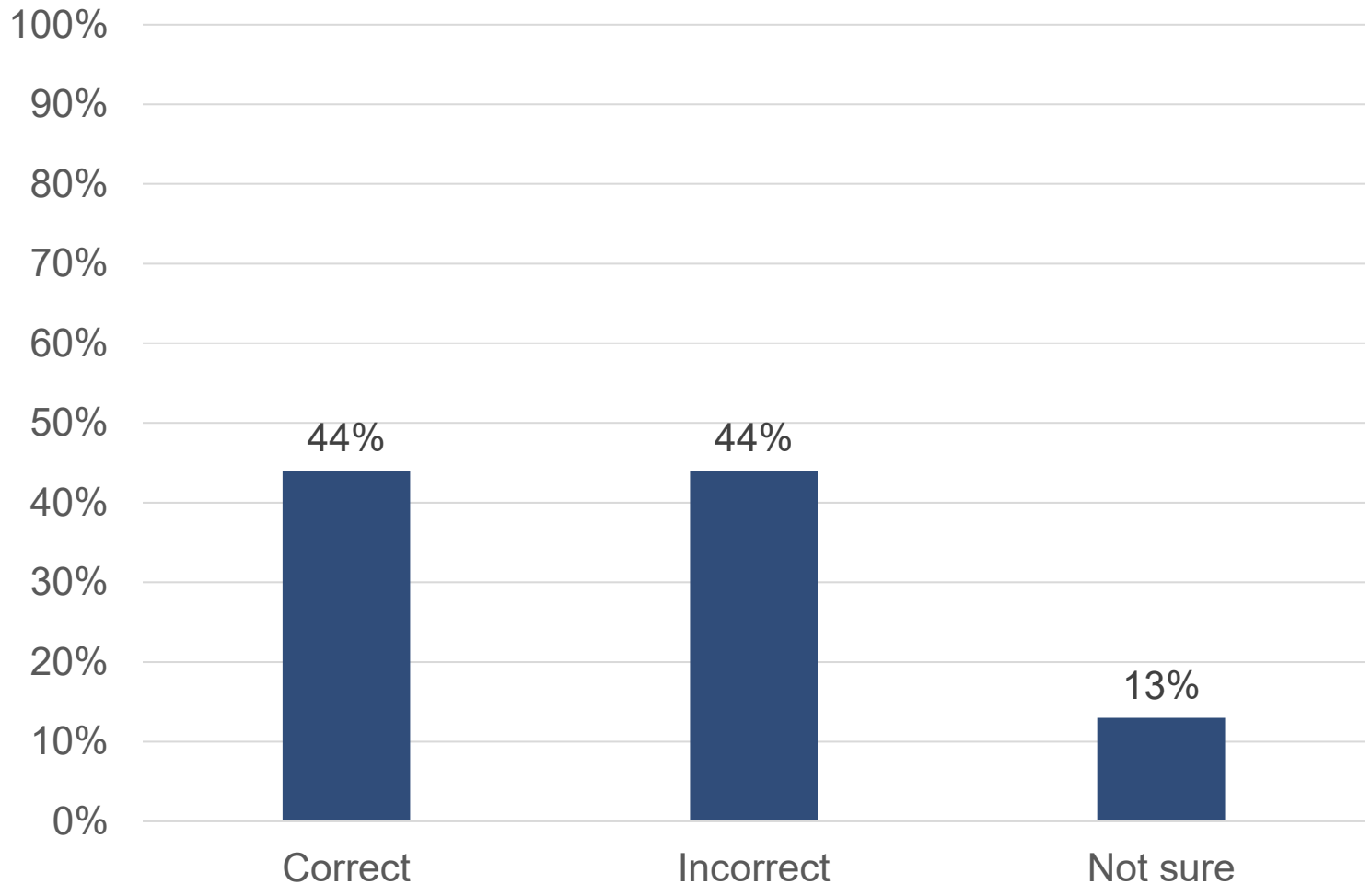


*Correct answer: Minor Prophets

Lifeway Research

Q52: "For each of the following books of the Bible, select the major division where it fits: **Joel.**" n=2,012

Isaiah



*Correct answer: Major Prophets

Lifeway Research

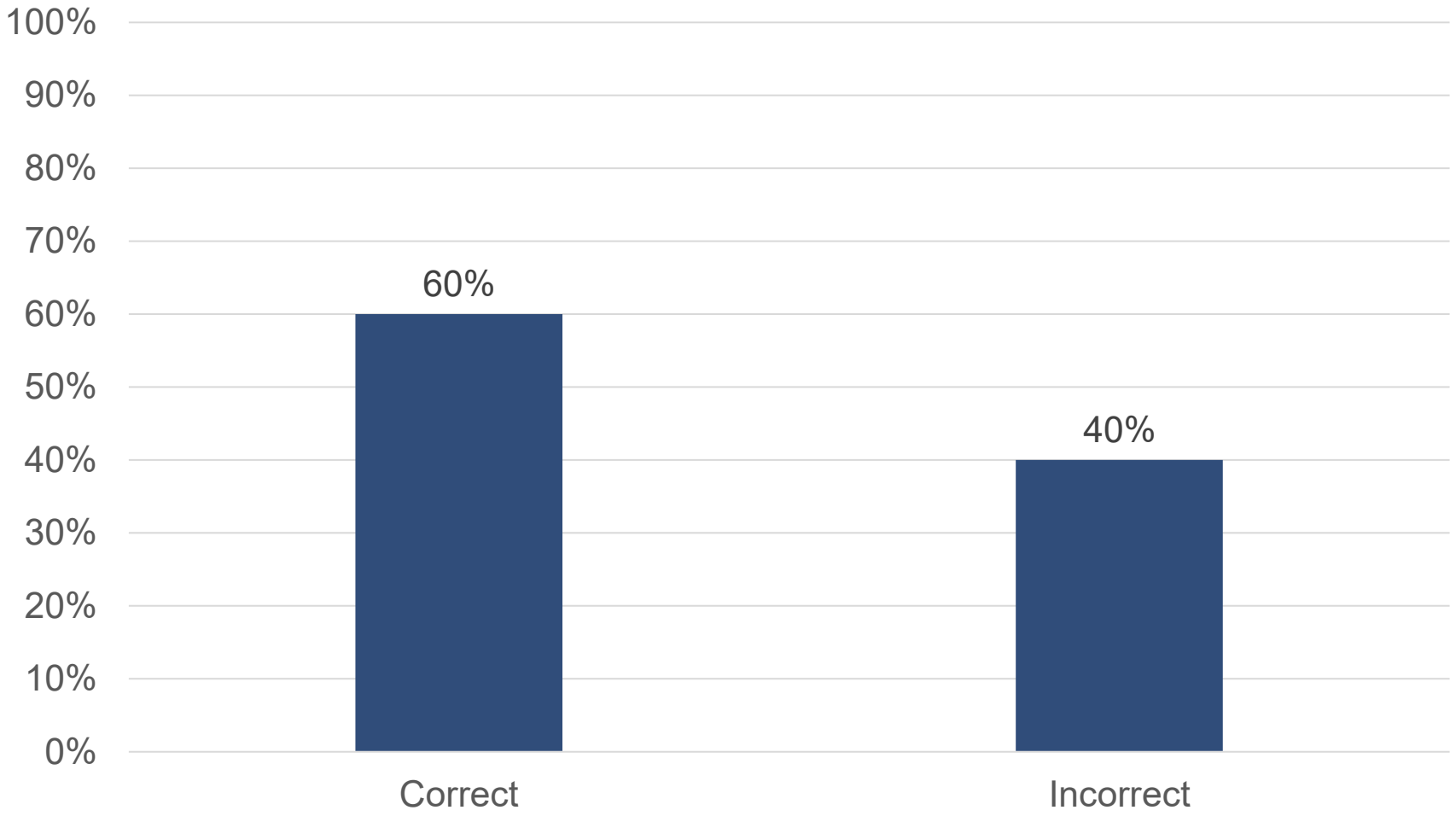
Q53: "For each of the following books of the Bible, select the major division where it fits: **Isaiah.**" n=2,012

Old Testament, New Testament, or Not in the Bible

Mean Score=56

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Obadiah

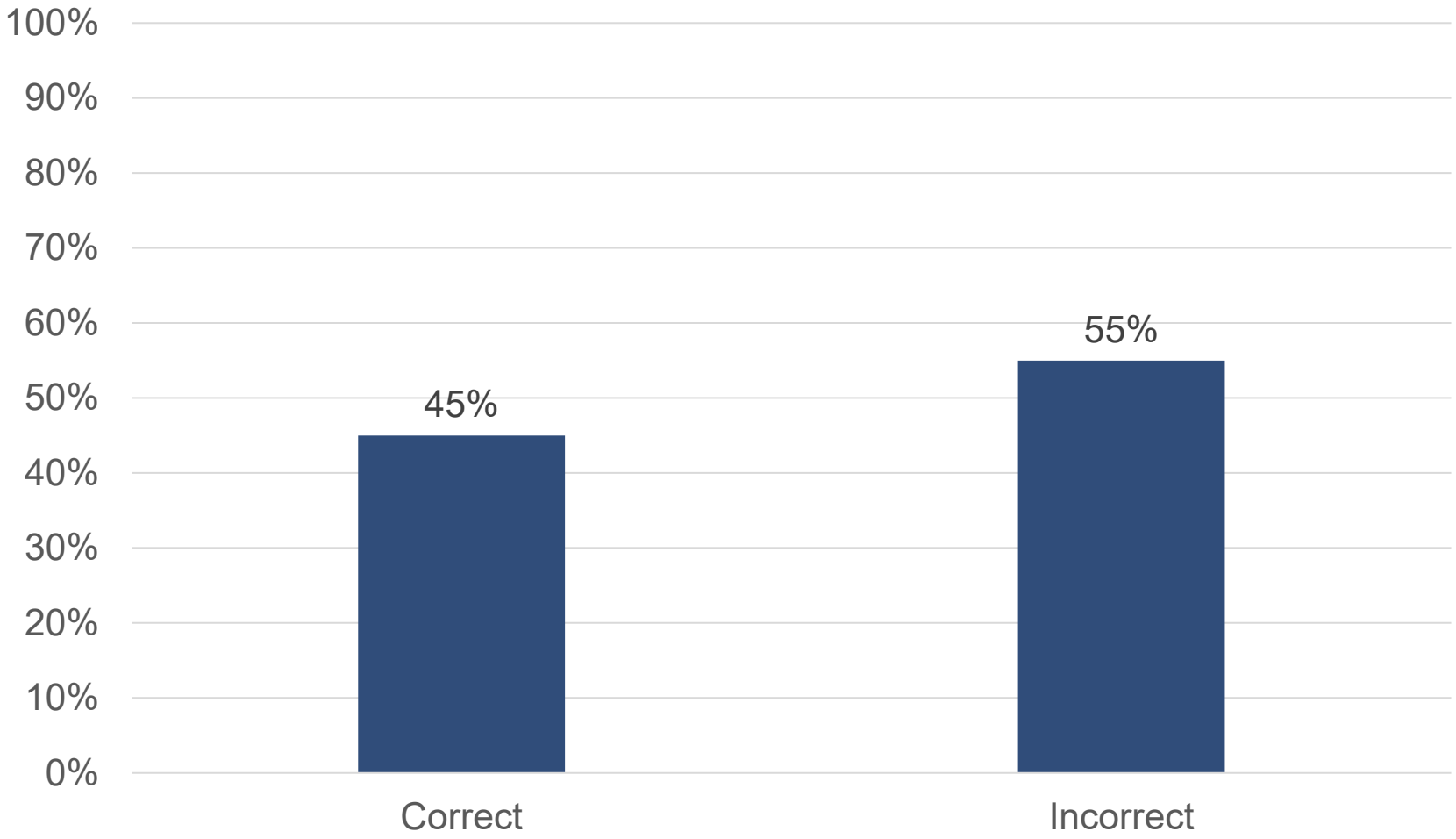


*Correct answer: Book in the Old Testament

Lifeway Research

Q54_1: "For each of the following books, please indicate where in the Bible it is found: **Obadiah"** .n=2,012

Philemon

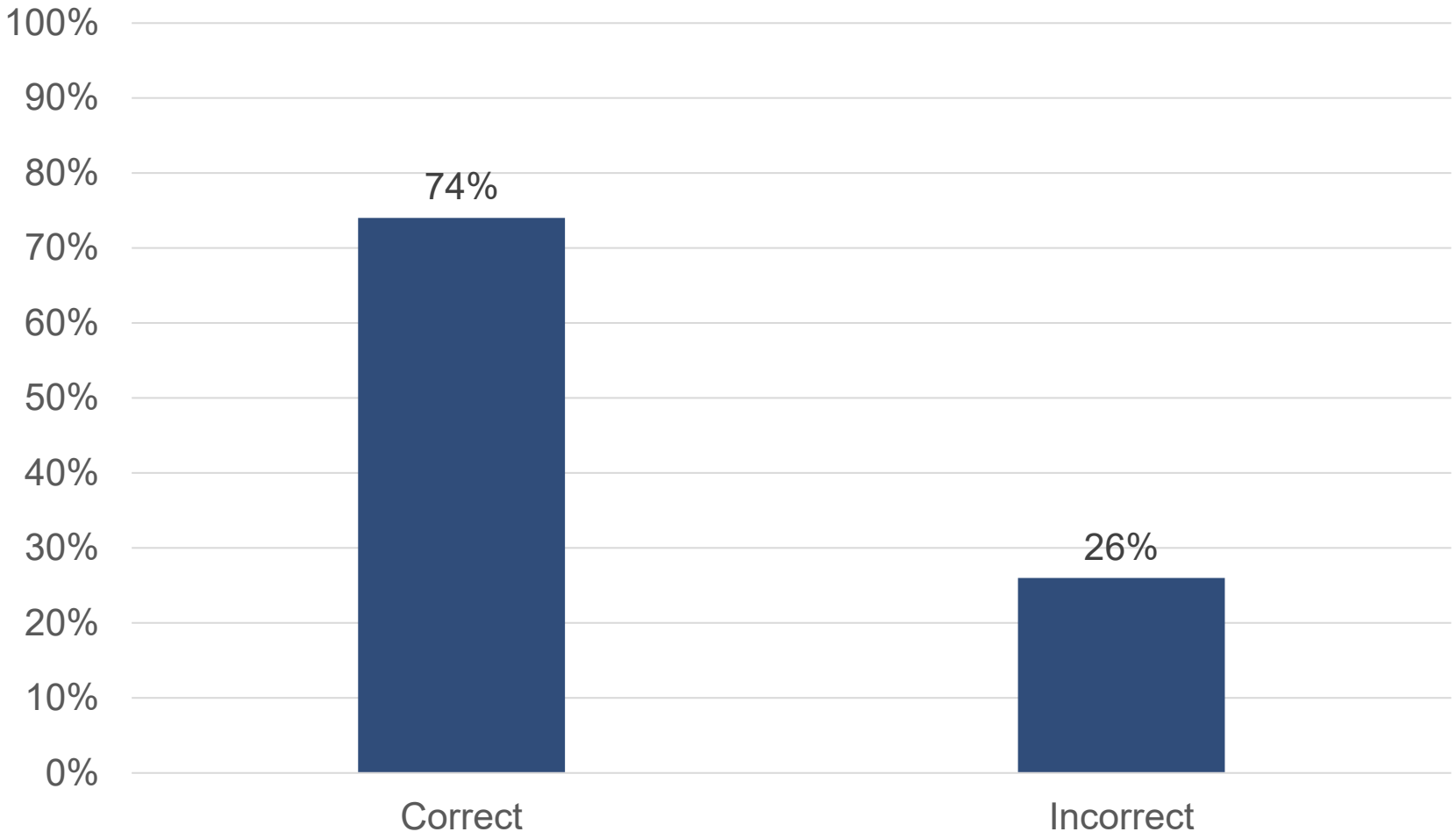


*Correct answer: Book in the New Testament

Lifeway Research

Q54_2: “For each of the following books, please indicate where in the Bible it is found: **Philemon”** .n=2,012

1 Corinthians

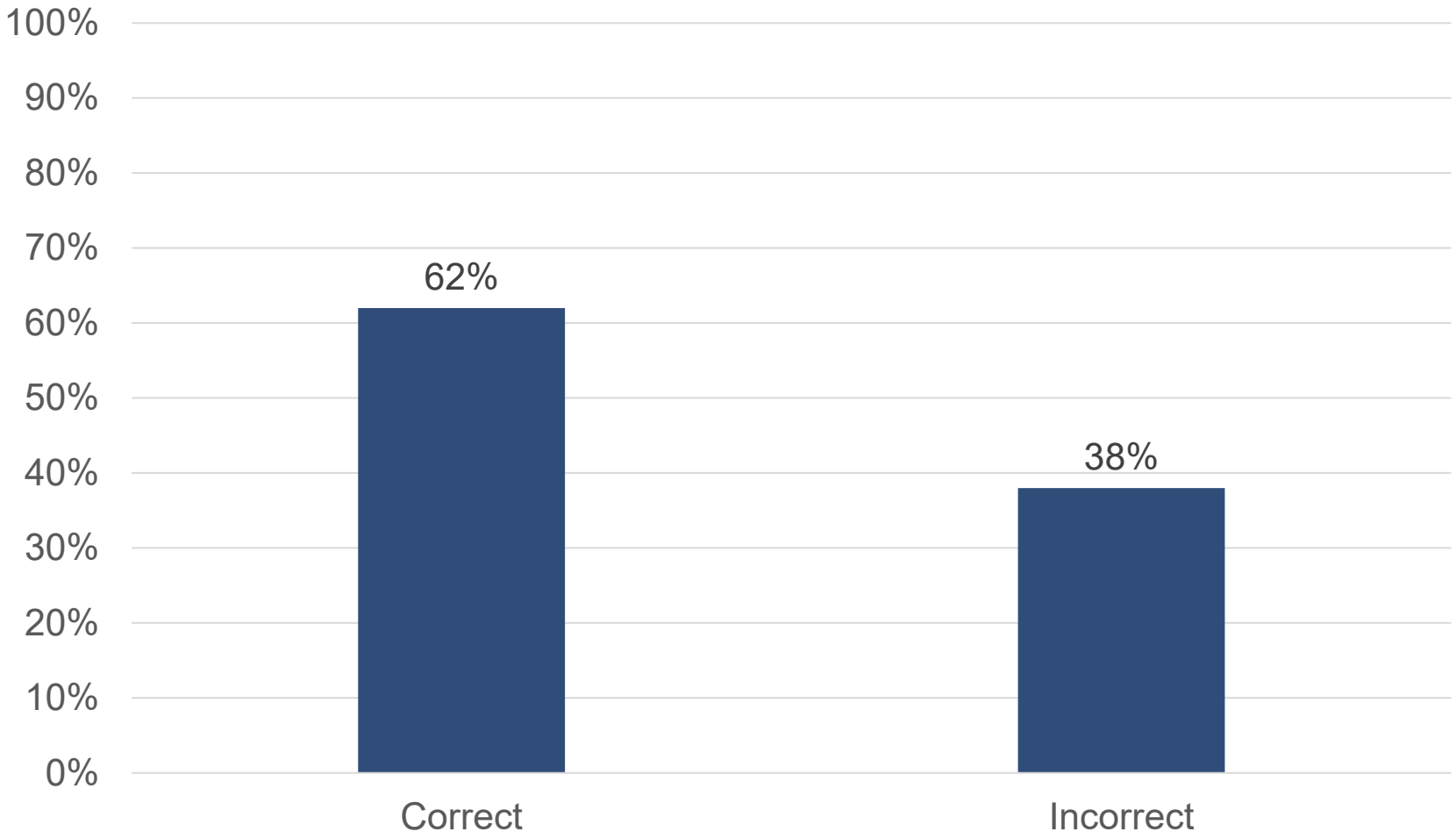


*Correct answer: Book in the New Testament

Lifeway Research

Q54_3: "For each of the following books, please indicate where in the Bible it is found: **1** Corinthians" .n=2,012

1 Chronicles

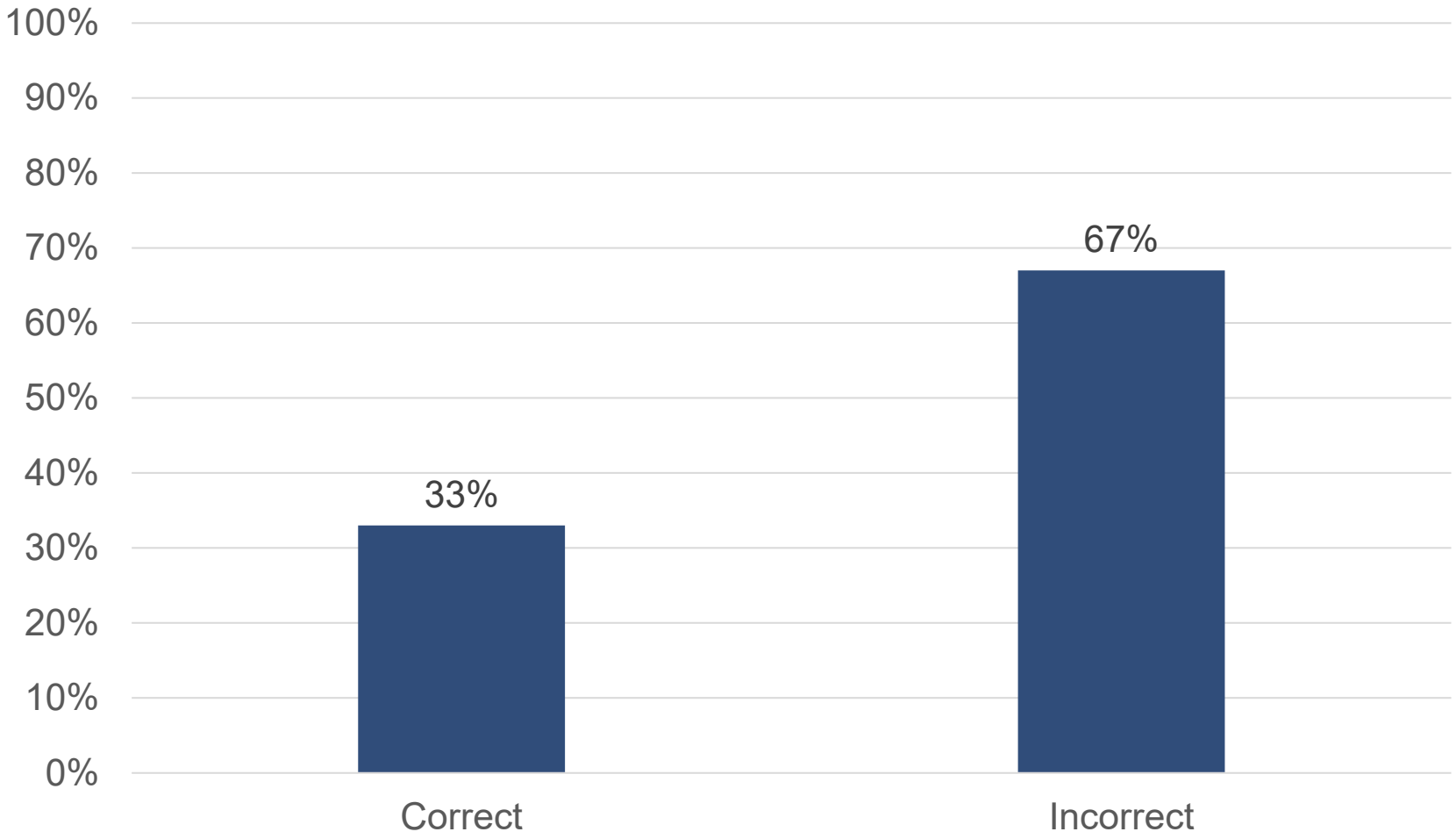


*Correct answer: Book in the Old Testament

Lifeway Research

Q54_4: "For each of the following books, please indicate where in the Bible it is found: 1 Chronicles" .n=2,012

Hezekiah

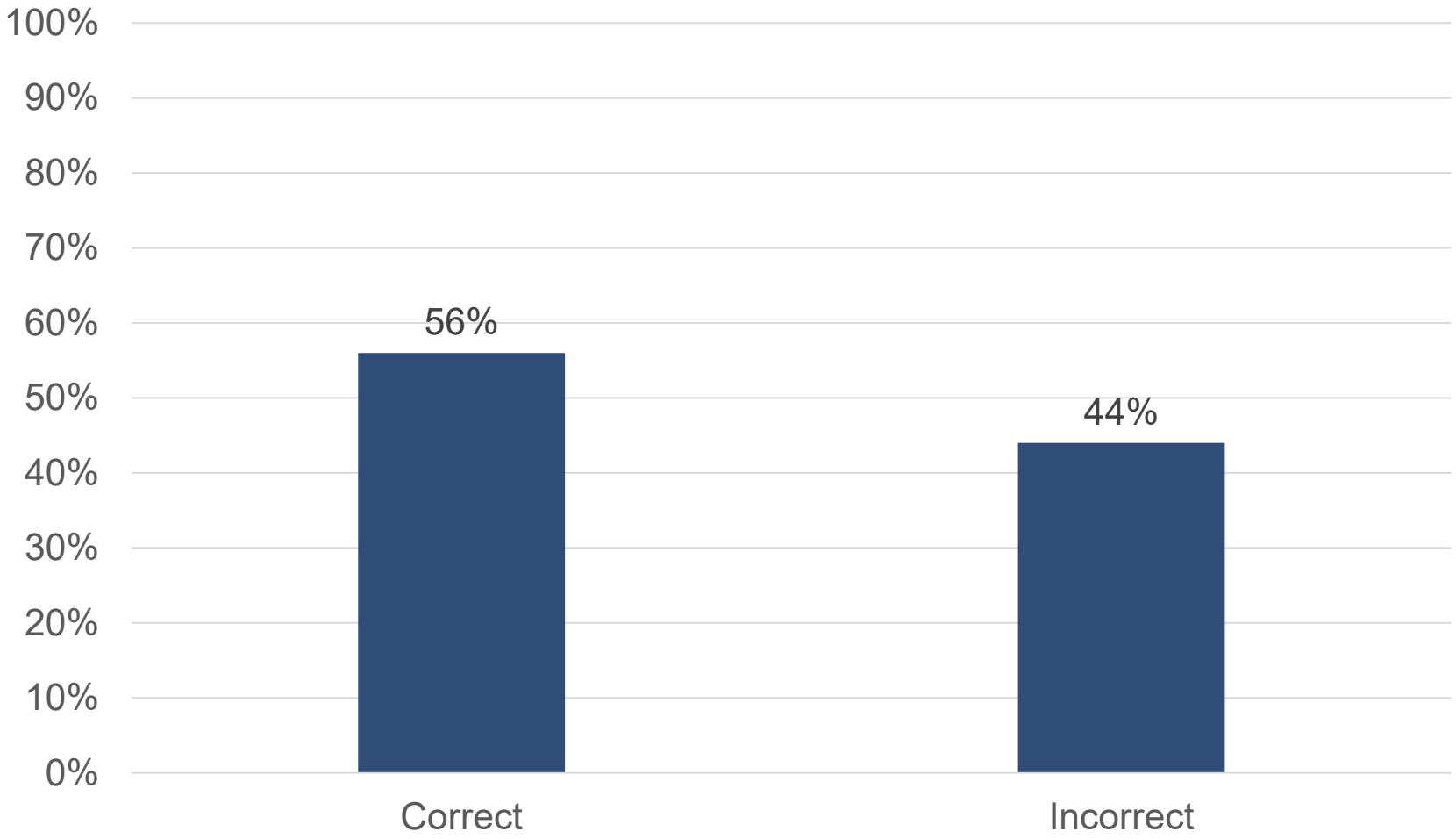


*Correct answer: Not a book in the Bible

Lifeway Research

Q54_5: "For each of the following books, please indicate where in the Bible it is found: **Hezekiah"** .n=2,012

Gospel of Thomas

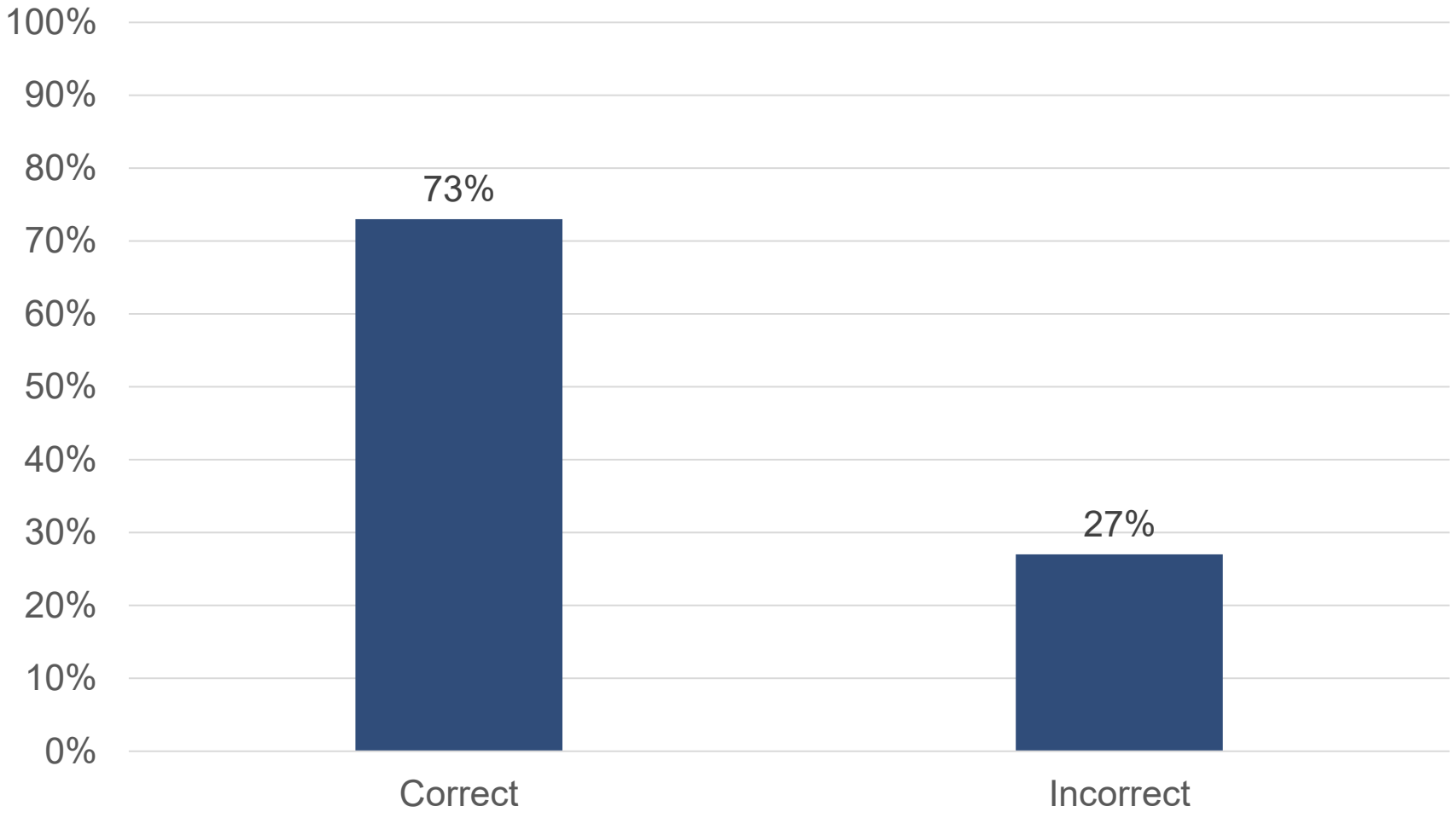


*Correct answer: Not a book in the Bible

Lifeway Research

Q54_6: "For each of the following books, please indicate where in the Bible it is found: **Gospel of Thomas"** .n=2,012

Psalms

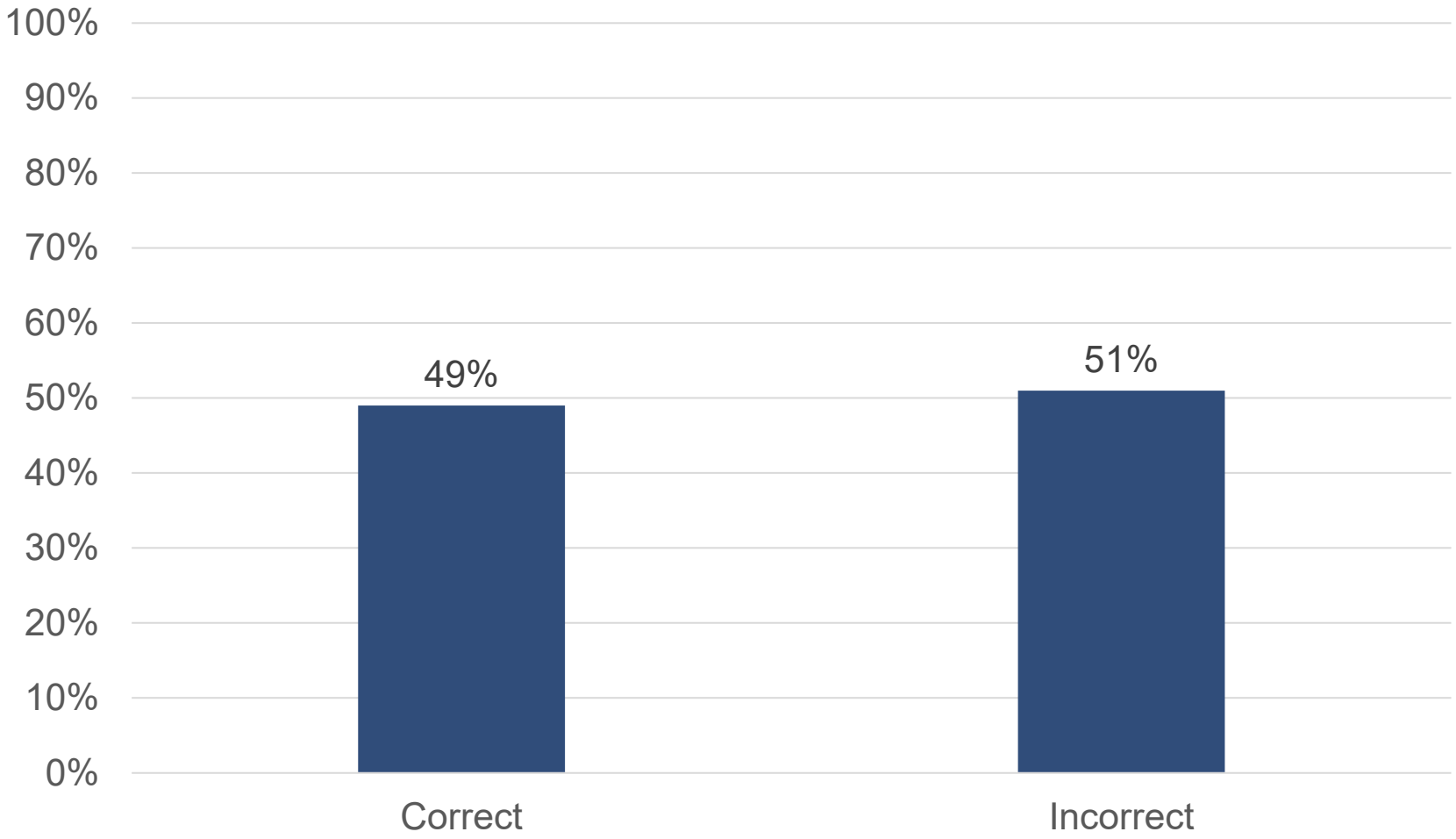


*Correct answer: Book in the Old Testament

Lifeway Research

Q54_7: "For each of the following books, please indicate where in the Bible it is found: **Psalms"** .n=2,012

Haggar



*Correct answer: Not a book in the Bible

Lifeway Research

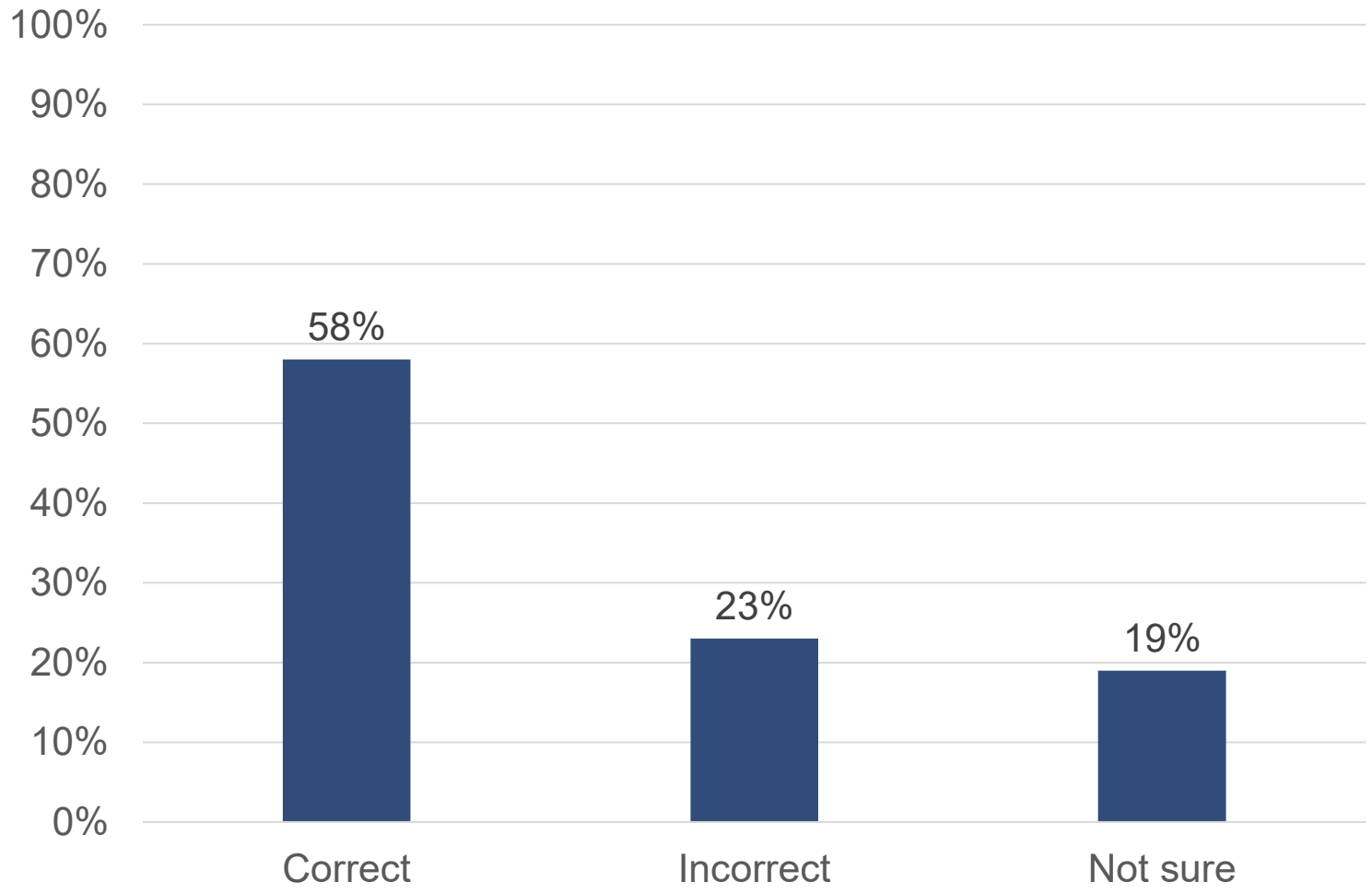
Q54_8: "For each of the following books, please indicate where in the Bible it is found: **Haggar"** .n=2,012

General Bible Knowledge

Mean Score=54

Lifeway Research

“How many ways did the devil tempt Jesus during His 40 days in the wilderness?”

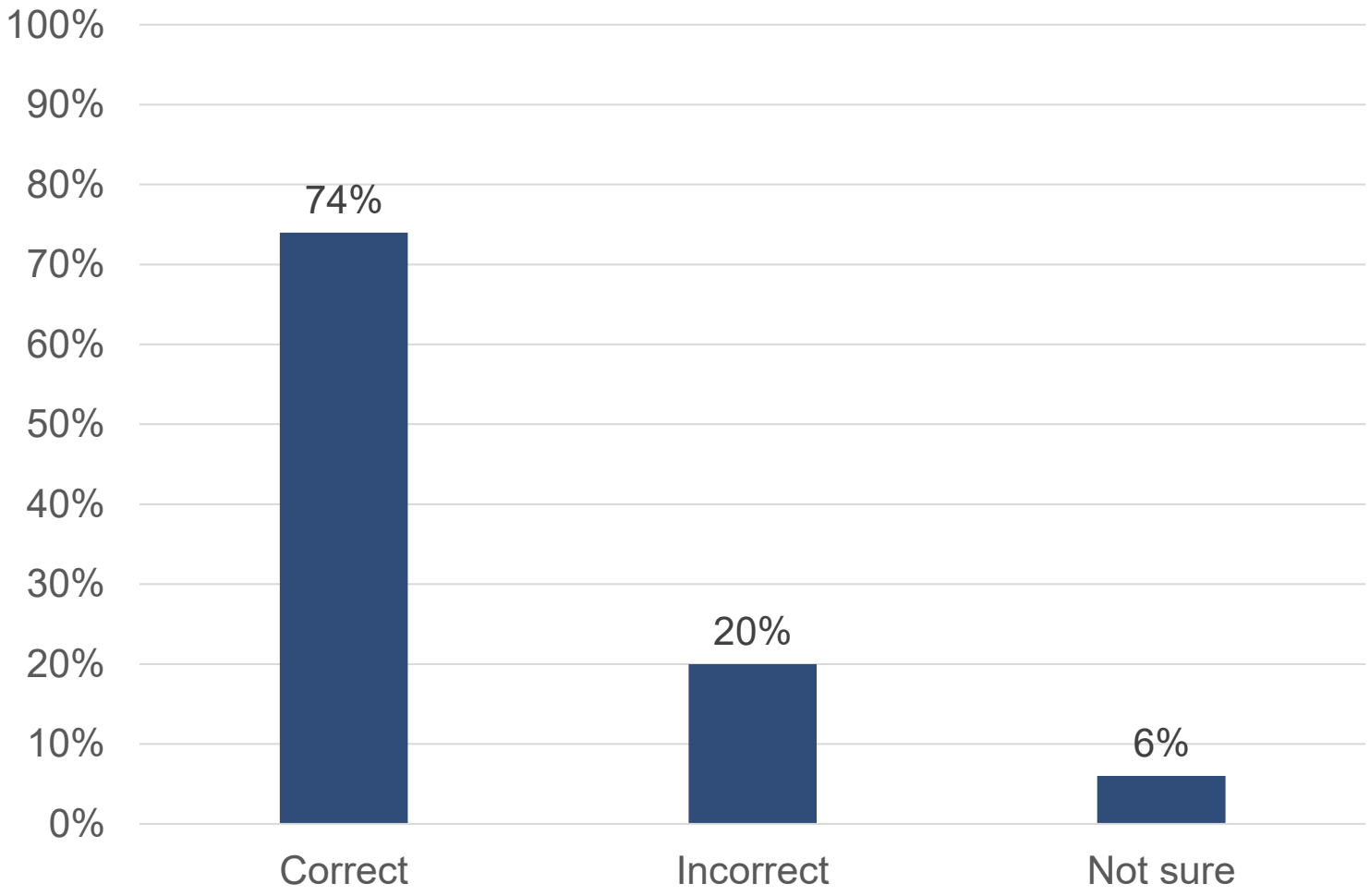


*Correct answer: Three

Lifeway Research

Q55: “How many ways did the devil tempt Jesus during His 40 days in the wilderness?” n=2,012

“Which word is the feast which celebrates God saving the firstborn of Israel from death?”

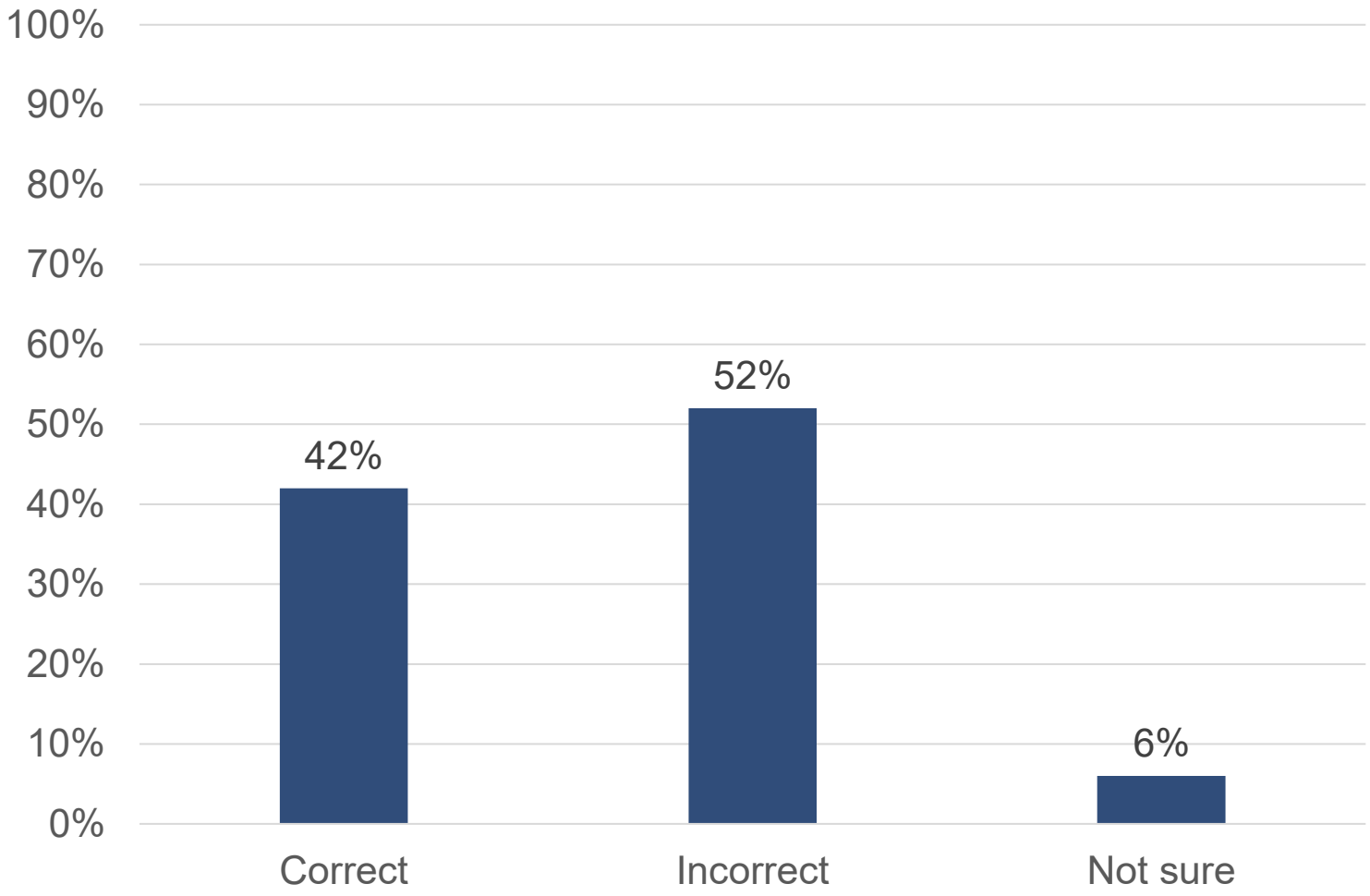


*Correct answer: Passover

Lifeway Research

Q56: “Which word is the feast which celebrates God saving the firstborn of Israel from death?” n=2,012

“Which one of the following is not recorded as a miracle of Jesus in the Gospels?”

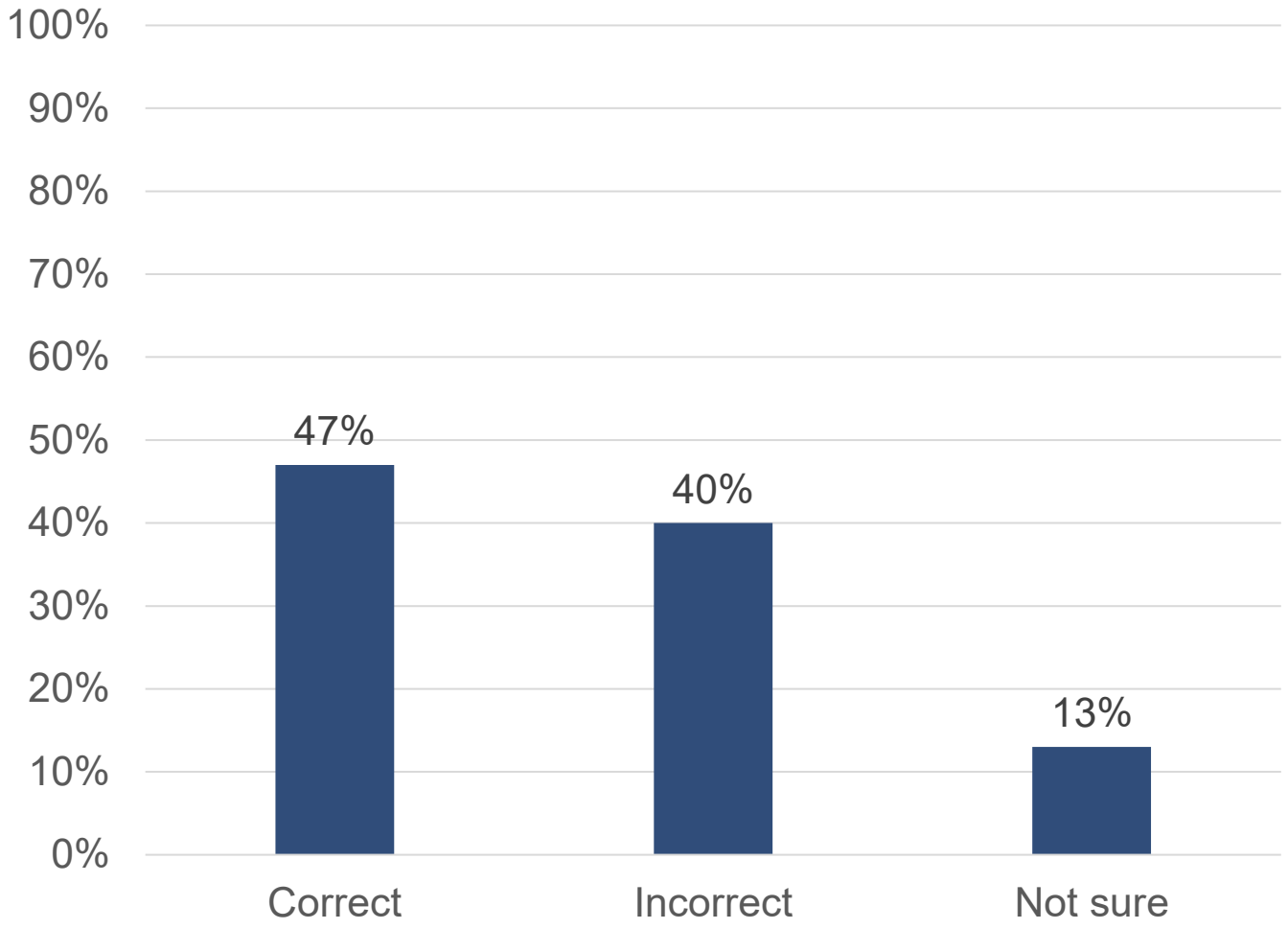


*Correct answer:
Turning stones to bread

Lifeway Research

Q57: “Which one of the following is **not** recorded as a miracle of Jesus in the Gospels?” n=2,012

“Who was the first person killed (martyred) for his witness about Jesus?”

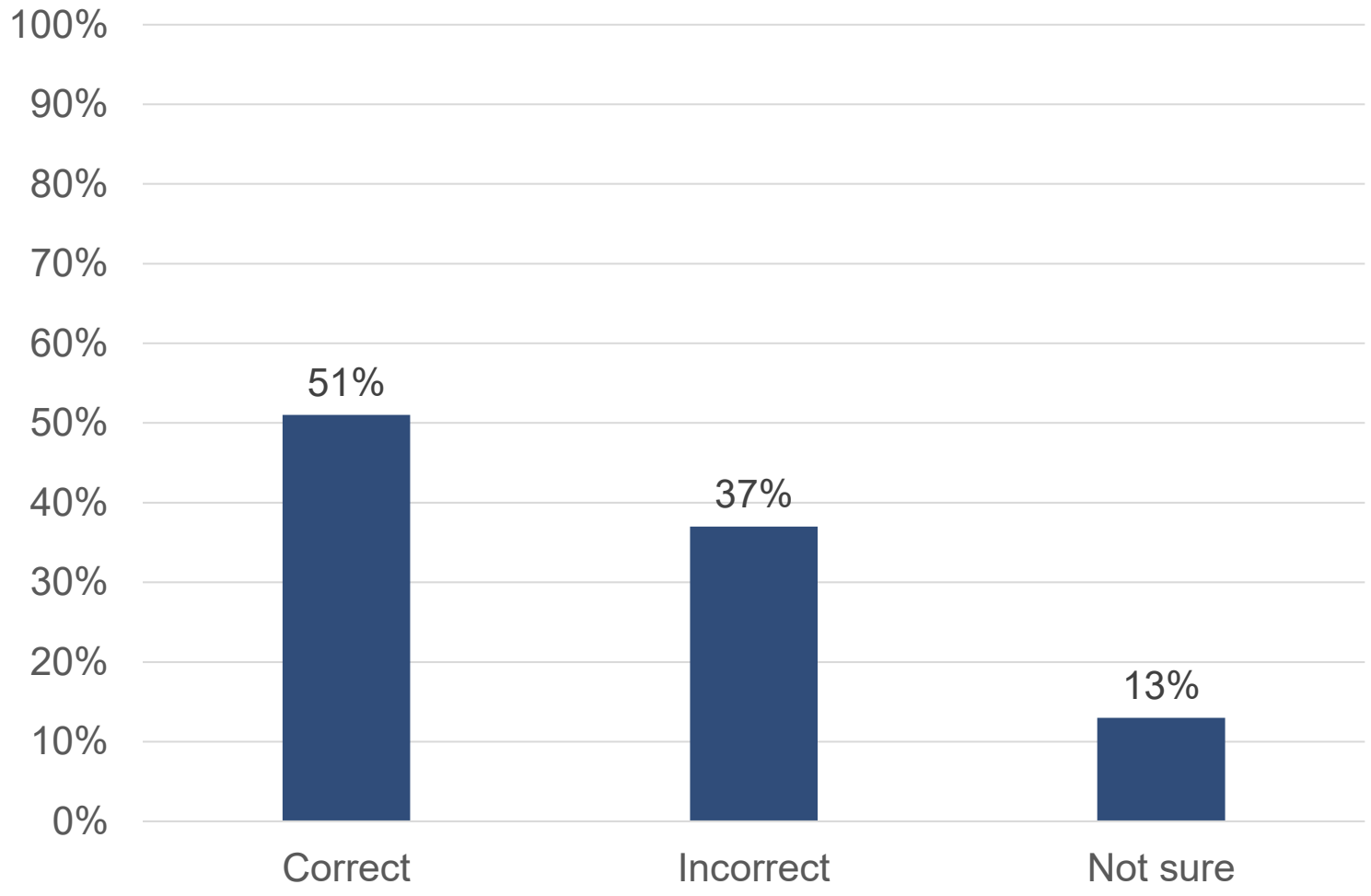


*Correct answer: Stephen

Lifeway Research

Q58: “Who was the first person killed (martyred) for his witness about Jesus?” n=2,012

“Who was the mother of Isaac?”



*Correct answer: Sarah

Lifeway Research

Q59: “Who was the mother of Isaac?” n=2,012

Is This Statement in the Bible

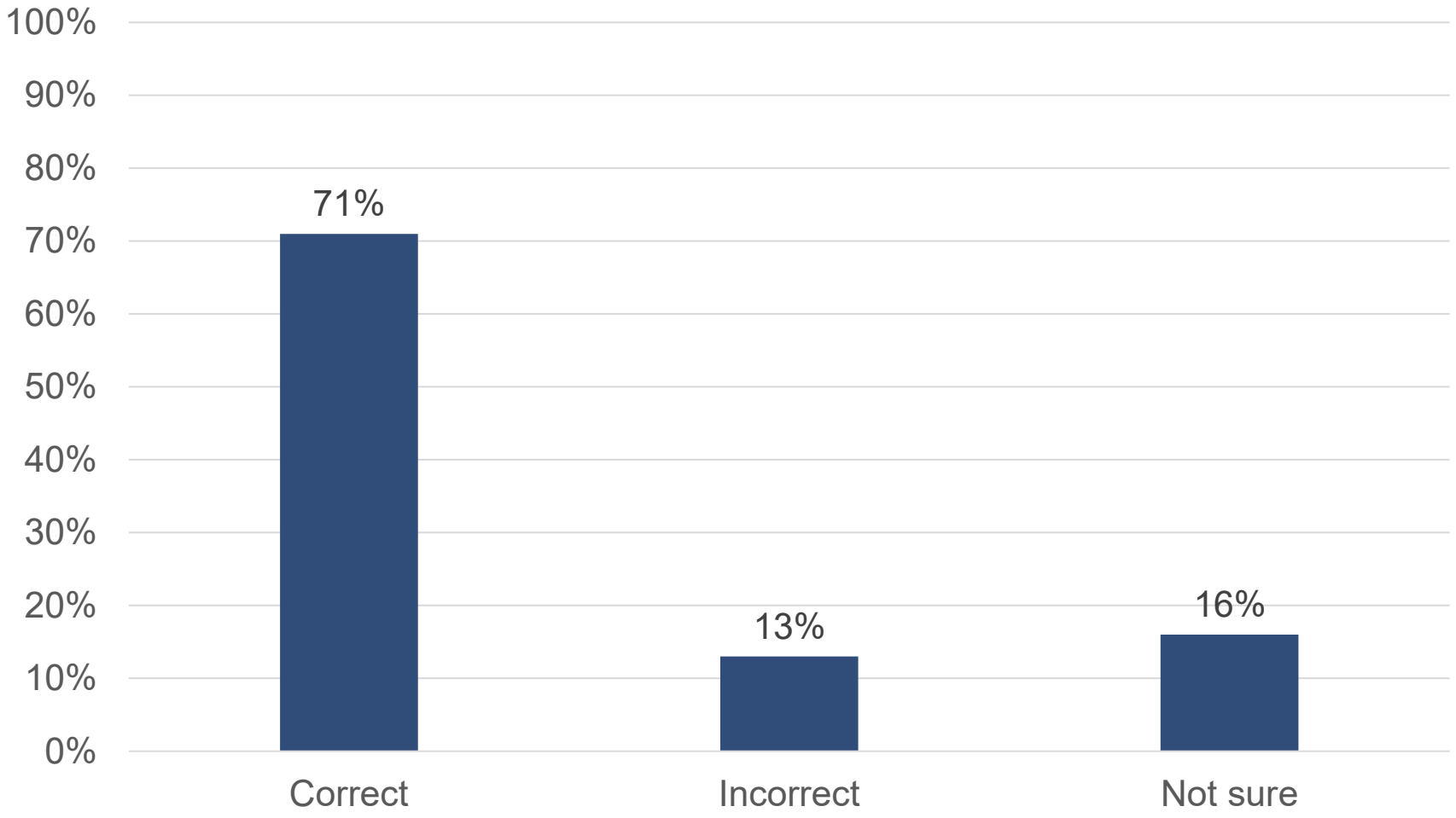
Mean Score=65

A few of the questions on the survey quoted text from the Bible. Instructions and a pulldown menu allowed respondents to view these in their choice of one of five translations:

Christian Standard Bible (CSB)
English Standard Version (ESV)
New International Version (NIV)
King James Version (KJV) *default*
Revised Standard Version (RSV)

Lifeway Research

“Pride goeth before destruction, And an haughty spirit before a fall.”

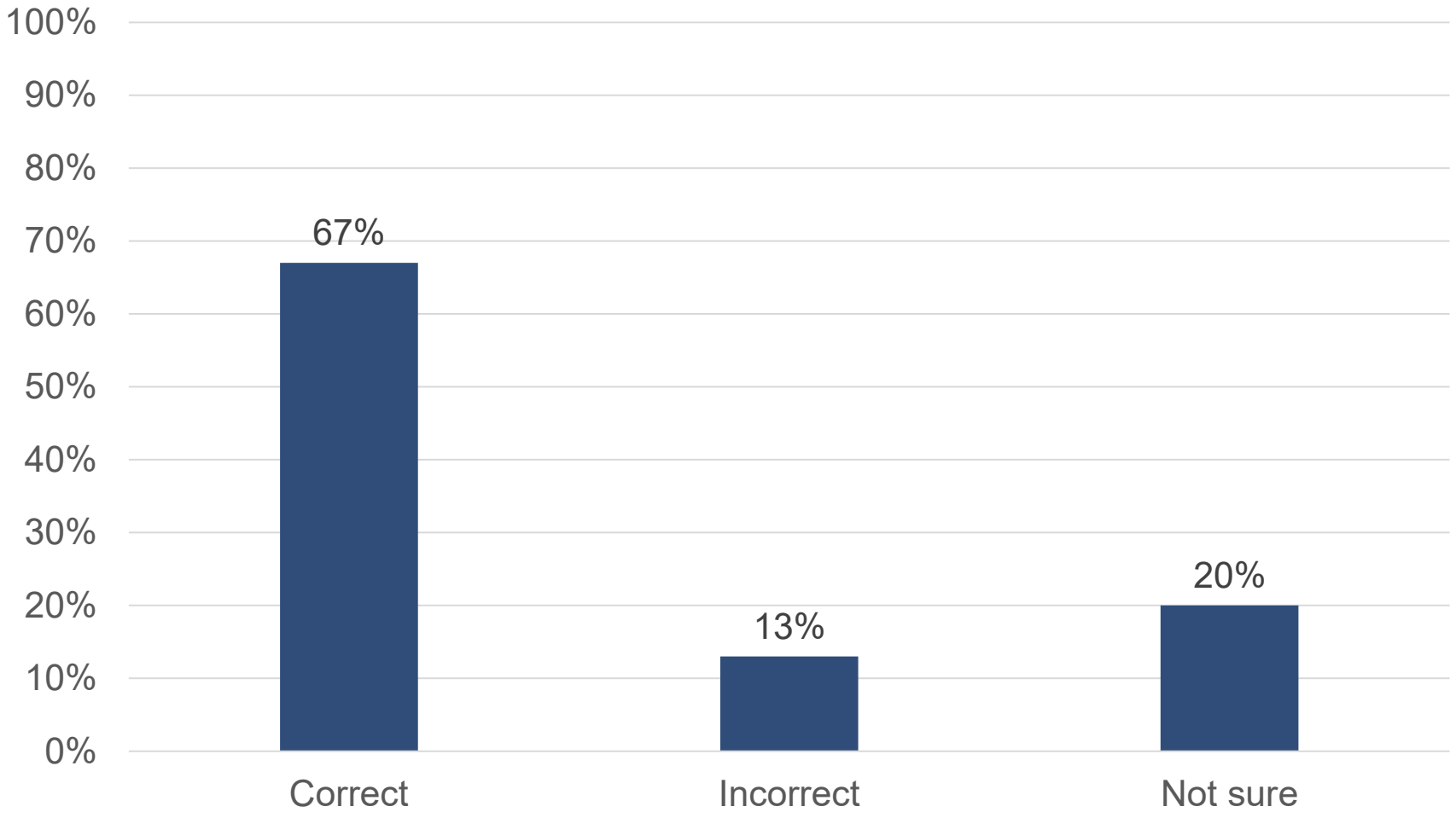


*Correct answer: Yes

Lifeway Research

Q61 “Is this statement in the Bible? 'Pride goeth before destruction, And an haughty spirit before a fall.’” *Reference not shown Proverbs 16:18* n=2,012

“Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.”

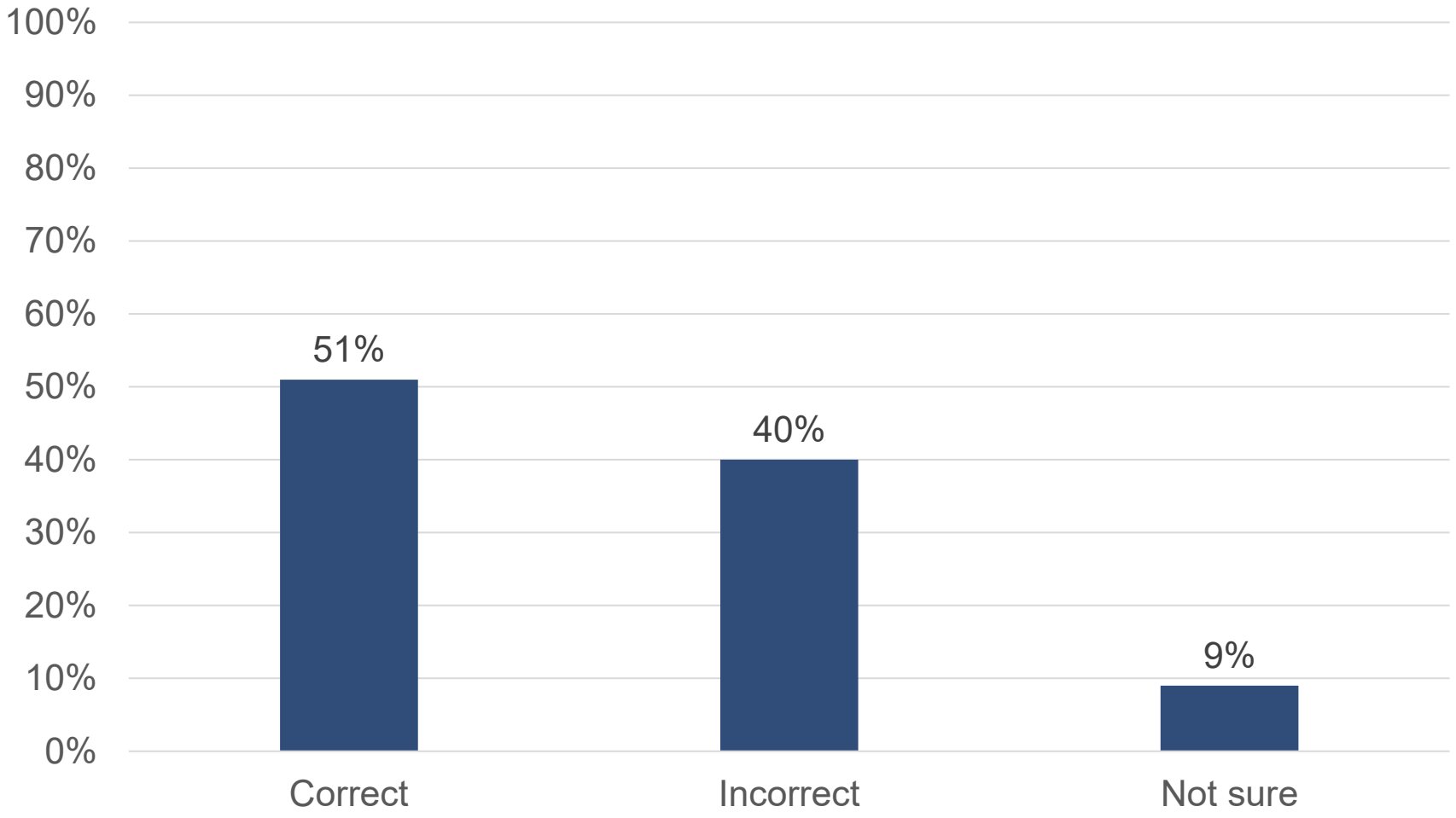


*Correct answer: Yes

Lifeway Research

Q62 “Is this statement in the Bible? 'Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.'” *Reference not shown Matthew 6:34* n=2,012

“God shall help those who help themselves.”

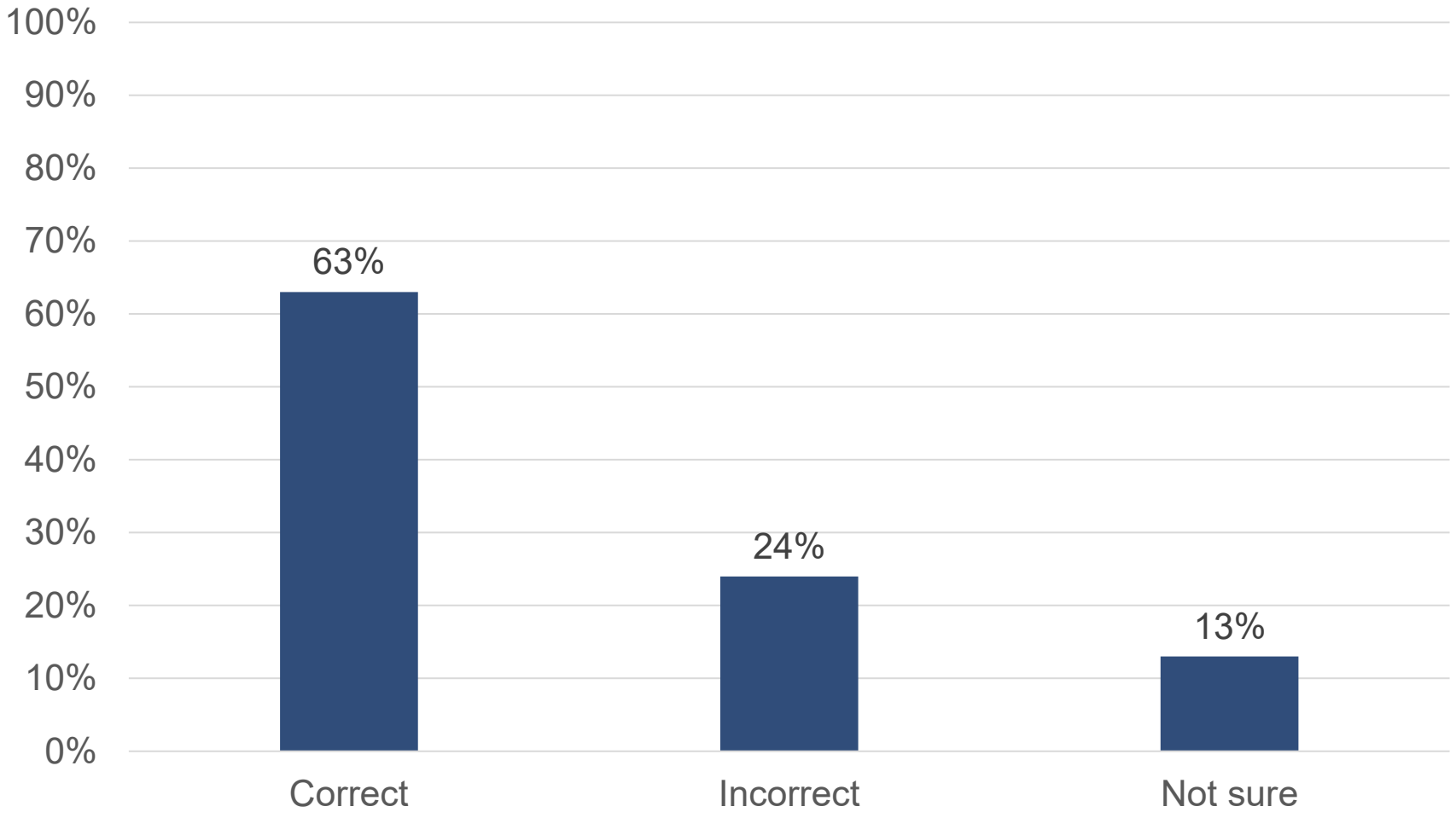


*Correct answer: No

Lifeway Research

Q63 “Is this statement in the Bible? 'God shall help those who help themselves.’” n=2,012

“Charity begins at home.”

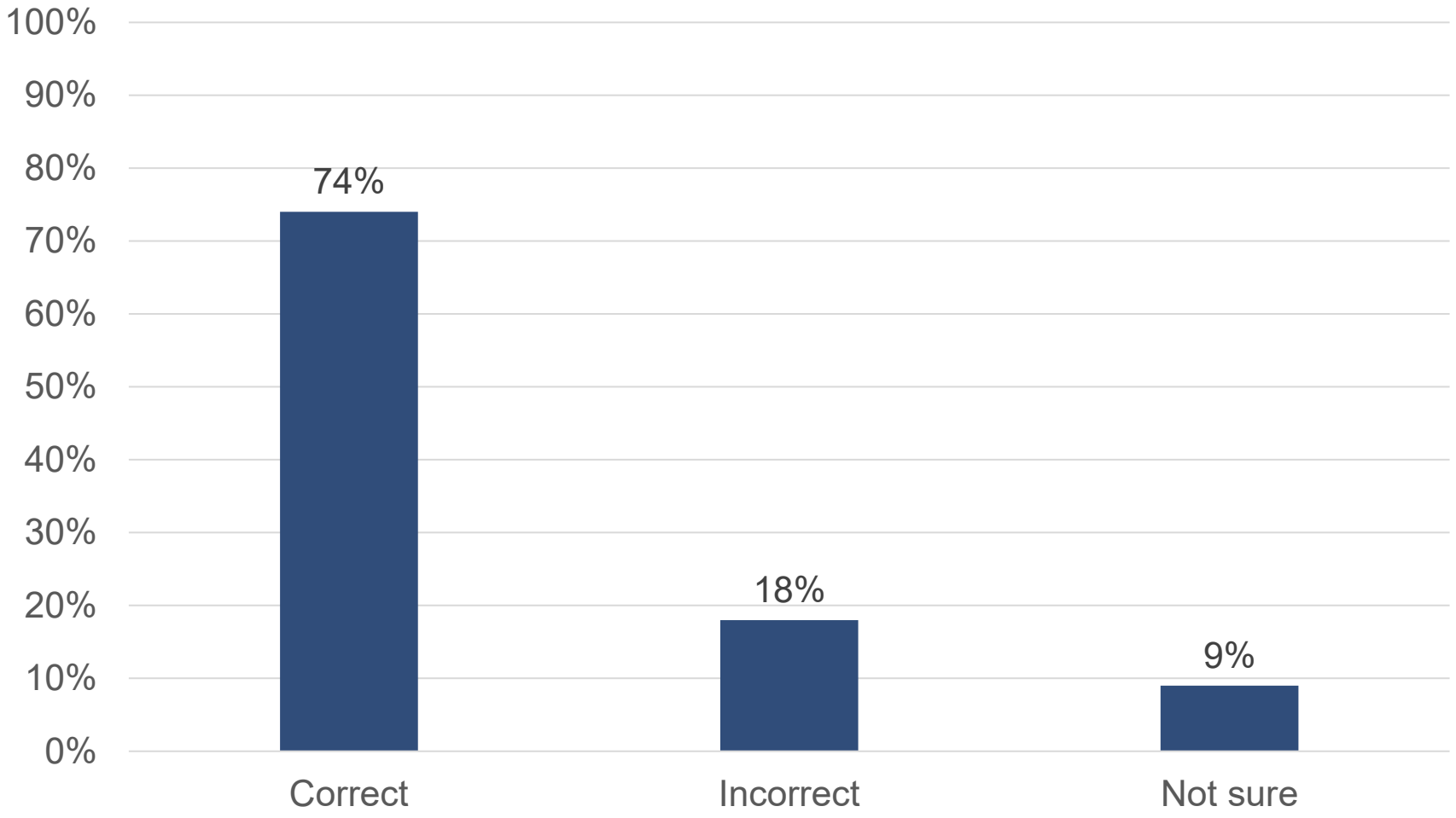


*Correct answer: No

Lifeway Research

Q64 “Is this statement in the Bible? ‘Charity begins at home.’” n=2,012

“Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.”

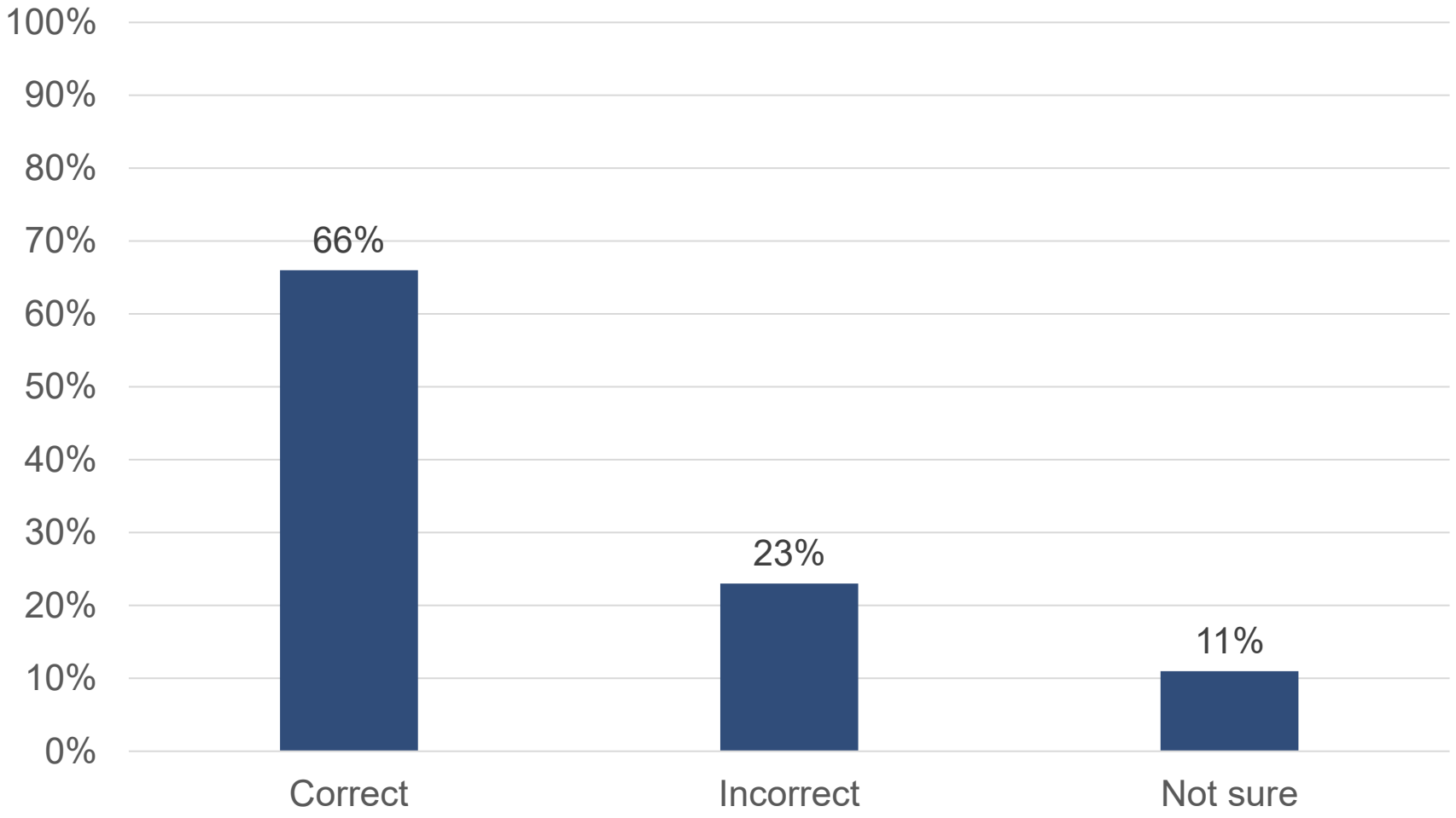


*Correct answer: Yes

Lifeway Research

Q65 “Is this statement in the Bible? ‘Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.’” *Reference not shown Romans 12:19* n=2,012

“Money is evil.”



*Correct answer: No

Lifeway Research

Q66 “Is this statement in the Bible? ‘Money is evil.’” .n=2,012

Average Score by Question Type

	Mean
People of the Bible	60
Which Book of the Bible	51
Ordering Events in the Bible	43
Fill in the Blank Bible Verses	42
Division of the Bible	40
Old Testament, New Testament, Not in the Bible	56
General Bible Knowledge	54
Is This Statement in the Bible	65

Lifeway Research

Overall Grades
by Demographics

Lifeway Research

Gender

	Male	Female
A	12%	7%
B	7%	9%
C	9%	9%
D	8%	10%
F	65%	65%

No Meaningful Differences

Lifeway Research

Age

	18-29	30-49	50-64	65+
A	11%*	16%*	6%	4%
B	8%	8%	6%	9%
C	8%	9%	7%	12%
D	9%	7%	10%	10%
F	63%	60%	71%*	65%

*Significantly Higher

Lifeway Research

Region

	Northeast	Midwest	South	West
A	12%*	5%	8%	16%*
B	7%	10%	8%	8%
C	10%	10%	9%	8%
D	6%	8%	10%	9%
F	65%	67%	66%	59%

*Significantly Higher

Lifeway Research

Ethnicity

	White	African American	Hispanic	Other Ethnicity
A	9%	10%	11%	7%
B	8%	10%	7%	10%
C	9%	9%	8%	8%
D	9%	8%	10%	6%
F	65%	63%	65%	70%

No Meaningful Differences

Lifeway Research

Education Level

	High School graduate or less	Some College	Bachelor's Degree	Graduate Degree
A	5%	6%	8%	23%*
B	5%	8%	10%	12%
C	7%	10%	8%	12%
D	9%	9%	10%	7%
F	74%*	68%	64%	45%

*Significantly Higher

Lifeway Research

Evangelical Beliefs

	Yes	No
A	10%	8%
B	10%	6%
C	10%	8%
D	12%	6%
F	58%	73%*

*Significantly Higher

Lifeway Research

Religious Tradition

	Evangelical	Black Protestant	Mainline	Catholic
A	8%	8%	8%	12%
B	10%	11%	4%	5%
C	10%	7%	9%	8%
D	11%	11%	7%	6%
F	60%	64%	72%*	70%*

*Significantly Higher

Lifeway Research

Worship Service Attendance

	Once a month	Twice a month	Three times a month	4 or more times a month
A	5%	8%	8%	10%
B	5%	5%	6%	10%
C	8%	8%	5%	11%
D	6%	5%	10%	10%
F	75%*	74%*	71%*	60%

*Significantly Higher

Lifeway Research

Personal Bible Reading

	Every day	A few times a week	Once a week	A few times a month	Once a month	Rarely/ Never
A	19%*	13%	7%	6%	2%	1%
B	17%*	11%	6%	3%	4%	2%
C	14%*	13%*	12%	7%	4%	3%
D	13%	11%	8%	10%	6%	4%
F	37%	53%	67%	74%	84%*	91%*

*Significantly Higher

Lifeway Research

Overall Scores by Demographics Using ANOVA

(Analysis of Variance testing of means)

Lifeway Research

ANOVA

Gender: Not statistically different

	Male	Female
Average Score	52%	51%

Age: 30-49 > 50-64

	18-29	30-49	50-64	65+
Average Score	52%	54%	48%	52%

Region: West > Midwest

	Northeast	Midwest	South	West
Average Score	52%	49%	51%	54%

ANOVA

Ethnicity: Not statistically different

	White	African American	Hispanic	Other Ethnicity
Average Score	51%	52%	51%	49%

Education: Graduate degree highest, HS or less lowest

	High School graduate or less	Some College	Bachelor's Degree	Graduate Degree
Average Score	45%	49%	52%	64%

Evangelical Beliefs: Yes > No

	Yes	No
Average Score	55%	47%

ANOVA

Religious Tradition: Evangelical > Catholic, Mainline

	Evangelical	Black Protestant	Mainline	Catholic
Average Score	53%	51%	48%	49%

Worship Service Attendance: 4 or more highest

	Once a month	Twice a month	Three times a month	4 or more times a month
Average Score	44%	46%	48%	55%

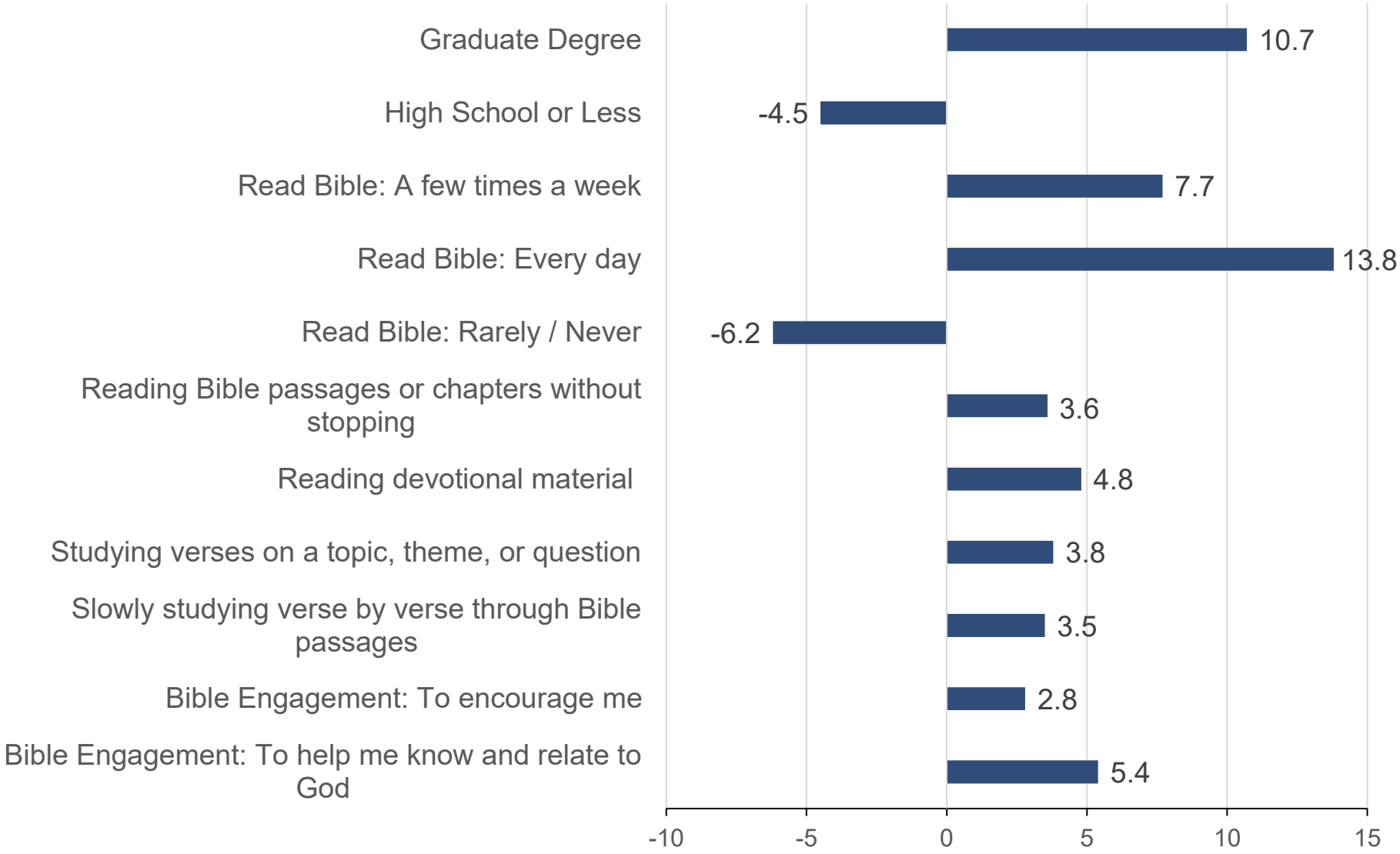
Personal Bible Reading: Every day highest, Rarely/Never lowest

	Every day	A few times a week	Once a week	A few times a month	Once a month	Rarely/ Never
Average Score	66%	59%	50%	46%	42%	36%

Regression Analysis

Lifeway Research

Which factors influence Bible literacy quiz score?



Lifeway Research

Results of regression analysis. Dependent variable: Total Score. R-square 31%

How to View Differences in Total Score

- Independent variables tested includes all demographic variables along with questions regarding the approaches one uses to learn the Bible and reasons for Bible engagement.
- The model begins with an average score of 38.
- Daily Bible reading provides the greatest average increase in total score.
- Reading long sections of the Bible, reading slowly, or studying verses have positive effects.
- Reading for encouragement or relationship-building are positive influencers.
- While those with a graduate degree scored higher on average, people who commit to regular reading can easily surpass the impact of a higher degree.