

BIBLE STUDY – WHAT? WHY? WHO? WHEN? WHERE? HOW?

Grace Fellowship Institute – Fall, 2004

#1 - Introduction – What is the Bible?

- **GOALS OF THIS STUDY:**

1. I will know **what is the Bible.**
2. I will have greater **confidence in the Bible.**
3. I will have greater **passion for the Bible.**
4. I will know better **how to study the Bible.**
5. I will be **changed by the Bible.**

- **WHAT IS THE BIBLE?**

1. How would you explain what the Bible is to someone who had *no knowledge whatsoever* about it?

2. How is it different from other books or even other “sacred writings”?
 - a.) Koran of Islam - believed to be the true words of God; given by Gabriel to Mohammed at age 40; 6666 verses in 114 sutras or chapters; written in Arabic over 23 years by one person in the fifth century; with the five pillars of Islam of confession of faith, regular prayer, charity, observance of Ramadan, and pilgrimage.
 - b.) Book of Mormon – believed to be given to Joseph Smith in 1830 on leaves of gold from an ancient prophet or angel named Moroni; about 6205 verses in 15 books; with the story of Jews who left the old world and traveled to the new world.
 - c.) Others

3. What is the significance of God’s “word” or revelation being written in a book?

- **WHAT DO WE BELIEVE AND TEACH ABOUT THE BIBLE AT GRACE FELLOWSHIP?**

Grace Fellowship’s Bylaws:

A. Scripture

We believe that the Bible is God’s written revelation of Himself. These Holy Scriptures are perfect as originally given by and from God (“God-breathed”), and are the eternal, inspired, inerrant, infallible, verbal and plenary very Word of God for man. We agree with the *Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy* as further explanation on our view of the Scriptures. They are the sole authority and truth for all men for all times for all matters of faith and practice. Properly interpreted, they support or supersede all that follows.

Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy:

Summary Statement

1. God, who is Himself Truth and speaks truth only, has inspired Holy Scripture in order thereby to reveal Himself to lost mankind through Jesus Christ as Creator and Lord, Redeemer and Judge. Holy Scripture is God's witness to Himself.

2. Holy Scripture, being God's own Word, written by men prepared and superintended by His Spirit, is of infallible divine authority in all matters upon which it touches: It is to be believed, as God's instruction, in all that it affirms; obeyed, as God's command, in all that it requires; embraced, as God's pledge, in all that it promises.

3. The Holy Spirit, Scripture's divine Author, both authenticates it to us by His inward witness and opens our minds to understand its meaning.

4. Being wholly and verbally God-given, Scripture is without error or fault in all its teaching, no less in what it states about God's acts in creation, about the events of world history, and about its own literary origins under God, than in its witness to God's saving grace in individual lives.

5. The authority of Scripture is inescapably impaired if this total divine inerrancy is in any way limited or disregarded, or made relative to a view of truth contrary to the Bible's own; and such lapses bring serious loss to both the individual and the Church.

1689 London Baptist Confession of Faith:

Chapter 1 - THE HOLY SCRIPTURES

1.1 The Holy Scriptures are the only sufficient, certain and infallible rule¹ for saving knowledge, faith, and obedience.²

Although the light of nature and the works of creation and providence give such clear testimony to the goodness, wisdom and power of God that they leave people without excuse,³ yet they are not sufficient to give the knowledge of God and his will that is necessary for salvation.⁴

Therefore it pleased the Lord to reveal himself at various times and in different ways, and to declare his will to his church.⁵ To ensure the preservation and propagation of the truth, and to establish and support the church against human corruption, the malice of Satan, and the world, he committed his complete revelation to writing. The Holy Scriptures are therefore absolutely indispensable,⁶ for God's former ways of revealing his will to his people have now ceased.⁷

1.2 The Holy Scriptures, or the Word of God written, consist of all the books of the Old and New Testament. These are:

The Old Testament: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 Samuel, 2 Samuel, 1 Kings, 2 Kings, 1 Chronicles, 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi

The New Testament: Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Acts, Romans, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians, 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon, Hebrews, James, 1 Peter, 2 Peter, 1 John, 2 John, 3 John, Jude, Revelation

All of these are given by the inspiration of God to be the rule¹ of faith and life.²

1.3 The books commonly called the Apocrypha were not given by divine inspiration, and are not part of the canon or rule of Scripture. Therefore they have no authority in the church of God, nor are they to be accepted or made use of in any way different from other human writings.¹

1.4 Holy Scripture demands belief, yet its authority does not depend on the testimony of any person or church,¹ but entirely on God its author, who is truth itself. Therefore it is to be received because it is the Word of God.²

1.5 We may be influenced and persuaded by the testimony of the church of God to hold a high and reverent regard for the Holy Scriptures.¹ Moreover the glory of its contents, the efficacy of its doctrine, the majesty of its style, the agreement among all its parts, the expanse of the whole (which is to give all glory to God), the full revelation it gives of the only way for human salvation, together with many other incomparable characteristics and its complete perfection—all these arguments provide abundant evidence that it is indeed the Word of God.² Yet, notwithstanding this, our full persuasion and assurance of its infallible truth and divine authority comes from the inward work of the Holy Spirit bearing witness by and with the Word in our hearts.³

1.6 The whole revelation of God concerning all things essential for his own glory, human salvation, faith and life, is either explicitly set down or implicitly contained in the Holy Scriptures. Nothing is ever to be added, whether by a new revelation of the Spirit, or by human traditions.¹ Nevertheless, we acknowledge that the inward enlightenment of the Spirit of God is necessary for the saving understanding of the things revealed in the Word.² There are also some aspects of the worship of God and of church government common to human activities and organizations which may be determined by the light of nature and Christian common-sense, but in accordance with the general rules of the Word which must always be observed.³

1.7 Not all things in Scripture are equally plain in themselves,¹ nor equally clear to everyone.² Yet those things that are essential to be known, believed and obeyed for salvation are so clearly set forth and explained in one place of Scripture or another, that not only the educated but also the uneducated may attain a satisfactory understanding of them by using ordinary means.³

1.8 The Old Testament in Hebrew (the national language of the people of God of ancient Israel)¹ and the New Testament in Greek (the common language of that time) were inspired directly by God, and were kept pure throughout the ages by his particular care and providence. They are therefore authentic,² so that in all religious controversies the church must appeal to them as final.³ But these original languages are not known to all the people of God, who have a right to and an interest in the Scriptures, and who are commanded in the fear of God to read and search them.⁴ They are therefore to be translated into the common language of every nation to which they come,⁵ so that (with the Word of God living richly in all) people may worship God in an acceptable manner, and through patience and comfort of the Scriptures may have hope.⁶

1.9 The infallible rule for the interpretation of Scripture is Scripture itself. Therefore, when there is a question about the true and full sense of any [part of] Scripture (which is not a miscellany, but a unity) it must be understood in the light of other passages that speak more clearly.¹

1.10 The supreme judge by which all religious controversies are to be settled, and all decrees of councils, opinions of ancient writers, human doctrines and individual thinkers are to be examined, can be none other than the Holy Scriptures delivered by the Spirit. In the verdict of Scripture our faith is finally determined.¹

#2 - What is the Bible? Revelation, Inspiration, Illumination, Scripture

I. God is the Creator Who “Speaks!”

1. Thankfully, God has chosen to reveal Himself to us in several ways and means.
2. As the One True Living God, God should be defined by HIMSELF, not by men or their ideas of God.
3. As the Creator, God is the ONLY ONE Who really knows man and can fully reveal man fully to him.
4. Only God’s revelation of Himself can be trusted as true and worshipped as God.
5. Only God’s revelation of man can be trusted as true and used as a guide for our lives.
6. The purpose of His revelation is that we might have a high view of Him, and an accurate view of ourselves, that we might know and love Him as His children bringing glory to Him.
7. God’s power is inherent in His revelation.

II. Man is a creature designed to “Listen!”

1. We are created with the ability to “hear” in many ways and gather information through our senses, conscience and spirit.
2. As finite and limited creatures, we could not know anything about our Creator that He did not chose to reveal to us.
3. We are dependent upon God’s revelation for LIFE, physically and spiritually.
4. We are responsible for what God reveals to us, whether we believe it or not!
5. The message of God’s revelation is a matter of life and death to us!

III. The Doctrine (teaching) of “Revelation”

- What is *revelation*?
- What are the major *sources* of *revelation*?
- *Why* has God spoken?
- *How* has God spoken?
- What is the message that God desires and determines to reveal to His own?
- The Doctrine of Revelation:

Revelation defined: the self-disclosure of God to man of what is otherwise unknowable by any other means

This is the Message that God has determined to reveal to men.

2 Major Sources of Revelation:

- A. General - External & Internal, Creation & Conscience
- B. Special - The Word of God: Christ and the Scriptures

- **The Doctrine of the Scriptures:**

Bible – from the Greek root “*biblios*”, meaning books or scrolls

The Bible is a very unique book. This evidences its Divine origin.

1. **Unique in its Product.** A unified book from 66 books, 1500 years, and 40 authors with very diverse occupations, backgrounds, settings, and personalities.
 2. **Unique in its Preservation.** Written over 1500 years, passed down over 2000 years, attacked from the beginning until now, it still survives and flourishes.
 3. **Unique in its Proclamations.** From heaven to hell, from eternity past to eternity future, it covers all things for all people for all times.
 4. **Unique in its Product.** Nothing has ever influenced the history, culture, law, thought, morality, thought or changed lives more than the Bible.
 5. **Unique in its Positions.** It claims to be the very “Word of God” many, many times, and as such is inerrant, infallible, true, and authoritative.
- **Why has God spoken?** In a word for us: **Salvation**; for Him: **Glory!**
 - **How has God spoken?** Through the miraculous process known as “inspiration.”

IV. The Doctrine of “Inspiration”

- What is *inspiration*?
- What is *inspiration not*?
- How can *both* God and men be the authors of the Bible?
- *Inspiration* or “*expiration*”, which is it?
- How do we know that the Bible is *inspired*? What witnesses do we have?

- **The Doctrine of Inspiration:**

Inspiration defined: God superintending human authors so that, using their own individual personalities, experiences, thought processes and vocabulary, they composed and recorded without error His revelation in the original copies of Scripture.

This is the Means of delivering or communicating the *message* to man.

- How can we understand this concept of *inspiration*? Perhaps by considering what *inspiration* is not:

1. Inspiration is not a high level of human achievement. (Natural inspiration)
2. Inspiration is not only in the thoughts of the writers. (Thought inspiration)
3. Inspiration is not the act of God on the readers. (Existential inspiration)
4. Inspiration is not mechanical dictation. (Dictation inspiration)
5. Inspiration is not only in some parts. (Partial inspiration)

- How can *both* God and men be the authors of the Bible?

God formed the authors into the men He wanted them to be. He created and shaped their personalities, experiences, intellects, vocabularies and emotions. He directed and controlled their “free choice” so that they wrote the very words of God. God selected the words of each author’s life, which He Divinely controlled.

Example and analogy of the virgin birth:

Jesus was both God and man, Son of both God the Father and Mary. Although she was a sinner and imperfect, He was sinless and perfect, although still her’s.

- What *is* inspiration?

2Tim. 3:16 “pasa graphe theopneustos”

1. **Theopneustos**
 - a. **Theos** “God”
 - b. **pneuma** “breathed”
2. **Graphe** “writings” (as defined by the preceding verse)
3. **Pasa** “all” (past, present, and future)

Therefore, **all Scripture is “expired” by God, or “God-breathed”.**

Scripture references: 2Tim. 3:16, Mat. 5:18, Acts 4:13, Deu. 4:2, Deu. 6:1, Deu. 12:32, Amos 3:7, Rom. 15:4, 2Pet. 1:20-21, Heb. 1:1, Jam. 4:5, Acts 1:16, 2Pet. 3:15-16, Gal. 1:11-12, Eph. 3:3, 1Cor. 11:23, 1Cor. 15:3, 1Ths. 2:13, 1Ths. 4:15, Col. 1:25, 1Tim. 4:1, Tit. 1:3, Rev. 19:9, Rev. 21:5, Rev. 1:3, Rev. 22:18-19, John 5:39, Luke 24:27, Mat. 5:17, Mat. 26:24, Mat. 26:54, John 10:35, Luke 16:17, Luke 18:31, Mat. 22:29-33, Mat. 19:4, Mat. 24:37-38, John 8:56, Luke 16:29, Mark 12:24-27, Rom. 10:14-17, 1Cor. 2:9-16, Col. 3:16

Testimonies:

- 1. The Bible Writers** repeatedly spoke with an “air of infallibility and authority”; never apologetically nor defensively
- 2. Jesus Christ** second, but most important objective witness; His statements proved that He believed Himself to be the theme of all Scripture, that it was literally and verbally inspired, and confirmed it over and over
- 3. The Holy Spirit** subjective, but most “convincing” witness; as the One who really enables us to take all the Scriptures as God’s Own Word.

V. The Doctrine of “Illumination”

- What is *illumination*?
- Why is *illumination important*?
- What are the *results* for us?
- **The Doctrine of Illumination:**

Illumination defined: The process by which natural, imperfect men are able to comprehend and understand the supernatural and perfect words, precepts and principles of the Bible. This is a supernatural work of God, not man, in the Person of the Holy Spirit, through the body, within the soul, so that it can be deposited in the spirit of man.

This is the Method by which men understand the Bible.

- **What is the application to our lives for the three terms above?** God has given man a special *revelation*, through the process of *inspiration*, that can only be understood through *illumination*. It is infallible, inerrant, complete, authoritative, sufficient, and effective for all men for all things for all time.

#3, 4, 5 - How Did We Get the Bible? Transmission & Translation

VI. The Doctrine of Scripture

A. Transmission

- How did God transmit His Word to us?
- Why is *writing* so important?
- What were some of the materials used for the writings?
- What were the languages used for the original writings?
- Do we have any of the original writings (autographs) today?
- Why is this important? What does this mean about *everything* that we do have today? How does that affect your faith in the Bible?

The Doctrine of Scripture:

A. Transmission

1. How did God transmit His Word to us?

Consider some of the ways God has revealed Himself in the past:

1. **Speech** – sometimes direct, like at Mt. Sinai
2. **Dreams** – sometimes directly, sometimes through another's dream, like Nebuchannezzer's for Daniel
3. **Visions** -
4. **Theophonies** – the Angel of the Lord that visited Abraham and Sarah, the One who wrestled with Jacob at Peniel (face to face with God), the burning bush, the One in the fire with S. M. & A.,
5. **Angels** -
6. **Signs, wonders, miracles**
7. **Spokesmen** - prophets

So, God has been speaking, but man cannot understand. Why? Because he is ignorant. (Eph. 4:18)

Ephesians 4:18 ¹⁸ being **darkened** in their understanding, excluded from the life of God, because of the **ignorance** that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart;

God has been revealing Himself, but man cannot see. Why? Because he is blind. (Eph. 4:18)

God has been speaking, but man cannot hear. Why? Because he is dead! (Eph. 2:1)

Ephesians 2:1 ¹ And you were **dead in your trespasses and sins**, (NASB)

God has been speaking, but man cannot comprehend. Why? Because he is natural, and God is spiritual. (1Cor. 2:14)

We understand the cry of Isaiah, that we need some *special* revelation:

Isaiah 64:1-2 ¹ **Oh, that Thou wouldst rend the heavens *and come down***, That the mountains might quake at Thy presence-- ² As fire kindles the brushwood, as fire causes water to boil-- **To make Thy name known** to Thine adversaries, *That* the nations may tremble at Thy presence! (NASB)

In the prophetic picture of the deliverance of the nation of Israel from the Egyptians, God said:

Exodus 3:8 ⁸ **"So I have come down to deliver them** from the power of the Egyptians, **and to bring them up** from that land to a good and spacious land, to a land flowing with milk and honey, ...

This was fulfilled in the Person of God the Son, who said:

John 6:38 ³⁸ **"For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.** (NASB)

Listen to what the Apostle Paul says that we have in this text:

1 Corinthians 2:12-16 ¹² Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know **the things freely given to us by God**, ¹³ which **things we also speak**, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual *thoughts* with spiritual *words*. ¹⁴ But a **natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them**, because they are spiritually appraised. ¹⁵ But he who is spiritual appraises all things, yet he himself is appraised by no man. ¹⁶ For **who has known the mind of the Lord**, that he should instruct Him? **But we have the mind of Christ.** (NASB)

What is this mind of Christ, God the Son, which Paul says we have?

What is the special revelation of God that answers the cries of all who, like Isaiah, have longed for God's revelation and presence in a special way?

- **The Answer:**

Hebrews 1:1-4 ¹ **God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways,** ² **in these last days has spoken to us in His Son**, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world. ³ And He is **the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature**, and **upholds all things by the word of His power**. ...

1 Peter 1:10-12 ¹⁰ As to this salvation, **the prophets** who prophesied of **the grace** that *would come* to you **made careful search and inquiry**, ¹¹ **seeking to know what person or time the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating** as He predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow. ¹² **It was revealed to them** that they were

not serving themselves, **but you**, in these **things which now have been announced** to you through those who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven-- **things into which angels long to look.** (NASB)

John 1:18 ¹⁸ No man has seen God at any time; the only begotten God, who is in the bosom of the Father, **He has explained Him.** (NASB)

John 14:6-10 ⁶ Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me. ⁷ **"If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; from now on you know Him, and have seen Him."** ⁸ Philip said to Him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us." ⁹ Jesus said to him, "Have I been so long with you, and yet you have not come to know Me, Philip? **He who has seen Me has seen the Father; how do you say, 'Show us the Father'?** ¹⁰ **"Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on My own initiative, but the Father abiding in Me does His works.** (NASB)

- Notice that all of the means that God used in the past were culminated, completed and perfected in God the Son, Jesus Christ:

He is **The Prophet** spoken of in Deut. 18:

Deuteronomy 18:15-19 ¹⁵ "The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your countrymen, you shall listen to him. ¹⁶ "This is according to all that you asked of the LORD your God in Horeb on the day of the assembly, saying, 'Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God, let me not see this great fire anymore, lest I die.' ¹⁷ "And the LORD said to me, 'They have spoken well. ¹⁸ 'I will raise up a prophet from among their countrymen like you, and I will put My words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him. ¹⁹ 'And it shall come about that whoever will not listen to My words which he shall speak in My name, I Myself will require *it* of him. (NASB)

He is **The Angel of the Lord** in many OT passages

He is **The Ultimate Theophony**, God in the flesh!

He lived an entire life of wonder that was **The Sign, The Wonder, and The Miracle!**

All of God's revelation has Christ at the center. He is the central character in all of it. From Genesis to Revelation, it is His Story!

John 1:1-4 ¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was in the beginning with God. ³ All things came into being by Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. ⁴ **In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.** (NASB)

John 1:14 ¹⁴ And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth. (NASB)

Therefore, we have this special revelation as believers, as His children. Notice that this revelation comes to us by Divine grace through faith;

It is the **revelation of God the Father**,
Which is the mind of **God the Son**,
Delivered to (**inspired**) and made alive (**illuminated**) to us by **God the Spirit!**

God has been speaking to man since He created him!

- **But *how* did God transmit His *written Word* to us?**

By WRITING!

The starting point is **the history of writing itself**. It is as God developed writing specifically for the purpose of bringing His Word to us in the Bible!

The earliest known examples of writing come from the lands of Egypt and Mesopotamia. An early Sumerian sandstone tablet with writing on it exists that has been dated about 3500BC. In spite of some skeptics, **writing was a well developed art and form long before** any of the earliest estimated dates of Biblical writings (Moses and Job).

The next condition necessary for the written word to be transmitted to us was the material on which the writing was to be recorded.

Consider **some of the materials** used for ancient writing purposes, and even referred to in the Bible itself:

1. Stone (Exo. 24:12, 31:18, 34:1, 28)
2. Clay (Eze. 4:1,
3. Wood (Isa. 30:8, Hab. 2:2)
4. Metal – gold, lead (Exo. 28:36, Job 19:24)
5. Papyrus (“paper”) (2Jo. 12)
6. Animal Skins (2Tim. 4:13)
 - Leather - cowhide
 - Vellum – calves (veal) or antelopes skin
 - Parchment – sheep or goats skin

How were these materials formed to produce the written documents?

1. Tablets – early forms, oblong in shape, baked to harden and preserve
2. Scrolls – for papyri and skins, usually about 30’ long and about 9 to 10 inches high, with writing in columns averaging about 3 to 4 inches in width
3. Codex, Codices – for skins; rectangular sheets stacked to form a “book”; usually about 10 to 15 inches in dimensions (Codex Sinaiticus is 13.5”W X 15”H); usually had about 3 or 4 columns or writing on each page; could be easier preserved, carried, and contained more writing; Christians may have helped develop this “book” form!

What were the languages used for the original writings?

1. Hebrew – most of OT, pictorial symbolic language, personal to the heart, the language of the Jews and “heaven”
2. Aramaic – (Ezra 4:8-6:18, Daniel 2:4b-7:28, Jeremiah 10:11) sister language to Hebrew, a language that was the language of man for state matters between nations
3. Greek – all of the NT, (except for Aramaic quotes like Abba, Eli eli lama sabachthani, Maranatha); exact, precise, & technical language; intellectual to the mind the ‘universal’ language of the “world”

Do we have any of the original “autographs” still extant today? NO!

Why? Probably by design of God! If we did they might be worshipped as idols, or they might have been used to change His word.

B. Translation

1. **Old Testament (Covenant)**
2. **New Testament (Covenant)**
3. **The Bible**

B. Translation

Everything we have today is a TRANSLATION! That is very important to remember as we approach the Bible and its study. So how were the original “autographs” translated and reproduced to bring us the Bibles we have today? How does this process of translation affect the accuracy of the Scriptures compared to the originals, and consequently our reliability and trust in them?

How did the “translation” process evolve?

Through different copies of “manuscripts” A Manuscript is anything written by hand! (As opposed to printed or produced as today, so they all predate the printing press circa 1435AD.)

Types of Manuscripts:

1. **Uncials** – Written all in large capital letters, with no spacing, punctuation, or proportional spacing in columns. About 375 NT uncials today, most dating from the fourth to the ninth centuries
 2. **Cursives** – Also called “minuscules”. Written all in smaller running hand styles, with very beautiful pages and artistic decorations, often in color. About 2800 NT cursives today, most dating from the ninth to the sixteenth centuries.
1. **Old Testament** (“Testament” is an unfortunate translation of the Greek *diatheke*, which may be better rendered “contract” or “Covenant”)

Books or writings of the OT period were gradually written, collected and acknowledged as the very Word of God. This occurred over a long time, but generally from about 1500BC to 400BC.

The progression of the development of the Hebrew Bible was:

1. Speeches & Sayings
2. Individual Books
3. Collections of Books
4. A Fixed and Complete Canon

Contrast of format of the Hebrew OT to that found in our modern Bibles:

<u>Original Collections:</u>	<u>Protestant Collections:</u>
1. The Law (Torah) 5 Books – Pentateuch	1. The Law 5 Books - Pentateuch
2. The Prophets (Neviim) 8 Books (7 plus Minor)	2. History 12 Books
3. The Writings (Ketuvim) 11 Books	3. Poetry & Wisdom 5 Books
	4. Prophecy 17 Books (5 plus minor)
24 Books	39 Books

Differences in order and groupings, but the same text and canon!

OT Translation Progression:

1. Samaritan Pentateuch – A form of the Hebrew text itself. Dated about 400BC, and used by the Samaritans at Mt. Gerizim as their Bible. Some variants from the Massoretic text accepted today, and only covered the first five books.
2. Septuagint – From the Latin *septuaginta* meaning “seventy.” Greek translation of the Hebrew OT performed by 72 Jewish scholars about 250BC in Alexandria, Egypt. Some minor mistakes of translation and variants from the Massoretic text.
3. Aramaic Targums – Aramaic (popular spoken language of the Jews after the exile) translations, dated about the fifth century AD. Two major targums cover the Pentateuch and the Prophets.
4. Syriac Peshitta – Syriac translations, from about first century AD. The earliest forms are in good agreement with the Massoretic text.
5. Latin Versions –
 - a. The Old Latin – 150AD, Latin translation from the Septuagint, limited due to the Septuagint being its basis.

- b. Vulgate – 400AD, Jerome’s very famous, scholarly and important work of translation directly from the Hebrew.
6. The Dead Sea Scrolls - Discovered in 1948, with many partial scrolls of numerous books, including Isaiah, Samuel, & Psalms, dating back to about 100BC. Very important in verifying the accuracy of translation from that time until the latest complete manuscripts of the Massoretic text about 1000 years later.
 7. The Massoretic Text – The common name for the most accepted text today. Derived from the name (*Massorettes*) of the scholarly Jewish scribes that sprang up around Tiberias about 500AD and continued for about 4 or 5 centuries. The latest edition of the current Hebrew Bible (Kittel’s *Biblia Hebraica*) is based upon the most important and oldest manuscripts from about 900 to 1000AD. The canon is virtually undisputed and the accuracy is almost totally secured by textual criticism of the many above progressions. The lack of more recent manuscripts is due to the procedures of the Scribes in destroying any worn or damaged manuscripts.

Importance of the Scribal Process:

The order and profession of scribes developed after the Babylonian captivity of 586BC. They followed VERY STRICT rules for copying the manuscripts and preserving their accuracy. (List and read the Talmud rules for scribes.)

2. New Testament

a. NT Manuscripts:

We have over 5000 total today! Including all textual documents, such as manuscripts and versions, there are many more; at least 20,000! Due to the fact that a complete hand-written copy of even just the NT would be too bulky for practical use, most are partial or single books. The Bible and the NT in particular is without question the most supported and verified ancient writing in the world!

1. Uncials – Oldest and Most Important!

A. The 3 Most Important Bibles in the World (The “Big Three”) (The 3 oldest and most complete uncial manuscripts)

1. The Vatican Manuscript (Codex B, or Codex Vaticanus)

Dated about 330AD, and first known to exist about 1481, when listed in a catalog of the library of the Vatican in Rome. Carried off by Napoleon to Paris where it remained until 1815. It was desired to be studied by many scholars, including Tischendorf, but was kept under wraps until the late 19th century. A complete photographic facsimile was made in 1889. A Greek version of

practically all of the OT and NT, consisting on 759 leaves of fine vellum, with three columns of text traced over. It does not contain Mark 16:9-20.

2. The Sinaitic Manuscript (Codex Aleph, or Codex Sinaiticus)

Dated about 350AD, and discovered accidentally in 1844 by the great German scholar Constantin Tischendorf at St. Catherine's Monastery at the foot of Mount Sinai. He did not secure them from the monastery until 1859 with the help of the Russian Czar, who received them as a gift. Russia sold it to England in 1933 for 100,000 pounds. Since then it has remained until today at the British Museum in London. Contains most of the OT and all of the NT with two non-canonical books (Barnabas and Hermas).

Note: The Roman Emperor Constantine ordered that 50 copies of Bibles be produced in Greek. The above may be two of them that remain!

3. The Alexandrian Manuscript (Codex A, or Codex Alexandrianus)

Dated about 450AD, and named for Alexandria, Egypt, the place from which it originally came. Originally offered by the Greek church as a gift to King James I of England, but James died before it could arrive, so it was given to his successor, King Charles I in 1627. Contains the complete OT less only ten leaves, and most of the NT. When presented to King Charles it caused as much excitement as the Dead Sea Scrolls has in our day.

B. Two Other Important Bible Manuscripts (Uncials)

1. The Ephraem Manuscript (Codex C)

A palimpsest ("scraped again" or rescripted) manuscript with a 12th century copy of the works of Ephraem of Syria over the top of a 5th century copy of the Scriptures (uncial). Published in 1845 due to the efforts of Tischendorf, and now preserved in the National Library of Paris. Contains most of the OT and the NT.

2. The Bezae Manuscript (Codex D)

Named for Theodore Beza who presented this document to the University of Cambridge in 1581. It is the earliest known Biblical copy in two languages, Greek and Latin, and as such the oldest known "parallel Bible." The two texts face each other, with the Greek on the left and the Latin on the right. It contains only the Gospels and Acts, with part of 3 John in Latin. It is the most curious and suspicious of all the above, and the *only* one available to the King James translators when their version was made. But, it was used very little due to the speculation surrounding it.

C. Other (Primary) Sources for the Greek NT:

1. Cursives ("minuscules")

Over 2800 are cataloged, dating from the 9th to the 16th century. Smaller running hand scripts, with beautifully adorned pages or leaves and some illustrations or drawings.

2. Lectoraries

Lectons were selected passages of the Scriptures to be read during the worship services, and were often written down in collections. Most Lectionaries are of the Gospels, but some contain Acts or the Epistles.

D. Other (Secondary) Sources for the Greek NT:

1. The Versions

These are early translations of the Greek NT that are used for comparisons with the above primary sources. The most important of these are the Syriac, the Peshitta, and the Latin versions.

2. Quotations of Christian Writers

These are direct quotes from the NT contained within other manuscripts of Christian writers and also can be used for comparisons with the above primary sources. The most important of these lived late in the 1st and early within the 2nd century. Some of these are Justin Martyr, Clement of Alexandria, Tatian, and Irenaeus. Others who lived later include Tertullian, Cyprian, and Jerome.

E. Non-Greek Translations:

3. The Bible

A. The Canon of the Scriptures

“Canon” goes back to the Greek word “*kanon*” and then to the Hebrew word “*qaneh*.” Its basic meaning is “reed”, (as our English word “cane” derives from it). Since a reed was used as a standard measuring rod, the word *kanon* came to mean a standard or a rule. It was also used as a list or index. Therefore the Canon of the Scriptures are the books received as Holy Scripture.

- Please note there is a difference between the *canonicity* of a book and the authority of that book! A book’s *canonicity depends upon its authority, not the other way around!* For example the letters of Paul that were Holy Scripture, possessed and were acknowledged as possessing Divine authority, from the moment they were written. (1Cor. 14:37, 1Ths. 2:13, 2Pet. 3:15-16) They were later acknowledged as having *canonicity* or as being a part of the canon, *only because they already had the inherent divine authority!* No decree of man or his churches can give to a book what only God can give (Divine authority). The books of the Canon already had their authority as Holy Scripture long before any councils of the church declared that they did.

“The Bible is not an authorized collection of books; the Bible is a collection of authorized books!”

“The church does not control the canon; the canon controls the church!”

“The Bible (or any of its books) is not inspired of God because men say so; men say so because the Bible is inspired of God!”

Canon of the OT:

This was fixed long ago and has never really been an issue. The best objective external source of this is Jesus Himself! He stated in Luke 24:44 that the Scriptures were composed of (3 sections) the Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms. This is undoubtedly equivalent to the 3 divisions of the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings in the OT Canon. Jesus also spoke of the time “from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah.” (Luke 11:44, Mat. 23:35) The first martyr of the OT was Abel and the last was Zechariah in 2Chr. 24:20-21. But remember that in the Hebrew arrangement and order that Chronicles is at the end of the Writings and their canon!

In the first century, Josephus wrote of the books received as Scripture by the Jews. (Read quote on page 107 of *How We Got the Bible*) Considering that most scholars agree that Josephus joined Ruth to Judges and Lamentations to Jeremiah, his 22 equals the Jewish 24 books of canon.

In the third century, Origen confirms the testimony of Josephus. A little later, Jerome also points to the same books as the canon of the OT.

Canon of the NT:

About the middle of the second century, Justin Martyr wrote that on Sundays the Christian worship assemblies read the “memoirs of the apostles” together with the “writings of the prophets.”

The Letters of Paul were first gathered into a single collection, then the 4 Gospels were gathered together, and then the other NT books followed.

As early as the third century, Origen named all of the 27 NT books, (but added that Hebrews, James, 2&3 John, & Jude were questioned by some).

Eusebius of the fourth century names all of the 27 NT books.

In 367AD Athanasius of Alexandria published his official list of the 27 books of the NT that were recognized and accepted as Scripture at the time.

In 397AD the 3rd Council of Carthage declared the 27 NT books as canonical and to be added to the OT.

Apocrypha & Others:

“Apocrypha” means “hidden.” It was used early in the sense of being “secretive” or “concealed.” They were added to the Roman canon in 1596 by the Council of Trent.

Others like the Epistle of Barnabas, the Shepherd of Hermas, Esdras, Tobit, Baruch, The Wisdom of Solomon, etc. were added by some at some times, but were never received as canonical.

Why? Why were these books rejected? What were the criteria for determining “canon” by the early church?

Criteria for Canon:

1. **Authorship** – Especially important for NT Canon; were they written by an apostle or an apostolic delegate or follower
2. **Acceptance** – Important for OT and NT. The above OT additions were never accepted by Jesus, His Apostles, or Josephus or any of the ancient writers for over a thousand years. They were added to the OT in the 16th century.
The NT additions were never accepted by the early church or its ancient writers. The early “Church Fathers” were men of Scriptures in the second century after Christ and had direct connection to the Apostles. They never accepted any of these writings and affirmed the canon we have today.
They cannot be maintained without false authority and compromise!
3. **Subject Matter** – They did not evidence the intrinsic qualities of Scripture in two ways. They were either legendary, mythical or fictitious in nature, and did not contain doctrinal or life instructional matters. They also contained errors in chronology, geography, and other facts. (They were not inerrant!)
4. **Personal Edification** – They did not contain the ability to inspire, teach doctrine, or change lives. The changed lives of millions of believers over the last two millennia are the greatest testimony to the books accepted as canonical.

Please note that the above criteria must be considered together, as no one criteria or element can satisfy the test for canon!

Other Misc. Information on the Bible:

- 1228** Bible divided into chapters. Stephen Langton did this with the Latin Vulgate.
- 1551** Chapters divided into verses. Robert Estienne (aka Stephanus) did this into the Greek NT. This versification was first used in the 1557 Geneva translation of the NT, and the 1560 translation of the whole Bible.
- 1571** Bible verses numbered.

WHO Can Study the Bible?

1. **The Saved** (1Cor. 1:21-24, 2:14-16)

2. **The Hungry** (1Pet. 2:2)
3. **The Willing** (John 7:17)
4. **The Diligent** (Acts 17:10-12, 18:24-28)
5. **The Holy** (at least “seeking” holiness; 1Pet. 1:13-16)
6. **The Afflicted** (Psa. 119:65-72)
7. **The Spirit-filled** (Eph. 5:18-19, Col. 3:16)
8. **The Prayerful & Believing** (Mat.21:22)

WHY Study the Bible?

(Just a few of the many answers!)

1. It is God’s Word! (2Tim. 3:16)
2. It is Authoritative! (Psa. 119:89)
3. It is the Source of Truth! (John 17:17)
4. It is Useful & Profitable! (2Tim. 3:16, 1Tim. 4:8, Tit. 3:8)
5. It is Active & Effective! (Heb. 4:12, Isa. 55:11)
6. It is Essential for Salvation! (Rom. 1:16, 1Cor. 1:18)
7. It is Essential for Growth! (1Pet. 2:2, Psa. 19:10)
8. It is Essential for Maturity! (Heb. 5:11-14)
9. It is Essential for Transformation & Worship! (Rom. 12:1-2)
10. It is Good, Pure & Perfect! (Psa. 19:7-9, Pro. 30:5-6)
11. It is Commanded! (2Tim. 2:15)
12. It is the Knowledge & Glory of God! (1Cor. 1:10-16, Rom. 11:33-26)

#6 – How to Study the Bible? (Introduction)

- **HOW to Study the Bible?** (Introduction & Overview)

A. How should we study *any* book?

A. Mortimer Adler's 4 Main Questions for Any Book

1. What is the book as a whole about?
2. What in detail is being said, and how?
3. Is it true, in whole or in part?
4. What of it?

B. Common Book Report Guidelines

1. What is the book about?
2. Who is the author?
3. When and where did the story take place?
4. Who are the principal characters of the book? Describe each and their strengths and weaknesses.
5. What forms of conflict are presented in the book? How are they resolved?
6. What did you find especially interesting, unique or enlightening about the book?
7. What are the book's principal strengths and weaknesses?
8. How does the book end?
9. What is the main theme or themes of the book? Do they apply to all people? How do they apply to you personally?
10. Did you like the book? Why or why not?
11. Did the book reinforce, or change, any attitudes or opinions that you may have held?
12. Would you recommend it to others?

- ***How can the above basic principles be applied to Bible study?***

II. How should we study the Bible?

A. **Preparation** - We must first be sure that we are **prepared** and ready to study by observation the Scriptures:

1. Prepare the Library & Tools
2. Prepare the Place & Time
3. Prepare the Person (Physical, Prayer, Purity)

B. (Most Recommended) **3 Step Process**:

1. **Observation** – *What do I see?*
2. **Interpretation** – *What does it mean?*
3. **Application** – *How does it work?*

#7 – How to Study the Bible? Observation

I. HOW should we study the Bible?

A. **Preparation** - We must first be sure that we are **prepared** and ready to study by observation the Scriptures:

1. Prepare the Library & Tools
2. Prepare the Place & Time
3. Prepare the Person (Physical, Prayer, Purity)

****Preparation is the critical pre-requisite to each and every step of any Bible Study method!***

C. (Most Recommended) **3 Step Process:**

4. **Observation** – *What do I see?*
5. **Interpretation** – *What does it mean?*
6. **Application** – *How does it work?*

- **Observation:**

The most fundamental step, as the next two depend upon how well we do this one. This is where we ask the questions: ***“What do I see?” “What are the facts?”*** Here we assume the role of an impartial and unbiased detective looking for clues and facts.

- The Value of Observation – Exercises and Examples

The importance of Observation cannot be overstated or overemphasized! It is the first and most foundational step, upon which all other depend! If life change or Application is the ultimate goal, we must build toward it. Proper Application flows from correct Interpretation; correct Interpretation flows from careful and complete Observation. Without good Observation, we cannot understand the meaning or how it works in our lives.

- **Observation Guidelines:**

A. READ!

Dr. Howard Hendricks suggests that two of the main reasons people fail or feel like they have failed at Bible Study are:

1. We don't know how to read
2. We don't what to look for

Both of these are critical to Observation, and Reading precedes everything since we are studying something written, (it has to be read). 11 times in the Gospels, Jesus said to the most well-read people of His time, "Have you never read?" Of course, they had, but they did not understand what they read!

Unfortunately, we are a society that is image-based and not word-based as our ancestors were before television. Reading has been almost lost as an art and a skill, and we suffer terribly from it. God evidently designed and intended His revelation to be *primarily written* and **heard, not** (primarily) **imaged** and **seen!** So we must become better readers to comprehend His Word and revelation to us.

3 Practical Ways to Help Us Read Better:

1. Learn to Read Better and Faster
2. Learn to Read as for the First Time
3. Read the Bible as a Love Letter

10 Strategies to Better Reading:

1. Read Thoughtfully – Put your thinking cap on! Dig deeper, Pro. 2:4. Read as if a Pilot or Nurse on a flight briefing or medical review
2. Read Repeatedly – Entire Books or Chapters at once. Start at the beginning of a book. Read different translations. Listen to Tapes of Scripture. Read out loud. Set up a reading schedule.
3. Read Patiently – The fruit of the Word takes time to ripen. Focus on the long haul. Zoom in and zoom out. Be patient with the text.
4. Read Selectively – Ask Questions: the 5W's and an H!
5. Read Prayerfully – Turn Scripture into Prayer
6. Read Imaginatively – Read paraphrases. Rewrite the text into your own paraphrase.
7. Read Meditatively – Jos. 1:8, Pro. 23:7, Psalm 1:1-2, 119:97, 19:14
8. Read Purposefully – Grammatical Structure: verbs, subjects, objects, modifiers, prepositional phrases, connectives; Literary Structure: biographies, geography, historical, chronological, ideological, doctrinal, prophetic; poetical, prose, narrative, teaching, etc.
9. Read Acquisitively – Not just to perceive, but to possess!
10. Read Telescopically – From the whole to the parts, and then back again.

B. Overview – Get the Big Picture!

6 Things to Look For: (The “Hand Illustration”)

1. Things that are Emphasized
2. Things that are Repeated
3. Things that are Related
4. Things that are Alike
5. Things that are Unalike
6. Things that are True to Life

1 Rule to Always Follow:

1. **The Rule of Context – Context Rules!**

- a. Prayer – (always *first!* John 7:17, 16:13-15; 1John 1:9-10; Luke 24:45)
- b. Identify the Context – “trunk” illustration on p. 20 of K. Arthur’s HTSYB
- c. Observe the Obvious – *Things that are easy to see!* Examples are people, places, events, etc. Illustrated by how we work a large jigsaw puzzle: corners, sides, then the middle.
- d. Objectively Deal with the Text – *Let the text speak for itself!* We also need to look at the text subjectively, but let that be secondary to an objective look.
- e. Purposefully Deal with the Text – *ASK QUESTIONS!* The 5 W’s and an H.

C. Observation Procedures:

1. Start with a Book
2. Move to a Chapter
3. Move to a Paragraph
4. Move to a Sentence
5. Move to a Phrase
6. Move to a Word

D. Observation Helps:

1. Notes
2. Markings
3. Subjects
4. Themes
5. Outlines
6. Charts
7. Paraphrases

#8 – How to Study the Bible? Interpretation

2. Interpretation:

The second step where we move from gathering the facts to analyzing them. This is where we ask the questions, “***What does it mean?***” & “***How do I understand the truth communicated through the facts observed?***”

Analogy of purchasing a piece of property:

Observation = fly-over, then a walk-over

Interpretation = soil analysis, vegetation studies, water tests, perc tests, etc.

Example of Phillip in Acts 8:

*Why are there so many different interpretations? Does God make His Word hard to understand? God is not trying to make the “meaning” of His Word complicated or hard to find! He wants us to know and understand His Word! It is *profitable* (therefore it must have *meaning*) and it covers everything in life. (2Tim. 3:16-17, 2Pet.1:3)*

*What do we mean by “**meaning?**”*

How can two people look at exactly the same text and come up with two entirely different meanings or interpretations? Can both be right?

For many, the meaning of the text is not *in* the text, but it’s in their response to the text. “Everyone is free to have their own response.” Meaning becomes purely subjective and relative!

“Meaning” for us has to be **God’s objective truth read out of the text.** We have to “think God’s thoughts after Him.”

Meaning becomes a re-creation process, whereby we try to re-create the author’s experience, feelings, environment, thoughts, etc. “What did he mean?”

Analogy of a Building:

Observation = Foundation

Interpretation = Structure

Application = Furnishings, Equipment and Uses

Excavation

Erection

Equipping

Why is **Interpretation** sometimes difficult?

1. Language Barriers
2. Cultural Barriers
3. Literary Barriers
4. Communication Barriers
5. Faulty Interpretations

Interpretation could be viewed as “Handle with Care”

What are some potential pit-falls or hazards of faulty Interpretation?

1. Misreading the Text (1Tim. 6:10)
2. Distorting the Text (2Pet. 3:16)
3. Contradicting the Text (Gen. 3:1-4, 2:16-17)
4. Subjectivism (Mat. 22:37)
5. Relativism (Ex. of the resurrection)
6. Over-confidence (1Cor. 8:1)

Examples on p. 208 of Living by the Book

Do we have a “right to disagree” over Interpretation?

As long as we keep in mind that the conflict is not in the text, but in our understanding of the text! God is not confused, even if we are!

How? 2Tim. 2:15 & Isa. 1:18

- **How do we Interpret or find what it *means*?**

L-I-G-H-T-S to the Word of God (Hank Hanegraaff)

- L** = Literal Interpretation (most obvious and literal sense first)
- I** = Illumination by the Holy Spirit (Spiritual truths)
- G** = Grammatical Principles (syntax, style, type, original language)
- H** = Historical Context (customs, culture, setting, etc.)
- T** = Teaching Ministry (under the teaching ministry of gifted others)
- S** = Scriptural Harmony (in light of other and the whole of Scripture)

Inductive Principles to Follow: (Kay Arthur)

1. Remember that context rules
2. Always seek the full counsel of the Word of God
3. Remember that Scripture will never contradict Scripture
4. Do not base doctrine on an obscure passage of Scripture
5. Interpret Scripture literally
6. Look for the author’s intended meaning of the passage
7. Check your conclusions by using reliable commentaries

“Be very wary if in your study you find something that no one else has ever seen before. God probably would not blind godly men to His truth for almost 2000 years and suddenly reveal it to you!”

Keys to Interpretation: (modified Howard Hendricks)

1. Category (what type of literature, p.217-219 of *Living by the Book*)
2. Content (observation, questions, things that “hand”, etc.)
3. Context (literary, historical, cultural, geographic, theological)
4. Comparison (Concordance, Scripture on Scripture)
5. Culture (Examples – Ruth, Last Supper)
6. Consultation (Concordances, Dictionaries, Handbooks, Atlases, Commentaries, Other Resources)

Figurative Language:

1. Simile
2. Metaphor
3. Hyperbole
4. Metonymy

5. Synecdoche
6. Personification
7. Irony
8. p. 265 of Living by the Book

Parables:

A story that teaches a moral lesson or truth. Parables affirm or amplify doctrine rather than establish it, because parables are more obscure than clear doctrinal passages.

Six Steps on p. 88 – 90 of HTSYB

Allegories:

A story with an underlying meaning that differs from the surface facts of the story itself; an extended metaphor.

Four Steps on p. 90-91 of HTSYB

Ex. of Romans 12:1-2:

p. 268-277 of Living by the Book

#9 – How to Study the Bible? Application

3. Application:

The third and most important step. This is the ultimate goal of all Bible Study – to apply it to our lives for growth and change in us and glory to God! This is where we ask the questions, “**How does it work?**” & “**How does the meaning apply to me?**” & “**What changes should I make in my thoughts, attitudes, actions, or life?**”

Observation and Interpretation are the “**hearing**” of God’s Word; **Application is the “doing”!**

“No matter how much you know about God’s Word, if you don’t apply what you learn, Scripture will never benefit your life.”

Remember what Scripture is given to us for. (2Tim. 3:16-17 the “How” of Application)

- *Analogy of learning to fly an airplane.*

We also need to apply Scripture for the sake of others. Not only that we might love and minister to them more Christ-like, but that might also be used of God to “make the truth of God more attractive.” (Titus 1:1, 2:9-11)

- **What keeps us from Application?** (James 1:22-25, 2Tim. 3:7, Luke 8:21, Acts 2:37)

Four Substitutes for Application:

1. We substitute Interpretation for Application (We stop or end there; like the Pharisees and Scribes of Jesus' day.)
2. We substitute superficial obedience for substantive life-change. (Example of taking honesty only so far, and not into our business practices.)
3. We substitute rationalization for repentance. (When God's truth gets too close to our sin or too convicting, we often start rationalizing.)
4. We substitute an emotional experience for a volitional decision. (Ex. of the "glorification of the worm" ceremony at the back of the church after a sermon. Real life change must begin with the will. Ex. of three-fold elements of "faith.")

- **What is True FAITH?** (How does it relate to our Soul: Mind, Will, Emotions)

1. Notia – Knowledge (Mind)
2. Assensus – Assent (Emotions)
3. Fiducia – Trust, Commitment (Will)

The last element is the most important and critical!

- **Four Steps in Application:**

1. KNOW
 - a. The Text (the Error of the Fork)
 - b. Yourself
2. RELATE

The Working Word effects a series of new relationships:

- a. To God
- b. To Yourself
- c. To other people
- d. To the enemy

The Working Word brings changes in these relationships by:

- a. Exposes our sin
- b. gives us God's promises
- c. gives us God's commands
- d. gives us examples to follow

3. MEDITATE (Get more thought time)
4. PRACTICE

- **Nine Questions to Ask:**

1. Is there an example for me to follow?
2. Is there a sin to avoid?
3. Is there a promise to claim?
4. Is there a prayer to repeat?
5. Is there a command to obey?

6. Is there a condition to meet?
7. Is there a verse to memorize?
8. Is there an error to mark?
9. Is there a challenge to face?

- **Principles that Govern Principles:**

1. They should correlate with the general teaching of Scripture
2. They should speak to the needs, interests, questions, and problems of real life today
3. They should indicate a course of action

#10 – How to Study the Bible? Organization

4. Organization:

This is not really another step in the basic Bible Study process, but rather a fourth element to improve the above three steps and ***broaden our skills!*** Many practical helps will increase our learning and efficiency of Bible Study.

- **What are some other study methods and tools to deepen and broaden our study?** (cf. *How to Study Your Bible* by Kay Arthur)

A. Outlining: “Organize the Material”

Principles of Outlining a passage of Scripture

1. Main Topics are the Central Ideas –
 - a. If outlining a Book, these are probably the Chapter themes; if outlining a Chapter, these are probably the paragraph themes
 - b. Usually denoted by Roman Numerals – I, II, III, etc.
2. Subtopics are the Points that Explain the Main Topics –
 - a. If outlining a Book, these are usually the paragraph themes
 - b. Usually denoted by capital letters – A, B, C, etc.
3. Subpoints are the Points that Explain the Subtopic –
 - a. Usually denoted by Arabic numerals – 1, 2, 3, etc.
4. Capture the Logical Flow of the Author -
 - a. Clarify or explain the main point of the previous larger subdivision
 - c. Classify points of the larger subdivision into categories
 - d. Define what the larger subdivision means
 - e. Serve as examples of the larger subdivision
 - f. List further details of the larger subdivision
 - g. Illustrate the larger subdivision
5. Each Subdivision must have at least Two Points –

Outline Form:

TITLE

- I. Main Topic
 - A. Subtopic
 - B. Subtopic
 1. subpoint
 2. subpoint

- II. Main Topic
 - A. Subtopic
 1. subpoint
 - a. subpoint
 - b. subpoint
 - 1) subpoint
 - 2) subpoint
 - a) subpoint
 - b) subpoint
 - (1) subpoint
 - (2) subpoint
 - (a) subpoint
 - (b) subpoint
 2. subpoint
 - B. Subtopic

- Short Outline Example of 2 Timothy (Handout)
- Detailed Outline of 2 Timothy 1 (Handout)

B. Topical Studies: “Topositional Studies”

Must be done VERY carefully and thoroughly! Require an enormous amount of preparation and a commitment to handling the Word of God with accuracy. We cannot use this as an attempt to find Scriptures to “proof text” our pre-conceived ideas or principles about an issue addressed by the Bible. We must let the Bible speak for itself!

1. Look up every parallel and relative passage on the subject or topic
 - a. Use a Concordance, Topical Bible, or a Chain Reference system
 - b. Look up all related words (to the topic)
 - c. Look for the major topical passage that covers the subject in the most comprehensive way and for where it is first mentioned in the Bible
 - d. Look up any contrasting or “balancing” passages (that seem to go against or balance out the topic)
2. Assemble the information
 - a. Study the passage thoroughly
 - b. Check the context carefully
 - c. Determine the main truths taught in the passage
 - d. Record the observations and insights
 - e. note which passages are clear and which are obscure
 - f. Note how often a particular teaching is repeated

3. Organize the Material into an Outline
 - a. Make sure the topic is completely and clearly covered
 - b. Do not base findings or doctrine on extra-Biblical sources, tradition, inference, etc.
 4. Pray and Meditate on the Truth (Ask for understanding and application of what is learned.)
- *How many controversies with other believers could be settled or avoided if more thorough topical studies like this were done on hot topics?*

C. Character Studies: “Direct Life Application”

1. Gather all the information on the character
 - a. List every mention of the character in the Bible (Concordance, etc.)
2. Read and make notes of main truths about the character
 - a. Meaning of his name
 - b. Ancestry, spouses, friends, etc.
 - c. Training and conversion (good or bad, Godly or evil)
 - d. Times lived, years of age lived, periods of life experience
 - e. Accomplishments and failures, assets and deficiencies
 - f. Spiritual life – prayers, obedience, suffering, responses, attitudes, etc.
 - g. Scriptures that can be used as cross-references for principles
 - h. Effects of his/her life on others
 - i. Means of death, impact on others
3. Check out extra-Biblical references
4. Compile your material
 - a. Chronologically from birth to death
 - b. According to the major events in the person’s life
 - c. According to principles of ministry
5. Apply the truths to your own life, and teach them to others

D. Word Studies: “It’s all Greek to me!”

One of the most important and rewarding study tools! If we believe the Scriptures to have been verbally and inerrantly inspired, we should pay great attention to the details!

1. Use an Exhaustive Concordance
 - a. Use one matched to your Bible translation (NJKV, NASB, KJV, etc.)
 - b. Look up the word you are investigating
 - c. Look up the Greek root word (by number) and its meaning
 - d. Note its other uses
2. Use an Expository Dictionary (*Vine’s, Zodhiates’*)
3. Note the tense, voice and mood of *verbs*
4. Note the number, case, and gender of *nouns*
5. Take what is learned and found back to the text

E. Cross Referencing: “Let Scripture interpret Scripture”

1. Find or list every cross reference for the word or subject to study
2. Look up each one of the Scriptures
3. Make a note of the ones that illuminates the passage studied

F. Study the Work of Others: “Stand on the Shoulders of Others”

1. Listen to tapes or CD's from reliable teachers and make notes
2. Read reliable commentaries, mark and make notes
3. Sit under the teaching of reliable Bible teachers

What responsibilities do the listeners of expository teachers have?

- a. Be personally ready – anticipate personal impact and application
- b. Be physically ready – rest, eating, exercise, alert
- c. Be prayerfully ready – pray for ourselves, congregation, **teacher**
- d. Be purposeful in response – attention, attitudes, actions, application

APPENDIX & HELPS:

Sources of Revelation about God:

-----**General Revelation**-----

Inner Revelation

Conscience

Internal to us

Given to All,
Effective for Few

Sufficient for
Accountability

Declares God's
Goodness

Revealed in our
Spirit

Revealed to our
Conscience,
Intuition,
Communion

Revealed through
Moral Impulse
Existence Intuition
Desire for Purpose

Examples -

Rom. 1:19
Rom. 2:14-15
Acts 24:16
Adam & Eve

Natural Revelation

Creation

External to us

Given to All,
Effective for All

Sufficient for
Condemnation

Declares God's
Greatness

Revealed in our
Body

Revealed to our
Consciousness,
Flesh,
Senses

Revealed through
Man
Universe
History

Examples -

Rom. 1:20
Psa. 19:1
Psa. 8:3-5
Israel

Special Revelation

Christ (The Word)

Both External & Internal

Given to Few,
Effective for All

Sufficient for
Salvation

Declares God's
Grace

Revealed in our
Soul

Revealed to our
Mind,
Will,
Emotions

Revealed through
Moses & Prophets
Apostles
The Incarnation

Examples -

Heb. 1:1-4
John 1:1-4
1Pet. 1:10-12
The Scriptures

**"The Bible was written in tears,
and to tears it yields its best treasures"
- A.W. Tozer**

The Bible has been in print for almost 550 years. In 1454, Johannes Gutenberg invented the "type mold" for his printing press, and chose the Bible as the first book ever to be printed.

Since then, the Bible has been translated into 2018 languages and counting – no other book even comes close to that, leaving the Bible alone as the best selling book of all time. The first translation of the complete Bible into English was completed by John Wycliff in 1382, and there are more different "versions" available in English than in any other language.

We realize that this can present quite a challenge for some in choosing the right Bible to purchase for themselves – or for someone else. This page, and the pages that follow, are presented to give a little bit of background on the most commonly used English translations, to better help you choose the version which best suits your needs.



To best serve your needs, each overview includes the chart pictured above, with the translation being discussed highlighted so you can easily see where it is on the scale.

A literal translation or formal equivalent seeks to represent the original Greek and Hebrew in a more word for word manner. Many prefer this method because, they are assured that each English word is represented by a Greek or Hebrew word, not some expansion or interpretation by the translator(s). Some literal translations include: the KJV (King James Version), the RSV (Revised Standard Bible), the NAS (New American Standard Bible), the NAS '95 Update (New American Standard Bible, 1995 edition), and the NKJV (New King James Version).

A paraphrase or free translation is one which is not as concerned with original word order or sentence structure as it is the idea of the passage. This type of translation seeks to render the ideas in the original text as accurately as possible in the target language (like English). Some examples in this category are: The Philips translation (the New Testament in Modern English), the LB (the Living Bible), and the Message (by Eugene Peterson).

A dynamic equivalent is a translation that seeks to strike a balance between the two mentioned above. The goal of this type of translation is to render the idea conveyed by the original language into that of the target language (like English). Some examples in this category would be the NIV (New International Version), NRSV (New Revised Standard Version), and the NAB (New American Bible).

Bible Translation Reading Levels

Sometimes, it helps to know what the approximate reading level is for a given translation. Here's a quick and easy guide for the most popular translations:

Translation	Grade Level	Translation	Grade Level
KJV	12 th	NIV	7 th -8 th
RSV	12 th	NKJV	7 th
NASB	11 th	NLT	6 th
NRSV	11 th	Message	4 th -5 th
ESV	10 th	NCV	3 rd
HCSB	9 th -10 th	NIRV	3 rd

Keep in mind:

Not everyone will agree about the reading difficulty level of every translation. The grade levels above are offered as general guidelines, and wherever possible, are taken from information provided by the publishers of the various translations.

In the case of some translations such as the KJV, we've gone with a generally accepted grade level or range of grade levels.