

Introduction to The Bible

Leaders Study Guide

ISSUE ONE: What is the bible?

1. Video = <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ak06MSETeo4>

The Bible Project -Bible is a collection of books given through prophets/apostles

Lesson Content: The bible is a collection of books. Many Old Testament books were passed down orally and recorded later. Old Testament books are generally given through Prophets (who passed the test of a prophet). Judges and others (who were affirmed in their calling) also contributed. New Testament books were by Apostles, or those writing under their supervision.

Read Acts 1 (Mattias replaces Judas) to view the qualifications necessary for holding the OFFICE of Apostle. (Note: Prophetic words and insights given to many believers is significantly different than claiming the “office” of prophet or Apostle)

-Bible is the story (revealing) of God

Lesson Content: The bible can be viewed as God’s story. It is the revealing of God as he interacted with, and revealed Himself to, people. It is the most complete and accurate text that describes God’s character and activity. Consider the first words of **Genesis 1**; “In the beginning, **God...**” The book begins with God’s activity in creation and ends in Genesis 22 with God’s revealed plan to heal, revive, and restore that which He created. In other words, the bible is God’s story.

- Bible is the story of the fall of mankind and God’s plan of saving us from the fall

Lesson Content: Genesis 1-3 can be described as the creation and fall. Everything else in the bible can be described as the story of God undoing the consequences of the fall of mankind.

-The bible is a guide for how to please God and go to heaven

Lesson Content: Heaven belongs to God, not people. The one who owns heaven gets to set the rules for who enters and who is turned away. The bible gives every person a “fair” shot at searching the requirements of God for entry into paradise.

-The bible is a set of covenants between God and mankind

Lesson Content: God has always related to mankind through a series of covenant. They are patterned after Suzerain (serf-vassal) Covenants which were understood by the original reader (or biblical characters). There were terms set for a covenant relationship in which the serf agreed to provide a percentage of the yield of their crops in exchange for the vassal’s protection from his enemies. These covenants were sealed with a vow and, often, an animal

sacrifice. The vow was sometimes taken; “whatever happened to these animals will happen to those of us who break this vow.”

Video: Chris Rosenberger / Covenants OT

<https://youtu.be/FtGya2ciXTw?si=DzuzGkjdW9uW6vF>

Video: Tim Keller / covenant contract with Abraham

<https://youtu.be/wuycEl-4Gnk?si=wmsaM6UI-GXGmID>

Video: The Bible Project / covenants <https://youtu.be/6HjIGvl8ljM?si=MT4hkC1-r4tqkM1j>

2. Discussion Questions

- a. Why do books written by prophets / apostles carry more weight than other books?
- b. How did mankind fall and what did God do to take care of that problem?
- c. What is a covenant? Do we have examples of covenants from our day?
- d. What are the 6 major covenants? What does 1 Cor 11 reveal about the sacrificial death of Jesus as it relates to covenant making?

ISSUE TWO: Where did the bible come from?

1. Video = (short) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nGgsyKO9EwU>
Assignment: Take careful notes on this video and be ready to explain the content to others.
Wes Huff -“hidden books of the bible” *Watch video and answer the question; “why the hidden books of the bible should not be included in our bible”*
<https://youtu.be/2RMcz3T3fj0?si=Yp103vsim8iEwtGA>

-What qualifications had to be met for a book to be included in the bible (canon)?

“Canon” is a standard unit of measure. The use of the term “canon” means the entire, completed, bible has become our rule or standard by which we measure everything.

Lesson Content: The following are qualifications used to determine the “canonicity” of bible books

- a. It was used in the early church
- b. It has a self-evident quality that deepens one’s faith
- c. It was written by a prophet or Apostle
- d. Its’ message is consistent with the rest of the scriptures (grocery lists from the Apostle Paul are not included in the bible)

- (Follow up) Why is the canon (bible) closed?

Lesson Content:

The primary issue relates to whether any book written after the death of the last apostle could meet the 4 qualifications listed above.

-What is the story of how the books were gathered (Muratorian canon & councils)?

Lesson Content: **The Muratorian Canon** was discovered by Lodovico Antonio Muratori, an Italian scholar in 1740. It is a late 2nd century (170-190 AD) Latin manuscript which describes the books of the bible used by the early church. Though their list differs slightly from our canon, the four gospels and most of the Paul and Peter’s letters are listed. Contrary to some novels and movies, Constantine and various councils did not determine which books were included in the bible. They only stated officially what books were already used since the church’s inception.

2. Discussion Questions

- a. Why does it matter that there are qualifications for writing bible books?
- b. How does this affect the way we see other spiritual books not written by an apostle or prophet?
- c. Discuss (so called) hidden or lost books of the bible. How would you counter those who say (insert book e.g., Gospel of Thomas) should be included in the bible, because it was “hidden” or “removed”?

ISSUE THREE: How is the bible organized?

Tips for finding books. Psalms is in the exact center of the bible. The major prophets appear just after the Psalms. The books of Moses (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy) are at the front of the bible. This should help you locate OT books.

OT 39 books gathered in groups

The Four Groups of Old Testament Books

GROUP 1
The Books of Moses (the Books of the Law)
Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy
GROUP 2
The Historical Books (The History of God's People Israel)
Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 and 2 Samuel, 1 and 2 Kings, 1 and 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther
GROUP 3
The Poetical Books
Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon
GROUP 4
The Prophets
The Major Prophets (the Longer Books) Isaiah, Jeremiah, (Lamentations), Ezekiel, Daniel
The Minor Prophets (the Shorter Books) Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi

Book Overview: Review each book and talk about the general content and purpose of the writing. Discuss rules of thumb on reading each of these groupings (related to genre and authorial intent).

NT 27 books / letters gathered in sections / divisions (chart of books & divisions)

Video: What is the NT? <https://youtu.be/Q0BrP8bqi0c>

Tips for finding New Testament Books: The gospels start the NT. As you flip through the bible, look for Matthew, Mark, Luke or John. These are books which record the life and ministry of Jesus.

Acts is a history book recording dramatic action of the Apostles to start the first churches. Acts appears immediately after the gospels.

After Acts comes 9 **letters written by the Apostle Paul to churches**, they planted. Notice the names of these books stand for the cities in which they started churches.

After these are Paul's letters to churches come **letters written to individual** church leaders.

Then there are letters **written by other Apostles**.



ISSUE FOUR: How to pick the right bible

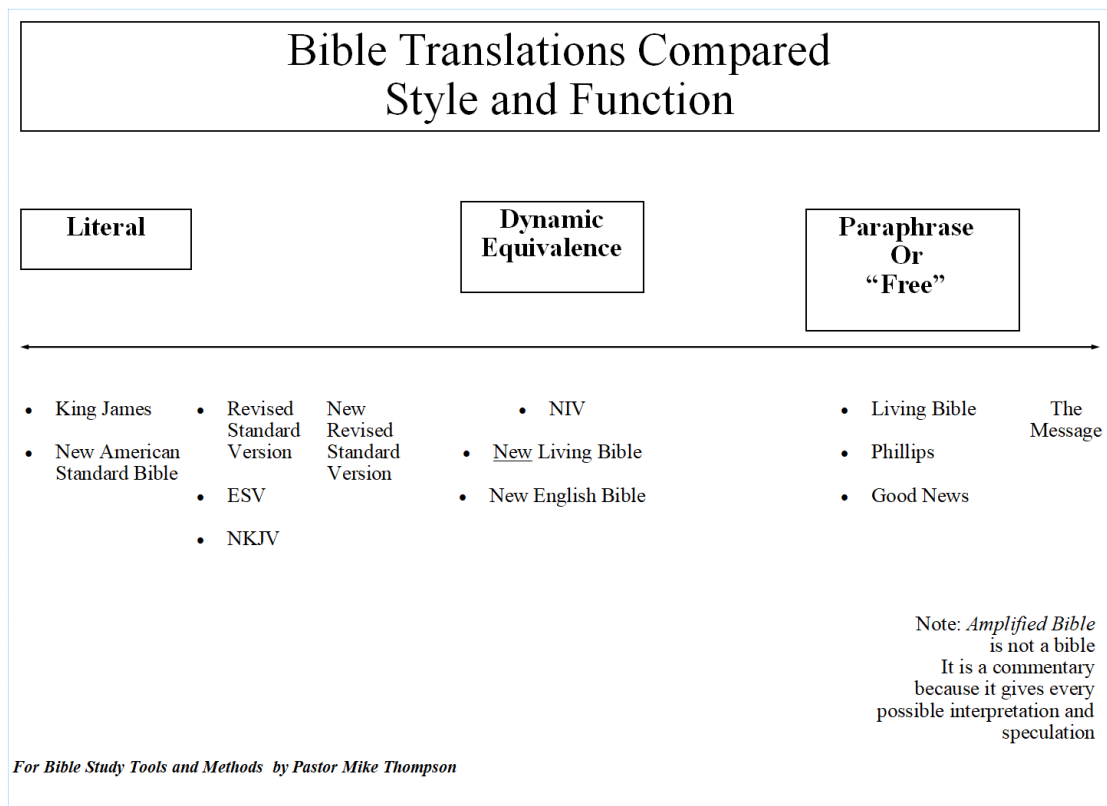
Videos: (Mike Winger) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lykAMFbbfsl&t=22s>

(Wes Huff) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O9DUWXorbI4>

(James White) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Eh3k_A9ugOo

(Darrell Bock) [re Passion Translation] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dz9PxplAsfE>

1. Picking the Right Bible



Note: "The Passion Translation" is not a good bible because it includes translation by words of knowledge rather than scholarship. There are many errors. The original text was received by recording what Jesus did or recording what God said (prophecy). But translating the original text from Greek to English is scholarship, not prophecy.

Example: **Galatians 4:12** "become free from the bondage of religion" (passion translation) is not in the Greek and contradicts James 1, which speaks of "true religion."

2. Factors in bible reading (This probably needs its own video)

Context (show context importance from Ephesians 5:22-23)

Text & writing styles (examples of narrative, poetry, law, epistle/instruction)

Historical background (where do we find background info)

Timeless truths and applications (how do our applications stay true to the text)

Compare & contrast other scriptures (how do we look up cross references)

3. **Discussion** – field questions from participants

ISSUE FIVE: Bible Study Aids and Tools

Video

1. Online bibles (show examples of online bibles and their functionality and uses)
2. Trusted sites (eg Gotquestions.org / ask pastor John)
3. Commentaries (discuss purpose of commentaries and trusted authors)
4. Bible background commentary etc
5. Bible reading plans and practices (biblegateway has 1 year reading plan)
6. Discussion Questions

Trusted Bible Teachers (who produce video content & pod casts)

1. Wes Huff
2. Mike Winger (Bible Thinker podcast)
3. Melissa Dougherty
4. Alisa Childers (podcast)
5. Dr James White
6. Gotquestions.org (has a huge data base with answers to thousands of bible questions)
7. John Piper (Ask Pastor John podcast answers hundreds of common questions)
8. N.T. Wright (on eschatology / end times & resurrection focus of the church)
9. R.C. Sproul & Michael Horton (reformed scholars)
10. Renewing Your Mind by R.C. Sproul and others (podcast)
11. "White Horse Inn" or "Core Christianity" by Michael Horton (podcast)
12. Gavin Ortlun – Truth Unites (Podcast)
13. Tim Keller
14. Voddie Buchannon
15. William Craig Lane (on Molinism; an alternative to typical free will vs predestination polarized arguments)
16. Gary DeMar – end times non-dispensational
17. Kim Riddlebarger (Amillennialism) end times
18. Thomas Schreiner (theology profession) **"the joy of hearing"** a commentary on Revelation (this might be the best work on the book of revelation I've ever read) Technical but it can be absorbed slowly.
19. The Bible Project (awesome cartoon videos that explain the scriptures)
20. Charismatic continuationists: John Piper, Craig Keener, Sam Storms, Jack Deere, C.J. Mahaney, J.P. Moreland. (Grudem and Moreland are considered serious scholars).
21. <https://credohouse.org/> Michael Patton is excellent. We use many of his courses. His blogs and courses are excellent and material is presented peaceably (irenic).

The Bible Project Videos

Bible and Biblical Books Video Overview

The Bible Project – What is The Bible?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ak06MSETeo4>

New Testament Overview

<https://youtu.be/Q0BrP8bqi0c>

Gospel of Mark Overview

<https://youtu.be/HGHqu9-DtXk>

Acts Part One

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CGbNw855ksw&feature=youtu.be>

Acts Part Two

<https://youtu.be/Z-17KxpjL0Q>

Romans 1-4

https://youtu.be/ej_6dVdJSIU

Romans 5-16

<https://youtu.be/0SVTI4Xa5fY>

Galatians

<https://youtu.be/vmx4UjRFp0M>

Ephesians

<https://youtu.be/Y71r-T98E2Q>

Revelation Part One

<https://youtu.be/5nvVVcYD-0w>

Revelation Part Two

<https://youtu.be/QpnIrbq2bKo>