

Week One: Teachers Guide

“How Did We Get the Bible? And How Can We Trust It?”

[You'll notice the prompts to show slide. These are optional. However, you will notice that they will enhance the experience by placing images to words as your share certain aspects of the Bible Study]

Overview:

1. Introduction
2. Can We Trust the Bible?
3. History of How We Got the Bible
4. Why the Language Change”
5. Who Actually Copied Biblical Translations

1. Introduction to the Bible Study

Thank you for allowing me the privilege to come here tonight to meet with you. It is truly my honor.

[Show Welcome Slide]...

Because of you allowing me to have a Bible study with you I have no doubt love you have an interest in the Bible.

So, no matter where you are in your journey...

No matter how much you feel like you do or do not know about the Bible...

I am confident that if you join us for the next several weeks...

You will learn some amazing things about God's Word and how it applies to your live here today in the 21st century.

Today's Lesson is entitled:

[Show Title Slide]...

How did we get the Bible, and can we trust it?"

A Few Simple Guidelines

[Show Slide with Guidelines]...

- This is a study of the Bible... not a study of a particular denomination's beliefs.
- No one is trying to prove anyone right or wrong.
- Lesson length will vary, but I am a firm believer that "the mind can only endure what the seat can handle."
- This first lesson will probably be the longest of all of them because I want to take a little time to establish the Word of God as authoritative.
- I mean... if we are going to say our time together is a "study of the Bible"... then we should make sure the Bible is a book that we can actually trust!
- For planning purposes, know that each lesson will be no less than 25 minutes and no more than 45 minutes.
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- Most importantly: That we would open our hearts and minds as we open up the Word of God!

DON'T BE CLOSE MINDED TO WHAT THE BIBLE HAS TO SAY!

[Show picture of girls working with mom in kitchen]...



Illustration:

- Two little girls were working with their mommy in the kitchen and as they started preparing the holiday ham... they asked, "Why do you cut the ends off the ham?" The mother said, "I don't know, I'll have to ask your grandmother as she always did it that way but never said why." So, the girls went and asked their grandmother and she didn't know either. They then went and asked their great-grandmother and she said, "Well, I only had a pan so big (hands held 12" apart) so I cut the ends off the ham in order for it to fit inside the pan."
- It's the same thing with religion. Many times, we're doing something year after year, generation after generation and we don't know why, and that is why we need to use the Bible as our authority and not just our traditions.
- Before we start, we always want to ask God to bless the lesson and help us to draw closer to Him... **PRAY!**

[Show Slide that says, "Can We Trust the Bible?"]...



2. Can We Trust the Bible?

As we start this Bible study, we will constantly be emphasizing the Word of God and how the only thing we can trust is the Bible.

If this is going to be the case, then we better start with “**why**” we can trust the Bible!

How do we know it is true?

After all, many will say it’s been:

- Changed,
- Doctored,
- There are contradictions,
- It was just written by men,

One such man was a man named **Simon Greenleaf** who was born in 1783.

[Show slide of Simon Greenleaf and his book]...

- He was an agnostic, some say atheist, who believed the resurrection of Jesus Christ was either a hoax or a myth.
- No stranger to truth, and to the proof of the truth, Greenleaf was a principal founder of the Harvard Law School and a world renowned expert on evidence.
- Challenged by one of his students one day to “consider the evidence” for the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, Greenleaf set out to disprove it, but ended up concluding that the Resurrection of Jesus Christ was indeed fact, not fiction.



- Being a man of conviction and reason, and in accordance with his conclusions, Greenleaf converted from Agnosticism to Christianity.
- He even wrote a book entitled, “The Testimony of the Evangelist” that details his experience. Many great minds have aimed to disprove the Bible through the years, but never to any avail.
- But can we actually trust that what we hold in our hands today is “the real deal?” God loved us so much that He went out of His way to not only give us His Word, but then to also preserve His Word through the ages!

And here are some of the reasons why He did that:

[Show Scripture]...

2 Timothy 3:16–17 (KJV)

16 All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

17 That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.

[Show Scripture]...

Psalm 119:105 (KJV)

105 Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, And a light unto my path.

Many people have tried to destroy the Word of God and even take it out of the hands of society and people like you and I!

Yet there were heroes who went before us, and even gave their lives translating His Word into known languages of today.



[Show Slide that says, "How Did We Get the Bible?"]...

3. History of How We Got the Bible

[Show Slide with following numbers on it]...

Old Testament

- The 39 Old Testament books were written over a period of 1,400 years and had 32 writers. The scope of its writing covers approximately 3,600 years.
- Yet there is not one contradiction that changes its meaning or value!
- Think about it... if you and four friends saw a car accident, how many stories would you have? There would be at least five...and that is only if some did not change their story!

[Show Slide with following numbers on it]...

New Testament

- The 27 New Testament books had 9 writers and covered a period of time of approximately 100 years.
- The two dominant writers were Moses in the Old Testament and Paul in the New.
- The Bible was penned by over 40 different men, rich and poor, over 3,600 years, and they all told the exact same story. What harmony! What a miracle from God!



- Our Bible was 1,600 years in preparation.
- The earliest book, Job, is believed to have been written around 1,500 B.C.
- While John completed his writing at the end of the first century A.D.

Quick Definition on B.C and A.D.

- B.C. means "Before Christ" or BCE means "Before Common Era."
- A.D. means "Anno Domini" which is Latin for "in the year our Lord." If you believe the earth is something like 6,000 years old, B.C. would mean that the earth began at 6,000 B.C. and went downward to zero. Then it started counting upward to where we are now, and our current date would have A.D. after it.
- History books have been rewritten; the Bible's facts, names, and accounts have always remained the same and withstood the test of time!

One person said, "It's the anvil that has worn out many hammers!"

When we look at the Bible, we will see that God gives the same command at the beginning, the middle, and the end!



[Show Scripture]...

Deuteronomy 4:2 (KJV)

2 Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you.

[Show Scripture]...

Proverbs 30:6 (KJV)

6 Add thou not unto his words, Lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar.

[Show Scripture]...

Revelation 22:18–19 (KJV)

18 For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book:

19 And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.

Every Biblical argument comes back to the fact that someone, somewhere either added or took away from His Word!

Quick Word on Baptism:

Even though we aren't going to be talking about the topic of "Baptism" today, I want to briefly point this out...

Ephesians 4:4–5 (KJV)

4 There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling;

5 One Lord, one faith, one baptism,

That passage tells us there is **"one baptism."**

If that is the case, why do we have some who say totally opposite things?:

- Baptism is just for adults... and others say we can baptize infants.
- Some say it should be done in the titles Father, Son, and Holy Spirit... others say it should just be the Name of Jesus.
- Some say someone should be immersed in water... others sprinkle water on the person desiring to be baptized.

We will look at these things in depth at a later lesson, but I just want to prove my point...

Scripture says there is **"one baptism,"** but today there are multiple ways people are being baptized!



Obviously, someone, somewhere, either added or took away from God's Word!

Moses is credited with writing the "Pentateuch," which is the first 5 books of the OT (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy).

The OT was written primarily in the Hebrew language with a small part written in Aramaic, a sister language to Hebrew.

The NT was written in Greek.

[Show Slide that says, "Why the change in language?"]...

4. Why the Change in Language?

Let's take a look...

[Show pic of Alexander the Great]...

- Alexander the Great...(356-323 B.C.... he died at the young age of 32 or 33)... Conquered the Middle East, including the Bible lands.
- Sometimes people don't think about it... but Alexander the Great lived during Bible times.
- He was before the time of Christ but after the people like Noah, Abraham, and David.
- Some argue that Daniel actually writes about Alexander the Great (though he never does call him by name).

During his life, Alexander the Great became one of the greatest military commanders in all of history. He conquered the vast Persian Empire that had swallowed up the territories of earlier empires: the Egyptian, Assyrian, and Babylonian. He ruled from Greece to India, but then suddenly died in Babylon. He had no heir and so his kingdom was divided among four of his generals.

And these are the **Hellenistic** kingdoms that were split between them.

“**Hellenize**” means to adopt Greek ways and culture.

To essentially “make Greek in character.”

Through his conquests, Alexander the Great **spread the Greek language and culture.**

While he conquered Asia, he endeavored also to Hellenize her.

He founded Greek cities and Hellenistic thought and the Hellenistic language were spread all over southwestern Asia.

It was through the conquests of Alexander that Greek became the language of literature and commerce from the shores of the Mediterranean to the banks of the Tigris.

It is impossible to estimate the effect of this spread of Greek on the promulgation of the gospel!

One result of this was the translation of the Old Testament into Greek about 150 years after Alexander’s conquests.

This translation is called “**The Septuagint.**”



The word "**Septuagint**" comes from the Latin word meaning, "**Seventy.**"

Tradition says that this refers to the 70 Jewish scholars who translated the OT from Hebrew to koine Greek, but we are not certain on that fact.

Jesus was born under Roman rule, but the common language of the Empire for commerce and education was Greek.

Thus, even though the first Christians were from Jerusalem and Judaea and spoke Hebrew and Aramaic as their mother tongue...

The Good News about Jesus spread in Greek since this was the dominant language of the Empire.

All of the New Testament books of the Bible were written in the Greek language.

Jesus had commanded His followers to take the message and experience of the upper room in the book of Acts to every nation in the known world of that time.

Well... persecution began in Jerusalem and this forced believers to scatter and the message did begin to spread!

[Show pic of destruction of Jerusalem in 70AD]...



Then, in 70AD, Jerusalem was destroyed, and Israel was conquered.

It is highly probable that original manuscripts of the Bible were destroyed here as the city of Jerusalem was burned to the ground.

Knowledge of the original languages was gradually lost.

The break-up of the Roman Empire resulted in the rise of new nations and the development of new national languages.

As new national languages developed, a desire grew for literature in the new languages.

Latin was the dominant language of the Roman Church, the schools, and then, for the universities.

But here is a problem:

Many people had no knowledge of Latin; reading and writing were limited skills at this time. Only a few portions of the Bible had been translated from Latin into Old English.

And because of this... A certain amount of corruption and tradition reared its ugly head.

Struggles were now taking place between the rulers and the papacy (or the authority of the Pope in the Roman Catholic Church of that day).

Different men began to stand up against the Roman Catholic Church of that day, but they were not necessarily trying to "change" the religion. They were trying to "reform" it.

[Show Reformation Pic]...



This began the period of time around the 16th century known as “The Reformation.”

People began to form new religions that branched off of other religions.

Scribes began copying translations of the Bible into the known languages of the national groups, countries, and peoples.

Copies of the translation were made by hand and were highly valued.

And let's pause here...

Imagine trying to make a translation of your Bible today...**by hand**...from one language to another!

[Show Slide that says, “Who actually copied the translations?"] ...



5. Who Actually Copied Biblical Translations?

[Show pic of Scriptorium] ...

The writing was done in what were called scriptoriums (or scribal institutions).

Even though this method allowed less error... the work was still extremely tedious.

If a certain number of copies were needed, the task would require as many writers as the copies that were ordered.

The way they did it at these scriptoriums was that there would be one central reader who would slowly read out loud.

Imagine that! It was a laborious task to sit hour after hour listening to the drone of a reader and still be alert enough to avoid making mistakes!

The scribes were not allowed to converse with one another, and if they were caught doing so, they were punished in wages!

Of course, any distraction at all could easily result in an error.

One example of such a mistake was found in one copy where in John 5:39 the Bible says, "They bear witness concerning me." Well, the scribe had written, "They are sinning concerning me."

Obviously, that is an absurd translation of what was being given at that time! But it was human error during the transcription process.

There are manuscripts where scribes misspelled unfamiliar proper names when copying them, or they made a mistake when dealing with numbers that resulted in small errors.

For example... take a look at these two verses...

[Show Scripture]...

2 Kings 8:26 (KJV)

26 Two and twenty years old was Ahaziah when he began to reign; and he reigned one year in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Athaliah, the daughter of Omri king of Israel.

[Show Scripture]...

2 Chron 22:2 (KJV)

2 Forty and two years old was Ahaziah when he began to reign, and he reigned one year in Jerusalem. His mother's name also was Athaliah the daughter of Omri.

There's a discrepancy between these two verses... but it's not a "contradiction" in the Bible!

It's simply a small error that was made by a scribe during the translation process!

The difference between the numbers 22 and 42 in Roman style numerals of that day was just a small horizontal hook!

Imagine having to re-write the entire Bible from one language to another... by hand... without computer!

I do believe that you and I would occasionally forget to dot an "i" and cross a "t" also!!!

The point is this... you will find this and other cases of discrepancies in copying... but the Lord nevertheless



ensured there was enough translations and copies of His Word that the occasional Bible with a scribal error could be corrected!

But does this somehow make it so we cannot trust the Bible?

Naysayers will say... "Yes, but they could have purposely changed His Word and played games with us!"

I would argue that even in using imperfect human beings, God protected the message of His Word throughout the test of time and translation.

These men loved that book probably more than a lot of modern people of our day.

They loved it and they saw its importance...

So much, in fact...That they were willing to die for it... and many did!

THE END OF PART ONE

(If you have time you can start the next one but it not recommended as it this will be great deal of information set before your student on this lesson)

