

Review: Did you gain any insights as you read through Genesis 42-50?

How would you explain the nature of the Bible to someone else? What is it?

The goal of this study is to understand the Bible's perspective of itself.

Read the following passage together.
Underline each of the effects the Word of God can have on our life.

Psalm 19:7-11 (NIV)

*⁷The law of the LORD is **perfect**, reviving the soul.*

*The statutes of the LORD are **trustworthy**, making wise the simple.*

*⁸The precepts of the LORD are **right**, giving joy to the heart.*

*The commands of the LORD are **radiant**, giving light to the eyes.*

⁹The fear of the LORD is pure, enduring forever.

*The ordinances of the LORD are **sure and altogether righteous**.*

*¹⁰They are more **precious** than gold, than much pure gold;*

*they are **sweeter** than honey, than honey from the comb.*

¹¹By them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward.

What do you think about these statements?

If we invented a pill that could *revive your soul, make you wiser, give you joy, and give you greater understanding of life*, how well do you think it would sell?

Why don't we gravitate to the Bible with the same enthusiasm as the Psalmist?

How can we claim the Bible is the Word of God, when we know it was written by people?

How do the following verses provide confidence that God's Word actually is God's word?

Deuteronomy 18:18-22 (NIV)

¹⁸I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers; I will put my words in his mouth, and he will tell them everything I command him. ¹⁹If anyone does not listen to my words that the prophet speaks in my name, I myself will call him to account. ²⁰But a prophet who presumes to speak in my name anything I have not commanded him to say, or a prophet who speaks in the name of other gods, must be put to death."

²¹You may say to yourselves, "How can we know when a message has not been spoken by the LORD?" ²²If what a prophet proclaims in the name of the LORD does not take place or come true, that is a message the LORD has not spoken. That prophet has spoken presumptuously. Do not be afraid of him.

Mark 16:20 (NIV)

Then the disciples went out and preached everywhere, and the Lord worked with them and confirmed his word by the signs that accompanied it.

2 Peter 1:19-21 (NIV)

¹⁹And we have the word of the prophets made more certain, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. ²⁰Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. ²¹For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

What do you think it means when it says they were "carried along by the Holy Spirit"?



According to these verses, how did the Bible writers view what was written?

1 Thessalonians 2:13 (NIV)

And we also thank God continually because, when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but as it actually is, the word of God, which is at work in you who believe.

2 Peter 3:15-16 (NIV)

¹⁵Bear in mind that our Lord's patience means salvation, just as our dear brother Paul also wrote you with the wisdom that God gave him. ¹⁶He writes the same way in all his letters, speaking in them of these matters. His letters contain some things that are hard to understand, which ignorant and unstable people distort, as they do the other Scriptures, to their own destruction.

What is the benefit of reading the Bible?

2 Timothy 3:16-17(NIV)

¹⁶All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, ¹⁷so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Hebrews 4:12 (NIV)

For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.

What are the implications for anyone who purposefully distorts the Word of God?

Revelation 22:18-19 (NIV)

¹⁸I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds anything to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book. ¹⁹And if anyone takes words away from this book of prophecy, God will take away from him his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book.



What is the safeguard that the Bible won't be completely destroyed or distorted throughout history or that we won't ever lose God's Word to us?

Matthew 5:18 (NIV)

I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished.

Isaiah 40:8 (NIV)

*The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God **stands forever**.*

HOME STUDY:

Read: Start reading Exodus through to 2 Kings.

The goal is to gain an overview of the story of the Bible. When you come to passages detailing the tabernacle structures, laws, or rites, simply scan them for now and proceed to the next narrative section to pick up the continuation of the story.

HOW TO READ THE BIBLE TIPS

1) Start with a Proper Attitude

View this as an opportunity to spend time with God and learn from him. This isn't like reading a textbook; it's far more relational than that. This is God writing a letter to you and he desires to reveal to you something about himself, something about your relationship with him, and something about how to live. Read the Bible with a sense of expectation.

2) Select a Specific Time

General principle: Try to give God the best time of your day vs. left over time. For some it's in the morning, for others it's in the evening. If you're approaching God when your mind and body is tired, don't expect to get as much out of your time together – that's true with any relationship. Value this time and try not to let it get crowded out by less important things in life (i.e. TV, newspaper, books, etc.). Don't focus on how long you're meeting with God - don't watch the clock. Remember, some days the time will be short, other days longer; the key is to focus on the relationship.

3) Choose a Special Place

It's best if you can get off by yourself somewhere where you won't be disturbed or distracted. Choose a location with good lighting and a place where you are comfortable talking out loud to God (but not so comfortable that you fall asleep, i.e. bed).

4) Read Conversationally

We're not talking in-depth theological studying at this point. We're talking about you and God getting to know each other. As you read through the passage, dialogue with God about what you're reading. If something sounds confusing, let him know and ask him to help you figure out the meaning. If you come across a statement that hits home to you – make special note of that and spend some time talking to God about it.

5) Apply it

“What am I going to do about what I've just read?”

The time you spend will only be as beneficial as the application of what you are learning to your daily life. Test God in this to see if what he says actually works. Find ways to remind yourself throughout the day of the truth you're trying to apply. This will help it sink in.

Remember, if you read the Bible but don't apply it to your life, it is absolutely useless to you.

Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. James 1:22 (NIV)

Even if you're not sure what you believe about God, start off by asking him to reveal himself to you through the passage you're about to read, then read it with that sense of expectation.



Bible Structure (66 books)

Old Testament (39 books)		
History (17)	Poetry (5)	Prophecy (17)
The Law (5) Pentateuch	Job Psalms Proverbs Ecclesiastes Song of Songs	Major Prophets (5) Large
Genesis Exodus Leviticus Numbers Deuteronomy		Isaiah Jeremiah Lamentations Ezekiel Daniel
Historical books (12)		Minor Prophets (12) Small
Joshua Judges Ruth 1 Samuel 2 Samuel 1 Kings 2 Kings 1 Chronicles 2 Chronicles Ezra Nehemiah Esther		Hosea Joel Amos Obadiah Jonah Micah Nahum Habakkuk Zephaniah Haggai Zechariah Malachi

New Testament (27 books)			
History (5)	Paul's Letters (13)	Other Letters (8)	Prophecy (1)
The Gospels (4) Story of Jesus Christ	Letters to Churches (9)	Hebrews James 1 Peter 2 Peter 1 John 2 John 3 John Jude	Revelation
Matthew Mark Luke John	Romans 1 Corinthians 2 Corinthians Galatians Ephesians Philippians Colossians 1 Thessalonians 2 Thessalonians		
The Early Church (1)	Letters to Individuals (4)		
Acts	1 Timothy 2 Timothy Titus Philemon		

Bible Authorship

The Bible was written by more than 40 different authors over 1500 years.

Authors: Shepherds, Fishermen, Kings, Royalty, Tax Collectors, Doctors, Tent Makers, Priests, Prophets, brother of Jesus, etc .

Historical Reliability * adapted from The Alpha Course

The closer the writing to the actual date of the event, the more reliable it is considered to be. The more documents that are in existence, the greater the weight that is given to the authenticity and accuracy of the documents. Out of the ancient historical documents that are universally accepted as reliable, the Bible dramatically outshines all. The Bible was written within a lifespan of the actual events and has far greater numbers of documents available than other literary works.

Literature	When Written	Earliest Copy	Time lapse from event to copies	# of copies discovered
Herodutus	488-428 B.C.	A.D. 900	1300 years	8
Thucydides	460-400 B.C.	c.A.D. 900	1300 years	8
Tacitus	A.D. 100	A.D. 1100	1000 years	20
Caesar's Gallic Wars	58-50 B.C.	A.D. 900	950 years	9-10
Livy's Roman History	59 B.C. – A.D. 17	A.D. 900	900 years	20
New Testament	A.D. 40 – 100	A.D. 130 (Full manuscripts A.D. 350)	30-310 years	5,000+ Greek 10,000 Latin 9,300 Other

Bible Translation

The Old Testament was originally written in Hebrew and a little Aramaic.
The New Testament was originally written in Greek.

When translating into English, translators have to determine whether they give the exact literal translation of the word or write the essence of what was trying to be communicated. If they write the exact translation it may not mean the same in our present culture. If they provide the meaning, then they are making some decisions of interpretation and moving away from the exact wording. It is a very difficult balance to strike. Present day translation of the Bible can be anywhere on that spectrum

