

TXT—1
THE HISTORY OF THE BIBLE

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.
Hebrews 4:12

I delight in your decrees; I will not neglect your word. Psalms 119:16

shakach (shaw-kakh'); to lay aside, to forget, to take for granted or neglect.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. John 1:1-2

History Timeline

1400 - 1500 BC: God wrote the 10 Commandments in ancient Hebrew on stone.

500 BC: 39 books that make up the Old Testament were completed and preserved in Hebrew on scrolls.

First Century AD: New Testament had been completed and was preserved in Greek on papyrus.

393 AD: Synod of Hippo officially approved the New Testament for the entire Church.

500 AD: Bible had been translated into over 500 languages.

600 AD: Bible was restricted to only Latin. All other versions were considered illegal.

400-1400 AD: Known as the “Dark Ages.”

500's - 1300's: Secret Bible society made up of the “Culdees” continued to study God's word.

1380: John Wycliffe (often called the Morningstar of the Reformation) translated the Bible into English.

1415: John Hus burned at the stake for his stance for the Bible. Wycliffe's bibles used to start the fire.

1517: Martin Luther nailed his famous 95 Thesis on the church door at the church in Wittenberg.

1526: William Tyndale printed the first English Bible.

1536: Tyndale was incarcerated before he was strangled and burned at the stake. Before dying, Tyndale prayed, “Oh Lord, open the King of England's eyes”.

1539: King Henry VIII finally allowed (and even funded) the printing of an English Bible.

Do Not Neglect God's Word

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

John 1:1-2, 14

I delight in your decrees; I will not neglect your word. Psalms 119:16

Life Group Questions

- 1) Describe a time when God spoke directly to you through the Bible.**
- 2) We examined Psalms 119:16 which says, "I delight in your decrees; I will not neglect your word." What can cause you to neglect God's word?**
- 3) What will you do to ensure that God's word leads you daily?**

(If you don't know how to study God's word, we'll examine this subject in more detail in two weeks. You might consider starting in the book of John and reading one chapter each day.)

Group Study Questions

Message Series: txt Week 1



Introduction: This week we learned about how the Bible came about and the high price that many people have paid for us to have it in our hands today.

- Before hearing this message, what did you know about the history of the Bible as a book?
- Why do you think it's crucial that we understand the history of the Bible?

Martin Luther

In the early 1500's access to the Bible had been restricted to only a few select priests and church leaders. Martin Luther believed everyone should have access to the scriptures and openly criticized these restrictions. 1521 Emperor Charles V issued an order making Luther an outlaw, subject to arrest and death in response to his efforts to make the Bible available the common man.

William Tyndale

Tyndale was caught and incarcerated for 500 days before he was strangled and burned at the stake in 1536 for printing and distributing Bibles.

- Most of us have a basic understanding of the history of our country. What price has been paid for the freedom we have as citizens of this country?
- Do we have the same understanding of the price that has been paid for us to be able to hold a copy of the Bible in our hands?
- Around the world, there have been countries where the Bible is banned and destroyed. People were jailed and killed for their commitment to God's Word. Why do you think some are so threatened by the Bible?
- How does it make you feel to know that the Bible is still under attack today?
(for more info go to bibles.com and www.persecution.com)
- Would your life change if your Bible was taken away?

- **READ:** Ps 119:16 and 2Ti 3:16 Has your Bible already been taken away simply by neglect?
- What will you have to do get your Bible back?
- How can you and your group help get the Bible in the hands of others?

Take action as a group:

Go to the www.thebiblesite.org and donate bibles to persecuted Christians worldwide.

Reading Resources:

[How We Got the Bible](#)
by [Dr. John H. Sailhamer](#)

[The Book : A History of the Bible](#)
by [Christopher De Hamel](#)



Movie Suggestion:

"Luther" (2003) is the biography of Martin Luther, the 16th-century priest who led the Christian Reformation. His efforts to make the scriptures available to the common believer resulted in his persecution and being put on trial for heresy.

Online Resources

www.youversion.com

An online version of the Bible that enables community and collaboration like never before. Post comments and links regarding passages of Scripture that are important to you.

www.Biblegateway.org

A free service for reading and researching Scripture online--all in the language or translation of your choice

www.bibles.com.

Making the Bible available to every person in a language and format each can understand and afford, so all people may experience its life-changing message.

www.persecution.com

The Voice of the Martyrs aids Christ-followers around the world who are being persecuted for their faith in Christ.

TXT—2
IS THE BIBLE INSPIRED?

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, 17 so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. 2 Timothy 3:16-17

theopneustos (teh-op'-nyoo-stos); divinely breathed, given by inspiration of God.

FACTS ABOUT THE BIBLE

IS THE BIBLE RELIABLE?

1) THE INTERNAL TEST

DO THE WRITERS OF THE BIBLE CLAIM THEIR WRITINGS ARE TRUE?

We did not follow cleverly invented stories when we told you about the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. 2 Peter 1:16

2) THE EXTERNAL TEST

WHAT DOES OUTSIDE EVIDENCE SAY ABOUT THE BIBLE?

"It may be stated categorically that no archaeological discovery has ever controverted a biblical reference." Nelson Glueck,

3) THE BIBLIOGRAPHIC TEST

HOW WELL WERE THE ORIGINAL DOCUMENTS TRANSLATED TO TODAY?

PROPHECIES ABOUT CHRIST

	OT PROPHECY	NT FULLFILLMENT
Born of a Virgin	Isa 7:14	Matt 1:25
Born in Bethlehem	Micah 5:2	Matt 2:1-2
Anointed by the Spirit	Isa 11:2	Matt 3:16
Rides Triumphantly on Donkey	Zech 9:9	John 12:14-15
Betrayed By Friend	Ps 41:9	Matt 26:48-49
Silent Before Accusers	Isa 53:7	Matt 27:12

Beaten and Spat Upon	Isa 50:6	Matt 26:67
Cast Lots for Clothing	Ps 22:18	John 19:23-24
Crucified With Criminals	Isa 53:12	Mark 15:27
Given Vinegar to Drink	Ps 69:21	John 19:28-30
Forsaken By God	Ps 22:1	Matt 27:46
Pierced For Our Sins	Isa 53:5	John 19:34-35
His Bones Will Not Be Broken	Ps 34:20	John 19:33
The Day Turns Dark	Amos 8:9	Matt 27:45
He Will Rise Again	Ps 118:17-18	Mark 16:6-8

PROPHECIES YET TO BE FULFILLED

1 Thess 4:16-17

Rev 19:11-16

Rev 7:9-12

LIFE GROUP QUESTIONS

- 1) **Suppose someone asked you why you believe the bible is true. How would you respond?**

- 2) **Read 2 Tim. 3:16-17. The verse reminds us that God's word is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness. Explain how God's word has recently impacted you in one of these ways.**

Group Discussion Questions

Message Series: txt Week: 2



Introduction: Since the Bible plays a crucial role in our becoming fully devoted followers of Christ, the question “Is the Bible reliable?” is one we need to be willing to ask and prepared to answer.

Here are 3 Reasons Why The Bible Is Reliable:

1. It Contains Fulfilled Prophecy

One of the strongest arguments for the reliability of the Bible is the record of fulfilled prophecy. Although a few other religious books have made prophetic predictions none of these predictions has been specifically fulfilled like those in the Bible. For instance consider this example.

Around 593 BC Ezekiel 26 Prophesied:

- Nebuchadnezzar would destroy the mainland city
Fulfilled in 573 BC (~20 years later)
- The debris of the city would be thrown into the water
Fulfilled in 332 BC by Alexander The Great (~261 years later)
- The city would become a bare rock
Fulfilled in 332 BC by Alexander The Great
- Many nations would come against Tyre
Fulfilled in 332 BC by Alexander The Great
- The city would never be rebuilt
Fulfilled in AD 1291 by Muslims in the Crusade (almost 1900 years later)
- Fisherman would spread their nets over the site
Fulfilled Today (almost 2700 years later)

2. It Is A Miracle Book

- Written over a 1500 year time span
- Written by more than 40 authors
- Contains 66 separate books
- Written in 3 different languages
- Written on 3 different continents

Despite the overall diversity of the Bible it maintains consistency throughout as a story of God’s unconditional love and His relentless pursuit of your heart.

- **Describe a time when you were reading the Bible and the story of God’s unconditional love really came alive for you.**

In the end the ultimate measure of reliability of the Bible is found in the effect that it has on people.

3. It Radically Changes Lives

- Do you think others will be more convinced of the reliability of Bible by the evidence of facts or the evidence in your life?
- How will you change so you can better demonstrate that the Bible is reliable?

Group Challenge:

Plan a group activity in the next month so together you can demonstrate the reliability of the Bible to others in your community. (ie. Feed the poor, help an elderly neighbor, paint someone’s house, adopt a family in need, etc.)

Reading Resources:

[How We Got the Bible](#)
by [Dr. John H. Sailhamer](#)

[The Book : A History of the Bible](#)
by [Christopher De Hamel](#)

Online Resources

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www.bibles.com

Making the Bible available to every person in a language and format each can understand and afford, so all people may experience its life-changing message.

TXT - 3 STUDYING GOD'S WORD

"Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away." Matthew 24:35

"I have hidden your Word in my heart..." Psalms 119:11

GOD'S WORD BRINGS

- **POWER.** *"For the word of God is alive and powerful."* Hebrews 4:12 (NLT)
- **HEALING.** *"He sent forth his word and healed them..."* Psalms 107:20
- **DIRECTION.** *"A man's heart plans his way, but the Lord directs his steps."* Proverbs 16:9 (NKJV)
- **FREEDOM.** *"...He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed."* Luke 4:18

GOD CALLS US TO

1. **MASTER THE TEXT.**

"Follow my advice, my son; always treasure my commands. Obey my commands and live! Guard my instructions as you guard your own eyes. Tie them on your fingers as a reminder. Write them deep within your heart." Proverbs 7:1-3 (NLT)

TOOLS FOR STUDYING THE TEXT:

- **CHOOSE A BIBLE.**
- **STUDY EXTRA MATERIALS.**
- **READ THE WHO, WHEN AND WHY.**
- **GO TO THE WEB.**

"As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God?" Psalms 42:1-2

2. **BE MASTERED BY THE TEXT.**

"Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of dead men's bones and everything unclean." Matthew 23:27

"We know that we have come to know him if we obey his commands . The man who says 'I know him,' but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But if anyone obeys his word, God's word is truly made complete in him. This is how we know we are in him: whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did." I John 2:3-6

ARE YOU WALKING AS JESUS DID?

BIBLE STUDY RESOURCES:

What Bible version should I use? Craig teaches from the *New International Version* (NIV). The *New Living Translation* (NLT) is also accurate and easy to understand.

What extra materials are helpful? Warren Weirsbe's *Bible Exposition* and "Be Series" are helpful. If you're looking for a Bible, *The Life Application Bible* is a great tool for new bible students. *The Daily Bible* is great if you'd like to read through the Bible in a year.

What do I need to know before starting? It is helpful to choose a consistent time of day to read. If you miss a day, don't panic and quit. Satan wants to talk you out of reading God's word. If you aren't a great reader, you can download daily bible readings from I-Tunes. Search under daily bible readings to download. Also when reading a book of the Bible, it is helpful to find a study bible that offers a short explanation about the context of each book. You'll want to know who wrote the book, who it was written to, and why it was written.

What websites are helpful? LifeChurch.tv's www.youversion.com is a great tool to interact with God's word. Other good sites include: www.studylight.org, www.biblegateway.com, www.crosswalk.com, www.biblestudy.org

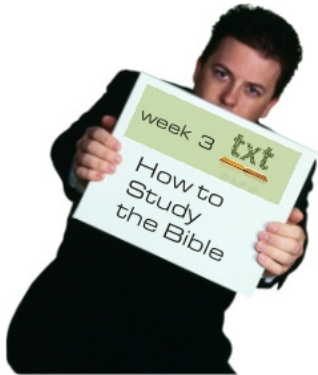
Where do I start? You don't have to read the Bible from beginning to end on your first time. The Bible is sixty-six books. John's gospel in the New Testament is a great place to start. Some enjoy reading one chapter of Proverbs each day for a month. Spend time learning the New Testament. Once you understand the basics of the New Testament, you'll be blessed by the richness of the Old Testament. Don't feel overwhelmed. You have the rest of your life to get to know God through his word. Start with baby steps. If you need some extra help you might read *A Beginner's Guide to Reading the Bible* by Craig Koester or *A Beginner's Guide to Studying the Bible* by Rolf Aaseng

LIFE GROUP QUESTIONS

1. How consistent are you in spending time with God?
2. What other activities/events typically get in the way of studying God's Word?
3. Are you currently using "tools" to help you study the text? If so, what are they?
4. Can you relate to the Pharisees? White – washing the outside of your life while harboring disobedience on the inside? What is God asking you to do?
5. What commitment do you need to make in studying God's Word?

Group Discussion Questions

Message Series: txt Week: 3



The message this week talked about important elements of studying the Bible: “Mastering the Text” and being “Mastered by the Text.”

Do we as followers of Christ seem to be better at “mastering the text” or being “mastered by the text?”

- **Mastering the Text**

What are some of the reasons we focus on mastering the text?

One of the main reasons we often focus on “mastering the text” is to find God’s answers to our questions like these:

Have group members look at the “Group Participant Guide” found on page 2 of this document and briefly mention some of the questions people seek answers for in the Bible.

LEADER NOTE: don’t get too bogged down here, keep the conversation light

Another reason to “master the text” is the scriptures encourage us to do so.

Ask volunteers to look up and read the following verses:

Psalms 119:11 2 Tim 3:16-17

Is it enough to just “master the text”? Why or why not?

My Questions

What is my purpose?
What’s the meaning of Life?
How do I fix my problems?

(insert your questions for God here)

- **Being Mastered by the Text**

Ask volunteers to take turns reading the following verses:

1 John 3:11, James 1:26, James 1:27, 2 Cor 9:9,
2 Cor 9:7, Col 3:13, 1 Thess 5:14-18

(Each of these verses can be found on the “Group Participant Guide” on page 2)

God's questions

Will you Serve me?
Will you Give everything?
Will you Love unconditionally?

(insert question God is asking you here)

When we focus on being “mastered by the text” we go from asking God questions to God asking us questions.

As a group look God’s questions on the “Participant Guide” and say:

After having read the verses a few moments ago ask yourself, “what question(s) is God asking me?”

Is He asking you any of the questions on that list? Is He asking you something else?

What can we as a group do to help each other answer God’s questions?

What can we do to be a group that is not only “mastering the text” but on that is also being “mastered by the text?”

Group Participant Guide

Message Series: txt Week: 3



“Mastering the text” means seeking God’s answers to my questions

What is my purpose?

Why is there suffering?

How do I fix my life?

Why can’t I overcome this addiction?

(Insert Your Questions Here)

This is the message you heard from the beginning: We should love one another.
1 John 3:11 (NIV)

If you claim to be religious but don’t control your tongue, you are just fooling yourself, and your religion is worthless.
James 1:26 (NLT)

Pure and lasting religion in the sight of God our Father means that we must care for orphans and widows in their troubles, and refuse to let the world corrupt us.
James 1:27 (NLT)

As the Scriptures say,
“Godly people give generously to the poor. Their good deeds will never be forgotten.”
2 Cor 9:9 (NLT)

God loves the person who gives cheerfully.
2 Cor 9:7 (NLT)

You must make allowance for each other’s faults and forgive the person who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others.
Col 3:13 (NLT)

Bible Study Resources

Books:

Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of The Bible, by James Strong (2007)
The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament by Craig S. Keener
The Essential Evangelical Parallel Bible: New King James Version English Standard Version New Living Translation The Message by John R., III Kohlenberger (2004)

Online

www.youversion.com
www.Biblegateway.org
www.blueletterbible.org

Being “mastered by the text” means me answering God’s questions

Will you love people unconditionally?

Will you control your tongue? Your temper?

Will you care for the widow/orphan down the street?

Will you give to the poor?

Will you give cheerfully or reluctantly to Me?

Will you give everything?

When will you forgive that person who wronged you?

(Insert God’s Question For You Here)
