

# Week 1: Bible Study Methods Study Guide

## ***Week One: Observation***

### ***(1) Read and discuss the History of the Scriptures.***

#### **History of the Scriptures**

God inspired men to write the Scriptures (II Timothy 3:16). Exact copies were made from the originals to circulate among the churches. About 4000 copies remain which were written between the second and fifteenth centuries.

The Old Testament was written originally in Hebrew, the New Testament in Greek. The Septuagint (LXX) is the Greek version of the OT used in Christ's time. It was translated in Alexandria by 70 Hebrew scholars in the second century BC. The Vulgate is a Latin version of the NT translated by Jerome in about 400AD. Interestingly a few chapters in the books of Ezra and Daniel were written in Aramaic. This language, which was close to Hebrew, was widely spoken in Palestine at the time and was the common language in the region east of Palestine to Persia.

Early English translations were made by Tyndale and Wycliffe in the 1400 to 1500s. In 1611 King James commissioned an English version of the Bible, translated into the common language of the people at that time. We now call this the King James Version (KJV). In the 1960s newer versions were translated into the common language of our time, specifically the New International Version (NIV) and the New American Standard Bible (NASB).

### ***(2) Open e-Sword or [www.biblos.com](http://www.biblos.com) to Ephesians Chapter 1. Read verses 1 and 2.***

### ***(3) Using Ephesians 1:1-2, complete Step 1 of the Inductive Bible Study Method. Record observations in Column 1 of the attached worksheet.***

#### **Inductive Bible Study - A Systematic Approach – Step 1**

##### **I. Observation: “what do I see?”**

###### **a. How to observe**

###### **i. Primary: bombard the text with questions**

1. Macro questions concerning the entire book, purpose, author, recipient, date and place of writing
2. Micro questions concerning individual words, phrases and context

###### **ii. Secondary: observe laws of structure**

###### **1. General**

- a. Atmosphere (e.g., Psalm 22: duress; I Corinthians: corrections to an immature church; John chapters 14-16: Christ's last minute instructions to the disciples before the cross)
- b. Literary form (e.g., letter, poetry, prophecy, wisdom literature, historical)
- c. Proportion: writer emphasizes or de-emphasizes by the amount of material included or excluded (Gospel instruction [extensive texts, e.g., Ephesians Chapters 1 and 2], versus hair length (I Corinthians 11:14-15))

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2. Transitional
  - a. Preparation or introduction (e.g., Ephesians 1:1-2)
  - b. Summary (e.g., Joshua 12 summarizes the conquests of Joshua chapters 1 to 11)
  - c. Climax: how incidents are arranged (e.g., I Thessalonians 1:5-7 is the Thessalonians' response to the gospel)
  - d. Explanation or analysis (Matthew 13:18-23 explains the parable of the sower)
  - e. Cruciality: the pivot point of the passage (e.g., Ephesians 1:15 uses "wherefore" to change the topic)
3. Specific
  - a. Repetition: same, identical terms or phrases (e.g., Ephesians 1:11 counsel [Greek: will] of his own will, Ephesians 1:4 "holy and without blame")
  - b. Generalization: general to particular or vice versa (e.g., Ephesians 1:3 describes the general benefits of salvation followed by verses 4-14 which describe the specific benefits)
  - c. Causation: cause and effect (e.g., Ephesians 5:31 for this reason a man shall leave)
  - d. Comparison: the association of like things (look for key words "as, so", e.g., Romans 15:7)
  - e. Contrast: the association of opposites (look for key word "but", e.g., Ephesians 1:21)
- b. Three potential pitfalls
  - i. Fail to observe details
  - ii. Observe things that are not there
  - iii. Fail to observe accurately

**(4) Homework: Complete Step 1 of the Inductive Bible Study Method on Ephesians 1:1-4. Continue to record observations in Column 1 of the worksheet.**

**Bible Study Methods Study Guide**

Bible Study Worksheet

OBSERVATION	INTERPRETATION	APPLICATION	INTEGRATION
<i>What do I see?</i>	<i>What does it mean?</i>	<i>What does it mean to me?</i>	<i>Where does it fit?</i>