



Serving the **T**ruth in a **L**ove **S**andwich

The Bible is God's Holy Word

Inspired and Inerrant in the Original Autographs

1st Peter 3:15 "But sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence."

This series of courses is about answering difficult questions about Christianity. As disciples of Jesus Christ we have a responsibility to be prepared to defend our faith. We are *not* going to study what Moslems, Hindus, Buddhists etc. believe. We are going to study the truth, not lies, except for a few of their questions, which often have lies as their basis. I hope as we go through these lessons you will create your own personal statement of faith, so you will have a clear idea of what you are defending. Remember God's truth is spread more heart to heart than mind to mind. Since we have minds they must also be included in the communication, but never forget to serve the truth in a love sandwich.

There are at least 7 reasons to believe the Bible is God's Holy Word

- (1) The Bible has something very important to tell us
 - (2) The Bible claims to be God's Word
 - (3) The Bible has prophecies which have been fulfilled
 - (4) The Bible is consistent, within itself, and with other known truth
 - (5) The Holy Spirit spoke to billions of people over 1,000's of years in the Bible. I'm one of them. Are you?
 - (6) The Bible has been widely available over a long period of time
 - (7) The Bible promotes the highest standards of morality
- We will study reasons 1, 6 & 7 in lesson 1. We'll study the others in the next four lessons.

Lesson 1 – The Bible is Important

Lesson 2 – The Bible Claims to be God's Word

Lesson 3 – The Bible has many Fulfilled Prophecies

Lesson 4 – The Bible is Consistent with the Truth

Lesson 5 – The Bible Speaks with God's Voice

Lesson 6 – Bonus Lesson – Responding to Skeptics

Suggested methodology for each lesson:

1. Fellowship (Save most of this for the end of class.)
2. Take prayer requests (Try to keep it from becoming a competition to see who has the most or the worst.)
3. Pray (The idea here is to leave our troubles with God so we can give His word our attention with a clear mind.)
4. Read the lesson's text aloud from the Bible. (... or a few verses at a time as you answer the questions.)
5. Answer and *briefly* discuss the "fill in the blank" questions. (Let those who prefer to listen, listen. My answers on the next page are just one opinion; you may have a better answer if it is based on Scripture.)
6. On the final "Think & Pray" question everyone should take a few minutes to pray over it and jot down their own thoughts before the discussion. **This will give the Holy Spirit a time to speak.**
7. Discuss your "Think & Pray" answers. (Never force anyone to share theirs. As with the other questions, my answer is just one more opinion; you may have a better answer.)
8. Close in prayer (It is best to call on others to pray, but try to get their permission ahead of time.)
9. Fellowship (Leave this as open ended as possible for the time and place you meet.)
- 10.

Depending on the number of people, each lesson is expected to take about one hour. Steps 4 thru 7 are about half of that. If you take longer, let each lesson take more than one meeting, or consider breaking into two groups. The final "Think & Pray" question should always be covered, because that is when everyone takes a quiet moment to listen to the Teacher, the Holy Spirit. If you take less time, extra questions are provided for discussion called "For Further Thought"

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Other free Bible courses are available at <http://www.LoveBibleStudy.com>

Additional Reading

These lessons are designed for small groups or individuals to use without reference to other materials besides the Bible. However, a lot more could be gained if those involved would do some additional reading between class meetings. (See <http://lovebiblestudy.com/CC/Library.htm>)

We plan to provide specific recommendations with each course at <http://lovebiblestudy.com/TLS/Adjunct/> We also hope to be making specific chapter recommendations from various Christian books that have helped us in our understanding of apologetics, but are not entirely about the topic of the course. Such as these books which would make good companions for this entire series of courses.

Mere Christianity by C. S. Lewis

I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist by Norman L. Geisler and Frank Turek

The Case for ... series of books by Lee Strobel

Cold Case Christianity, God's Crime Scene, and Forensic Faith – 3 books by J. Warner Wallace

Also this book would work very well with this particular course,

God Breathed by Josh McDowell

Lesson 1 – The Bible is Important

Since God made man it is not unreasonable to expect that He would want to communicate with men. A book would be a good choice since it would be relatively permanent and fairly stable. But if God wrote the book it would have to be a very special book.

Read these scriptures and answer the associated question:

(1A) John 10:10 Why did He come? _____

(1B) Romans 15:4 Why was it written? _____

(1C) 1 John 5:11 What does it testify? _____

(1D) Col 4:16 What were they supposed to do with the letters? _____

(1E) Exodus Chapter 20:1-17. What is this passage called? _____

(1F) Mark 12:28-31. Who are the two we are supposed to love? _____

(1G) Matthew 7:12. This quote, often called the Golden Rule is called what 2 things in this passage?

(1H) Psalm 12:6. God's word is compared to silver purified how many times? _____

(1I) Part of the reason we believe the Bible is the word of God is because it tells us important things like how to hope for eternal life, it is widely available to people all around the world, and it promotes the highest standards of morality. What do you see as the strengths and weaknesses this argument?

Think & Pray _____

For further thought:

[1j] *Skeptic's Question*: "The bible is man's work, not God's. Why do you believe the particular 39 books called the Old Testament are the Word of God? The decisions about which ancient writings to include was entirely arbitrary and sometimes perhaps whimsical.

"After the destruction of the Jewish temple in 70 AD, the Jews came together in a Council of Jamnia and other meetings and correspondence and decided to include only the 39 books we refer to as the Old Testament in their canon. It is still the canon of Jews worldwide today. If you are a Christian why do you let the Jews decide which Bible you are going to read?

Catholics and some other Christian denominations still look to the "extra" books included in the Septuagint (called the Apocrypha) as part of the Old Testament. Why don't you?

"In the same way, the New Testament came together over a long period of time based on human discussions beginning with letters in the late AD 90's through a series of councils ending with the Council of Carthage (397 AD) which picked 27 books as authoritative. There are still Christian groups that disagree about what should be included. Many scholars would like to include the early Christian writings of the Gnostics as part of the New Testament. Why are you right and they are wrong?

"Is God the author of confusion? How could a book born in such chaos be reliable, since Christians cannot even agree among themselves what should be included?"

How would you answer this attack? (Hint: His facts are basically correct. It is his conclusions based on those facts that are wrong. Start with what you do know and work from there.) (Hint: 2nd Peter 1:16-18)

----- SOME POSSIBLE ANSWERS -----

(Your answers do not have to match exactly.)

Lesson 1 – The Bible is Important

(1A) John 10:10 Why did He come? That we may have life

(1B) Romans 15:4 Why was it written? For our learning and that we may have hope

(1C) 1 John 5:11 What does it testify? God has given us eternal life, His Son.

Is there anything more important than eternal life and hope?

(1D) Col 4:16 What were they supposed to do with the letters? Share them among the churches. The Bible is the most widely available book in the world. All or portions have been translated into over three thousand languages. The Bible typically sells over 100 million copies every year making it the best seller on any list. *This is because it is the book of God's communication to man. People all over the world now have an opportunity to read it and to know God.*

(1E) Exodus Chapter 20:1-17. What is this passage called? The Ten Commandments

(1F) Mark 12:28-31. Who are the two we are supposed to love? God and our Neighbors

(1G) Matthew 7:12. This quote, often called the Golden Rule is called what two things in this Scripture passage? The Law & The Prophets

Are there any higher standards or righteousness than these?

(1H) Psalm 12:6. God's word is compared to silver purified how many times? Seven

(1I) These are certainly admirable traits and it does seem reasonable that God's word would have these attributes. But if the offer of eternal life is not real than the hope is frivolous and those who believe it are to be pitied. We do show that the resurrection is a real historical fact in course #6 in this series. The Bible is clearly more popular than any other book, but popularity is seldom a measure of truthfulness. Of course, the point is availability, not popularity. It is not the only book to promote high moral standards.

My further thoughts:

[1j] My actual response: I do not dispute these facts. Christianity is not based on the Bible. Christianity is based on the life and work of Jesus Christ. Our evidence is His Resurrection, which is a historical fact. It is true that is reported in the Bible, but that is not what makes the Resurrection true. It is the Resurrection that makes the Bible God's word. Every reasonable person agrees that the gospels are four very old documents that report some difficult to believe miraculous events. It is not until you decide that you believe the Resurrection actually occurred that the Gospels begin to take on more significance.

The Resurrection authenticates Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ authenticates the apostles and their writings. Peter, the apostle, authenticates Paul's writings. The New Testament authenticates the Old Testament. The apocrypha is not included in our idea of the Old Testament because it seldom, if ever, claims to be God's word and because it is seldom, if ever, quoted by Jesus or the Apostles.

The other ancient Greek writings were not included in the New Testament because the Christian church at the time did not use them for worship and did not believe they were written by Apostles or disciples of Jesus. When the early Christians were making these decisions 24 of the books were never in serious dispute, and only one was seriously considered that was not included.

Even so the various councils that supposedly made those decisions did not have authority over the whole church, only the part inside the Roman Empire. The church had already spilled out of the empire east to Mesopotamia and south into Africa below the Sahara. These "other" Christians chose the same 27 books independently. I believe that is the hand of God." How could I have made this answer more loving?

Lesson 2 – The Bible Claims to be God's Word

Many of the books of the Bible start with something that clearly says that God is the source of the contents of that book. Almost 4,000 times the Bible declares, "God said," "Thus says the Lord," or something similar. These are some of those many places the Bible declares God is talking: <http://lovebiblestudy.com/TLS/Resources/GodSpeaks.htm> Also biblical writers often claim to be testifying to the truth and talk about what God did and/or said.

Read these scriptures and answer the associated question:

(2A) Genesis 1:3 What came into existence from nothing at God's command? _____

(2B) Leviticus 1:1-2. Who told Moses what to say? _____

(2C) 2 Kings 17:13 How did the Lord warn His people? _____

(2D) Isaiah 1:1-2. Who spoke? _____

(2E) Jeremiah 21:8 What was set before the people? _____

(2F) Luke 1:1-4. Is Luke claiming to have written the truth? Yes

(2G) Acts 2:32 To what were they all witnesses? _____

(2H) 2 Peter 1:16 To what were they eyewitnesses? _____

(2I) Rev 1:1-3. Who is the source of the Revelation of Jesus Christ? _____

(2J) 1 John 1:1-5 Have seen, heard, examines and touched the Word of Life what was the message?

(2K) We believe it is significant that the Bible claims to be the Word of God, and is part of our foundation for believing that it is His word. What do you see as the strengths and weaknesses this argument?

Think & Pray _____

For further thought:

[2L] *Skeptic's Question:* "Peter supposedly says that Paul's writings are part of scripture in 2 Peter 3:15-16, but Paul did not obey Jesus' own words, so how could he be a reliable author of the New Testament? Paul did not baptize as commanded: In 1 Cor. 1:17 ('For Christ sent me [Paul] not to baptize but to preach the gospel') Paul is saying Jesus was wrong when He said in Matt. 28:19 'Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them....' So how can we believe Peter or Paul?" How would you answer this attack? (Hint 1 Corinthians 1:14-16)

[2m] *Skeptic's Attack:* "You believe the Bible because it tells you about God, and you believe in God because the Bible tells you so. That is circular reasoning, which is invalid reasoning."

----- SOME POSSIBLE ANSWERS -----

(Your answers do not have to match exactly.)

Lesson 2 – The Bible Claims to be God's Word

- (2A) Genesis 1:3 What came into existence from nothing at God's command? Light
(2B) Leviticus 1:1-2. Who told Moses what to say? The LORD
(2C) 2 Kings 17:13 How did the Lord warn His people? Through his prophets
(2D) Isaiah 1:1-2. Who spoke? The LORD
(2E) Jeremiah 21:8 What was set before the people? the way of life and of death.
(2F) Luke 1:1-4. Is Luke claiming to have written the truth? Yes
(2G) Acts 2:32 To what were they all witnesses? The resurrection of Jesus Christ
(2H) 2 Peter 1:16 To what were they eyewitnesses? His Majesty
(2I) Rev 1:1-3. Who is the source of the Revelation of Jesus Christ? God via an angel
(2J) 1 John 1:1-5 Have seen, heard, examines and touched the Word of Life what was the message?
God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all.
(2K) Anyone can claim anything. However, if the Bible didn't claim to be His word, wouldn't that disqualify it immediately?

My further thoughts:

[2L] *My response:* Paul makes it clear in other verses that, first, he did sometimes baptize and second, Christians are to carry out the Great Commission as a team. Different people have different gifts from the Spirit, and can contribute in different ways. (1st Cor 12:4-11, 27-31) If I financially support a missionary, and never baptize anyone, I am fulfilling the Great Commission. All Paul is saying is that he mainly preached, while others on his team baptized.

Different Atheist Responded: I wouldn't be as strict as (the first atheist) in requiring that Paul baptized personally, but the fact remains that he didn't do it.

My Answer: This is a classic case of ignoring the context. In 1 Corinthians 1:14-16 Paul says, "I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius, so that no one would say you were baptized in my name. Now I did baptize also the household of Stephanas; beyond that, I do not know whether I baptized any other." Paul lists at least four people that he baptized, indicates that he has baptized so many people, he can not remember them all, and that is just at Corinth. Your argument is a simple assertion contrary to fact.

How could I have made this answer more loving?

[2m] *My Answer:* "You have oversimplified my point of view into an illogical strawman for easy rhetorical assault. I think the Bible is good testimony. I believe it for that reason. The Bible is one of the reasons I believe in God and my principle source of information about Him. You might find my evidence unconvincing, but there is nothing illogical about it. What kind of evidence would you find convincing?"

Lesson 3 – The Bible has many Fulfilled Prophecies

Read these scriptures and answer the associated question:

3A Deut 18:18-22. How are we supposed to be able to tell that a prophet is really God's prophet?

3B Deut 13:1-4 Is fulfilled prophecy enough to establish a prophet as God's prophet?

Let's look at some fulfilled prophecies, chosen for their simplicity and conciseness. Write these scripture references next to the prophecy: (Hint: In some cases you will have to read several verses of context to find out who or what is being talked about.)

Deut 28:64 Isaiah 14:23 Isaiah 53:7 Amos 9:14-15

3C _____ The people of Israel would be scattered worldwide.

3D _____ Jacob's descendants would regain control of Israel.

3E _____ The Messiah would be silent before his accusers.

3F _____ Babylon, which had been a world power at two different times in history, would be reduced to swampland.

Here are five more. Write these scripture references next to the prophecy:

Deut 28:64-67 Deut 29:23 Isaiah 41:18-20 Zech 9:9 Ezek 26:12

(3G) _____ The prophet speaks of a future king coming to Jerusalem riding on a donkey.

(3H) _____ Tyre's stones, timber and soil would be thrown into the sea.

(3I) _____ Israel would become a wasteland.

(3J) _____ Trees would flourish again in a desolate Israel.

(3K) _____ The Jews would be persecuted in the lands where they were scattered.

(3L) There are over 2,000 specific prophecies in the Bible which have already been fulfilled. This is particularly astounding when we recall that there are no such prophecies in the 'scriptures' of any other religion. This is good evidence the Bible is the word of God. What are the strengths and weaknesses of this argument?

Think & Pray _____

For further thought:

[3m] *Skeptic's Question:* "Compare Matthew 27:35 in the King James Version and the New International version. The KJV has added a fulfilled prophecy just to make it more mystical and miraculous. How can we tell what really happened? " Reading John 19:4 in the New International Version should show why this question is silly.

[3n] *Skeptic's Attack:* The Bible reports miracles, which are impossible. Why would you trust it?

----- SOME POSSIBLE ANSWERS -----

(Your answers do not have to match exactly.)

Lesson 3 – The Bible has many Fulfilled Prophecies

- (3A) Deuteronomy 18:18-22. How are we supposed to be able to tell that a prophet is really God's prophet?
If what he predicts comes true
- (3B) Deuteronomy 13:1-4 Is fulfilled prophecy enough to establish a prophet as God's prophet?
No, he must also not encourage us to rebel against God.
- (3C) Deuteronomy 28:64 - The people of Israel would be scattered worldwide. By 70 A.D., 1,600 years after Deuteronomy was written, Jewish communities existed in the Middle East and on the Mediterranean coasts. Jews followed the Romans into Europe and from Persia and Babylonia spread as far east as China. Since then right up until modern times, Jews have migrated to the rest of the world. Despite the creation of the state of Israel in 1948, the vast majority of the Jewish people remain scattered around the world.
- (3D) Amos 9:14-15 - Jacob's descendants would regain control of Israel. This prophet lived about 2,700 years ago, during a time when the people of Israel were being forced out of their homeland by a succession of foreign invasions. Despite many centuries of exile, many Jews returned to Israel and in 1948 reclaimed sovereignty over a portion of their ancient homeland.
- (3E) Isaiah 53:7 - The Messiah would be silent before his accusers. 700 years later, as explained in Matthew 27:12-14, this is what happened to Jesus. He was falsely accused but remained silent and did not protest the accusations. Jesus was silent for the Scriptures prophesied that when the Lamb of God would come to Earth, the first time, to be the Blood Atonement, He would "not open His Mouth". Just as sheep are dumb before their shearers, so would the innocent Lamb of GOD be "dumb" or silent before His "shearers", the false accusers. Protesting would only prove that He wanted to be excused of the crime they accused Him. He knew already what He was sent for. He always obeyed the Father.
- (3F) Isaiah 14:23 - Babylon, which had been a world power at two different times in history, would be reduced to swampland. After Cyrus conquered it in 539 BC, it never again rose to power. Archaeologists excavated Babylon during the 1800s. Some parts of the city could not be dug up because they were under a water table that had risen over the years.
- (3G) Zechariah 9:9 - The prophet speaks of a future king presenting himself to Jerusalem while riding on a humble donkey. 500 years later, as explained in Luke 19:35-37, Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey and presented Himself as the Messiah, the King.
- (3H) Ezekiel 26:12 (You have to read the verses in context.) - Tyre's stones, timber and soil were thrown into the sea by the forces of Alexander the Great.
- (3I) Deuteronomy 29:23 - Israel would become a wasteland. Mark Twain wrote the following, in 1867, after visiting the land of Israel, which at the time was called Palestine: "Palestine sits in sackcloth and ashes... the spell of a curse that has withered its fields and fettered its energies... Palestine is desolate and unlovely... It is a hopeless, dreary, heartbroken land."
- (3J) Isaiah 41:18-20 - Trees would flourish again in a desolate Israel. In Israel they have constructed a vast irrigation system to improve farming. During the past century, more than 200 million trees have been planted in Israel.
- (3K) Deuteronomy 28:64-67 - The Jews would be persecuted in the lands where they were scattered. The book of Esther records a persecution of them in ancient times. The Jews were intensely persecuted in Europe and Russia during the Crusades and Pogroms of the Middle Ages right up to modern times. Wherever they
- (3L) This is an amazing and convincing truth, even though the prophecies of the end times remain unfulfilled. Each prophet predicted enough immediate events to be recognized as a prophet and be included in the Bible during his time. (Deuteronomy 18:18-22) As we have seen a lot more has been fulfilled with the passage of time. This encourages us to expect the end times prophecies will also be fulfilled

Lesson 4 – The Bible is Consistent with the Truth

In course #9 of this series we demonstrated that the Bible is consistent with History and Archeology. In this lesson we will add Science to that list. The purpose is not to explain what a great science text the Bible is, (it is not), but rather to show that it is consistent with scientific facts. There are some so-called scientific theories that disagree with the Bible but there are no known scientific facts that contradict the Bible.

Here are a few scientific concepts and the scriptures that agree with them. Many of them were listed in the Bible hundreds or even thousands of years before being recorded elsewhere or "discovered" by modern science. These are not stated in the technical jargon of modern science, of course, but in terms of the basic world of man's everyday experience; nevertheless, they are completely in accord with the most modern scientific facts. For instance, the description of Behemoth in Job 40:15-24 matches what paleontologists call a Brachiosaurus. (See <http://clarifyingchristianity.com/science.shtml>)

Match the scripture with the science.

Genesis 1:25 Ecclesiastes 1:4-7 Jeremiah 33:22 Hebrews 1:11-12

- (4A) _____ The wind goes around in circles.
- (4B) _____ The heavens and the earth will wear out in time.
- (4C) _____ Animals reproduce animals of their own kind.
- (4D) _____ There are more stars than can be counted.

That was fun! Let's look at 4 more examples. Try to match these scriptures with the related scientific fact:

Genesis 7:11 Job 26:7 Job 28:25 1 Corinthians 15:41

- (4E) _____ Each star is unique.
- (4F) _____ The Earth floats through space resting on nothing at all.
- (4G) _____ Air has weight, giving the wind its force, among other things.
- (4H) _____ There are springs in the ocean depths.

(4I) The Bible is consistent with other known truth. We find this adds important evidence to our case for the Bible is God's word. What are the strengths and weaknesses of this argument?

Think & Pray _____

For further thought:

[4j] *Skeptic's Attack:* The Bible says snakes fly. See Isaiah 14:29. You do know this is false, don't you?

[4k] *Skeptic's Attack:* "The Bible is out of date. Eccl. 1:9 says "What has been is what will be, and what has been done is what will be done; there is nothing new under the sun") but since then we have invented the atomic bomb and landed on the moon among many other scientific advances." How would you answer this attack? (Hint: Ecclesiastes 1:4-10)

[4L] The Bible made a statement contrary to known scientific fact in 1 Samuel 2:8 "For the pillars of the earth are the LORD'S, And He set the world on them."

----- SOME POSSIBLE ANSWERS -----

(Your answers do not have to match exactly.)

Lesson 4 – The Bible is Consistent with the Truth

- (4A) Ecclesiastes 1:4-7 Describes the motion of the winds long before the advent of modern meteorology.
- (4B) Hebrews 1:10-12 Describes the wearing down of the creation (The second law of thermodynamics)
- (4C) Genesis 1:25 The phrase “according to its kind” occurs repeatedly, stressing the reproductive integrity of each kind of animal and plant. Today we know this occurs because all of these reproductive systems are programmed by their genetic codes.
- (4D) Jeremiah 33:22 Only about 3,000 stars can be seen with the naked eye and therefore could have been counted even in ancient times and yet the writers at the time seemed to know what scientists did not know until the invention of the telescope much later.
- (4E) 1 Cor 15:4 Modern astronomy has shown that no two stars are identical which is a fact that is not obvious without a telescope and sophisticated light measuring technology.
- (4F) Job 26:7 The Earth floats through space resting on nothing at all. This fact was not "discovered" by science until the fourteenth century.
- (4G) Job 28:25 About four hundred years ago science "discovered" that air has weight, three thousand years after Job was written.
- (4H) Genesis 7:11 Hot water fountains or springs are found deep in the ocean and are a recent discovery.
- (4I) These ancient writers with no knowledge of modern science did not contradict what is now known to be facts. That does not by itself prove the Bible is God's word, but if the Bible was not consistent with other known truth that would eliminate it as possibly being God's word.

My further thoughts:

[4j] Isaiah 14:29 does mention a flying serpent in some versions. Some versions call it a "darting" serpent. Paleontologists think there were flying lizards which could be what is meant in Isaiah. Even if it is not, they dig up new species all the time. How do those who accuse the Bible of errors of fact know that there were no flying serpents at the time of Isaiah which were endangered species that have since gone extinct? They are arguing from the absence of evidence in a field that science makes no claim to have completed its study. No evidence is only the lack of evidence. Just because they have not found a flying serpent does not mean there was not one. It is also, possible this is a figure of speech, that symbolically represents Satan or his demons. You could also make a case from the Hebrew for translating it "dark" serpent, like a black snake or "darting serpent" as some versions have it"

[4k] *My actual response:* "The scientific principles that make atomic bombs and rockets possible were just as true when Eccl 1:9 was written as they are today. The proclivity of people to wage war and explore is the same as it has always been. I believe it is a warning against people like you who arrogantly believe they can look at a book thousands of years old and find something in it that no one else ever noticed."

[4L] *My actual response:* It is a figure of speech in the middle of some very nice poetry.

Atheist Retort: Poetic license does not include factual error.

My answer: You are right. It is still a figure of speech in the middle of some very nice poetry, which means the writer did not expect anyone to take it as a factual claim.

Lesson 5 – The Bible Speaks with God's Voice

The effect that we have seen over and over again of Bible reading on people's lives testifies to its power from God. All of the other reasons given in this course and course #9 may be convincing, but here is one you can test for yourself without spending hours in the library researching scientific and historical facts to compare with the Bible's historical and prophetic writings.

Read these scriptures and answer the associated question:

(5A) Isaiah 55:10-11. What will God's word accomplish? _____

(5B) Hebrews 4:12. What is the word of God sharper than? _____

(5C) 1 Thess 2:13 Where does the word of God perform its work? _____

(5D) Ps 119:100 Why does the psalmist understand more than his elders?

(5E) Ps 1:2-3 Who is like a tree that yields timely fruit? _____

(5F) Ps 19:7 What does the law of the Lord do? _____

(5G) 2 Timothy 3:16 Where did all scripture come from? _____

(5H) Mark 13:31 What will survive the end of the world? _____

(5I) Rom 10:17 Where does faith come from? _____

(5J) Many people believe the Bible is the Word of God. Over a lifetime of use, over the lifetimes of my ancestors, over the lifetimes of my brothers and sisters in Christ, over the lifetimes of billions of Christians the Bible has proved itself to be a reliable guide to all necessary spiritual truth. Almost every person on the face of the planet who believes there is just one God believes He speaks at least in some part of the Bible - Christians, Jews (Old Testament), and Moslems. (Moslems acknowledge some portions of the books of Moses as truly from God, although they are wrong. Allah is a moon god, an idol, and speaks nowhere. The point is they acknowledge the Bible to some extent.) That is about 4 billion people worldwide, or around half. What do you see as the strengths and weaknesses this argument?

Think & Pray _____

For further thought:

[5k] If we think God is speaking to us from the Bible, how do we know it is not just our minds playing tricks on us? Or Satan?

[5l] What impact has the Bible had on the lives of your fellow Christians?

[5m] What has reading and studying the Bible done in your life?

[5n] *Skeptic's Attack:* "God should have made the Bible unambiguous so that it could not be misunderstood. Since it can be misunderstood, it is not God's word." How would you respond to this attack? (Hint: Deuteronomy 29:4)

[5o] *Atheist's Attack:* "Even if I agree that the God, a god, or gods, exist, how do you know the God of the Bible is the only God, or even among the gods?"

----- SOME POSSIBLE ANSWERS -----

(Your answers do not have to match exactly.)

Lesson 5 – The Bible Speaks with God's Voice

(5A) Isaiah 55:10-11. What will God's word accomplish? Whatever God wants it to.

(5B) Hebrews 4:12. What is the word of God sharper than? A Sword

(5C) 1 Thess 2:13 Where does the word of God perform its work? In those who believe.

(5D) Ps 119:100 Why does the psalmist understand more than his elders?

Because he obeys God's word

(5E) Ps 1:2-3 Who is like a tree that yields timely fruit? He whose delight is God's word

(5F) Ps 19:7 What does the law of the Lord do? Restores the soul

(5G) 2 Timothy 3:16 Where did all scripture come from? It inspired by God

(5H) Mark 13:31 What will survive the end of the world? God's word

(5I) Rom 10:17 Where does faith come from? Hearing God's word

(5J) Yes, many people believe, but many do not. Almost everyone used to believe the world was flat. Although not convincing by itself, the number of people who have believed it, makes it something worth investigating. Here is a testimony from one of those 4 billion people: "If we read the Bible at face value, without a preconceived bias for finding errors, we will find it to be a coherent, consistent, and relatively easy-to-understand book. Yes, there are difficult passages. Yes, there are verses that appear to contradict each other. We must remember that the Bible was written by approximately 40 different authors over a period of around 1600 years. Each writer wrote with a different style, from a different perspective, to a different audience, for a different purpose. We should expect some minor differences. However, a difference is not a contradiction. It is only an error if there is absolutely no conceivable way the verses or passages can be reconciled. Even if an answer is not available right now, that does not mean an answer does not exist. Many have found a supposed error in the Bible in relation to history or geography only to find out that the Bible is correct once further archaeological evidence is discovered." Test this for yourself. Read the Bible for 15 or 20 minutes every day and watch the power of God change your life for the better.

My further thoughts:

[5k] We know because our internal witness of the still small voice of God matches the voices of Christian fellowship and the words in the Bible. If they don't agree, it is probably not God speaking.

[5n] *My response:* Show me one piece of writing of comparable size and theme to the Bible that is not misunderstood. They did not write in a way that could not be misunderstood because it is impossible.

Atheist Retort: An all-powerful God should be able to do anything.

My Answer: You missed my point entirely. The more mutually related information communicated in language, any language, the more possible ways to construe it there are. The number of possibilities increases rapidly with the length of the piece of writing. That makes it a logical impossibility for a writing of any substantial size about a complex topic such as religious belief to exist that can not be construed in such a way that it can be misunderstood. God can not make a square circle and He can not make a book His enemies can not quote out of context and twist. Taken in its entirety it is quite clear. (See also: Mark 4:11-12; 1st Cor 1:21,27; Jer 8:9; Jam 2:5; Matt 13:11; John 12:40)

[5o] Because the Resurrection of Jesus Christ is a historical event. Jesus gives credibility to the Holy Scriptures as the Word of God. He quoted the Old Testament and ordained the apostles who wrote the New Testament.

Lesson 6– Bonus Lesson – Responding to Skeptics Attacks

(6A) *Skeptic's Attack*: "Compare 2nd Timothy 2:15 in the King James Version and the New International version."

KJV: Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

NIV: Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.

"The word 'Study' has been omitted from the NIV and without question changes the meaning of the verse. How can they both be God's word?" How would you respond to this attack? (Hint: Titus 3:9)

Think & Pray _____

(6B) *Skeptic's Attack*: "Compare Mark 12:29 in the King James Version and the New International version."

KJV: "And Jesus answered him, 'The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord'."

NIV: "The most important one," answered Jesus, "is this: 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one."

"The question Jesus was asked was not which one is most important, but rather which one is first. It's not necessarily the most important simply because it is first. How can they both be God's word?" How would you respond to this attack? (Hint: Context Mark 12:20-39)

Think & Pray _____

(6C) *Skeptic's Attack*: "Compare Isaiah 65:11 in the King James, New King James and the New International versions."

KJV "But ye are they that forsake the LORD, that forget my holy mountain, that prepare a table for that troop, and that furnish the drink offering unto that number."

NKJV has it "But you are those who forsake the LORD, Who forget My holy mountain, Who prepare a table for Gad, And who furnish a drink offering for Meni."

NIV "But as for you who forsake the LORD and forget my holy mountain, who spread a table for Fortune and fill bowls of mixed wine for Destiny,"

"The KJV makes no sense so modern Christians have doctored the Bible up to save face. How is anybody to believe any of these versions? One makes no sense, and the other two are mocked up fakes." How would you respond to this attack? (Hint: 1st Tim 1:3-4)

Think & Pray _____

----- SOME POSSIBLE ANSWERS -----

(Your answers do not have to match exactly.)

Lesson 6– Bonus Lesson – Responding to Skeptics Attacks

(6A) *My response:* "Actually the NIV does nothing to change the meaning of the verse. Instead it makes it more understandable. In 1611 the English word "study" did not always mean what it does today. The word comes from the Latin "studium" meaning "to devote oneself." In 1611 "study" could be taken in the sense that we take it today, but it more often retained its older sense of "considered endeavor towards some objects, earnest and reasoned effort, desire, or thought."

"Spoudason" is the underlying Greek word and is no different in the various Greek versions. (i.e. There is no textual problem causing the difference in translation.) It means, "1. To hasten, make haste, or 2. to exert one's self, endeavor, give diligence." Thayer's 1885.

Clearly, "Do your best" is a much better translation today than "study" and this whole issue demonstrates the value of having more than one translation to work with when trying to understand the meaning of the original language."

Should I have said something to show more kindness in this answer?

(6B) *My response:* The question we have to consider is what does the Greek say? The underlying Greek word for "first" or "most important" is "prote" a form of "protos." It is the same in this verse in all Greek versions. (i.e. There is no textual problem causing the difference in translation.) It is the same word that is translated "chief" by the KJV and "most important" by the NIV, 10 verses later in Mark 12:39. It is the same word that is translated "first" by the KJV and "first one" by the NIV 9 verses earlier in Mark 12:20.

"protos" actually can mean either first in a time or in sequence or in order of importance. I think "foremost" would be a better English word for "prote" because it seems to retain the same ambiguity in the English that is in the Greek. (i.e. foremost can mean either "first" or "most important" See <http://dictionary.reference.com/>) In fact, the NASV does translate protos "foremost" for this passage.

The scribe was asking which was first in importance (see Mark 12:32-33) and that is how Jesus answered him. Furthermore, the commandment Jesus quoted is the most important, so what is wrong with the NIV saying so? How could you misunderstand the KJV saying "first" as anything besides in importance?"

How could I have put this answer in a love sandwich?

(6C) *My response:* "There is no real difference between the NIV and New King James. Gad and Meni are near eastern gods of destiny and fortune. (Notice the words Fortune and Destiny are capitalized in the NIV.) In a footnote they are explained. In this case the KJV just gets it wrong. In 1611 they did not know that the words were names, so they guessed what they meant based on similarities to Hebrew words, and they guessed wrong. Later when Europeans got access to more writing from the ancient Near East we were able to discover the real meanings of the words.

"The poetic construction of the passage keeps the meaning from being lost, even in the KJV – do not forget to worship God, and God only, is the message of the passage in all versions."

How could I have made this answer more loving?