

Syllabus for the Course

Bible Survey

DIBS

Tailor-made Biblical education for every believer

BIBLE SURVEY

General Course Description

The course *Bible Survey* is an examination of the entire Bible in which the student studies every book of the Bible paragraph by paragraph, making sure that he can correctly read everything with at least a surface-level understanding of the message. The student is given the task of making sure that he follows the flow of thought of each book, understands the general background of each book, and can see the basic implications for life and doctrine of what is said in the Bible. At the end of the course, the student will have the ability to “walk through” the Bible book by book. This course is worth 12 credit hours and is part of the Bible Certificate program. The estimated study time for the course is 480 hours.

Course Objectives

The student is to be able to do the following as a result of this course:

- ◆ With the Bible closed, he is to be able to briefly describe the background of each book.
- ◆ With the Bible closed, he is to be able to briefly state the theme of the book and its broad flow of thought.
- ◆ With the Bible open, he is to be able to read the text smoothly, pronouncing the words and names correctly, understanding the meaning of each word, knowing the general location of each geographical place, and knowing in general what each object referred to in the text is like.
- ◆ With the Bible open, he is to be able to demonstrate that he has a basic understanding of the main message or idea of each paragraph.

These abilities will enable the student to progress effectively in his other courses, especially in the study of exegesis and of theology.

Getting Ready to Study

You will need to do the following things to get ready to study. You should have done all of them before you actually begin your study.

Step #1. Decide on a study approach

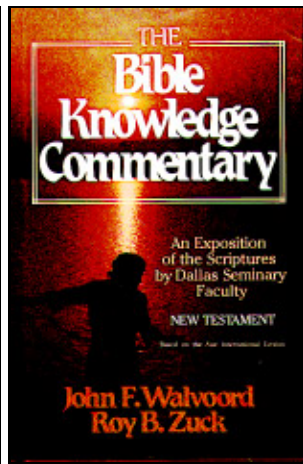
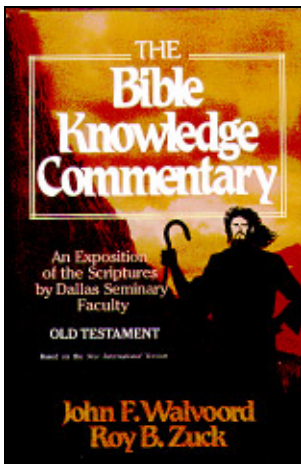
You need to decide on whether to survey the Bible textually or chronologically. A student may choose to study the books of the Bible in textual order (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, etc.) or in chronological order (in which case Isaiah would be interspersed with passages from 2 Kings and 2 Chronicles and would be followed by Nahum, Zephaniah, and then Jeremiah). If a student follows the order in the English text, then he should normally finish one book before going on to the next. However, if the student follows the chronological order, then the historical books (such as 1 & 2 Kings and 1 & 2 Chronicles) should be studied together and should be spread out over the study of the prophets who wrote during that period of time and over the psalms and other Biblical literature that were written at that time. If you choose the chronological approach, you will be required to get the book *The Daily Bible* listed below under the next step.

Step #2. Get the textbooks you will need for this course

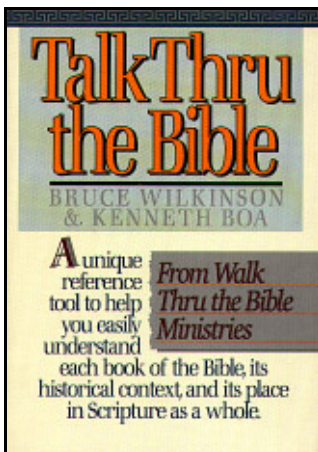
You will need to get the following books for your study of this course:



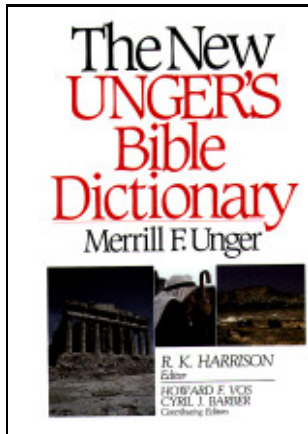
Bible. You may select any translation that you like, although we recommend that you keep your selection to one of the following: NASB, NIV, NKJV. It is important that you have a good translation written in the language of today. However, if you attend a church that uses a different translation, you may want to use that translation. But the key issue is not how good your translation is, but how well you know it and obey it.



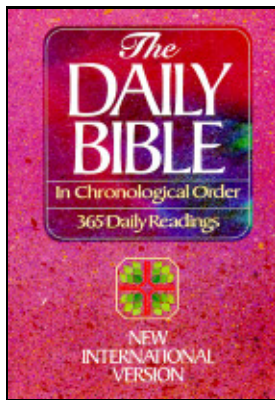
Bible Knowledge Commentary, edited by John F. Walvoord & Roy B. Zuck, in 2 volumes (published by Victory Books, Wheaton, Illinois, 1983). This is a very helpful commentary. You will be reading it along with your reading of the Bible. You are not expected to agree with everything it says, but it will help you to become better informed about what the Bible says and how leading evangelical scholars understand the Bible.



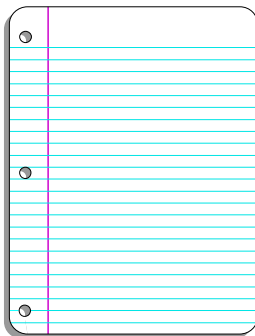
Talk Thru the Bible, by Bruce Wilkinson and Kenneth Boa (published by Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nashville, Tennessee, 1983). Since two of the objectives of your study are for you to be able to give the general background information of each book (Who wrote it? When did he write it? and What was the historical setting?) along with a general description of the book (its theme and general flow of thought), this book is especially helpful since it majors on giving that information in a clear, concise manner. When you are able to explain what each book of the Bible is about on this elementary survey level, you will be among an elite, small group of believers who can.



The New Unger's Bible Dictionary, from Moody Press (Chicago, Illinois, 1988). One of your primary objectives in this course is to be able to read each passage clearly and correctly, with the proper pronunciation and with a general understanding of what each object is and where each place is. *The New Unger's Bible Dictionary* gives proper pronunciation for each Biblical name, clear and simple descriptions of objects in the Bible, and lots of geographical and biographical information. Of course, there may be some words you come across that you don't know, but which are not special "Biblical" words. For these you will need a good English dictionary. Make a habit of looking up every word you are not really sure about.



The Daily Bible, edited by F. LaGard Smith (published by Harvest House Publishers, Eugene, Oregon, 1984). This book is optional unless you are doing the chronological approach. This Bible puts everything in chronological order. For example, it puts Psalm 3 right after 2 Samuel 16:5-14 since the two passages deal with the same events. In addition to this, parallel passages are combined into one text. The editor has also added helpful explanatory comments that help the reader follow what is going on in the passage, and he has added a simple, paragraph level outline to the text. Even if you do not follow the chronological approach in this course, this book is highly recommended.



A notebook. You will be taking lots of notes in your study. You will need to get a notebook in which you can keep the following items: 1) a log of your study (when you studied, how long you studied, and what you studied), 2) notes on what you had to look up (so you don't have to look it up again), 3) comments and observations on what you have studied (whether practical applications, insights into the passage, or critiques of what the commentary you are reading has said), and 4) your notes on the background, theme, and outline of each book of the Bible.

Step #3. Set up your study time and targets

Once you have selected your study approach (textual or chronological) and have your textbooks assembled, you need to set up a study schedule and make some realistic goals for completing your study. You will need to consider the following:

- 1) How much time will you spend each day or week in your study for this course, and when will that time be each day? (If you do not set the time aside and force yourself to keep to that schedule, you most probably will be irregular in your studies or even stop them altogether.)

- 2). When will you get together with your director of studies at DIBS? (Remember, you are expected to contact your study supervisor at DIBS at least once per week. Things will work best if you schedule a specific time and day for doing this.)
- 3). What date do you expect to reach your first study goal? (Your first goal is to finish the study of Genesis. When do you expect to have reached that goal? Keep that goal in front of you and plan a celebration when you have reached it. Then set the next goal.)

Doing the Study

As you do your study in this course, you will develop your own style and approach. More importantly, you will develop your skills in Bible study. The following steps will help you as you begin your study of Bible Survey.

Step #1. Pray about your study

Never begin your study of God's Word without first making sure your heart is right with Him. Ask God to help you in your study and to make you sensitive to His Word. And don't forget to pray at the end of your study and thank God for what you have learned and for the opportunity to do this study. You might also remember to pray for DIBS.

Step #2. Log your study

You need to make a note in your study log of when you did your study, how much time you spent, and what you studied. To do this, you will need to make a note at the beginning and at the end of each study session.

Step #3. Work at your study

Keep in mind the learning objectives of this course. Don't let yourself get sidetracked (or if you do, realize that you are doing something else other than studying for this course). The following section ("Learning the Material") summarizes the kinds of things you need to learn in this course and describes how to go about learning them.

Step #4. Report your study

At least once per week report to your study director at DIBS what you have been studying. If you have any questions or special comments, communicate these to him. This kind of accountability can be very helpful for keeping you on course.

Learning the Material

Your study supervisor/director at DIBS is there to help you with your studies. Whenever you have any questions about your study, do not hesitate to contact him. He may also supply you with supplementary material to help you in your study. He may require additional tasks of a student, especially when he sees that the student has a special need. Remember that the objective of Bible study is not merely academic, but spiritual. The director has the task of helping the student not only learn the material, but the task of getting him to value the

study and apply it. Since this is a more subjective matter, the teacher is given some freedom in tailoring the course to the spiritual as well as the academic needs of the student.

As you reach each of the following goals for each book of the Bible, you may wish to check them off on the “Study Check List” found on page 11.

Learn the background of the book

Begin by reading a brief introduction to the book you are studying in *Talk Thru the Bible*, followed by the introduction to the book in the *Bible Knowledge Commentary* (BKC). Try to reduce in writing the background information on the book to just a few sentences. As you work through the book, you will continue to refine this statement. The kinds of questions this statement should answer are these: Who wrote it? When was it written and with which period of time does it deal? To whom was it written? What major historical events and geographical settings are significant for understanding it?

For example, Nahum was written by a prophet in Judah sometime between 663-612 B.C. It describes the judgment on Nineveh, the capital of the Assyrians. They had captured the northern 10 tribes of Israel in 722 B.C. and nearly captured Jerusalem in 701 B.C. Nineveh was the dominant world power at that time. It was cruel, arrogant, and evil. Shortly after the prophecy, Nineveh was destroyed. This is more than enough information for the background statement. It would be sufficient to say the following for a background statement of Nahum: *Nahum, a prophet in Judah, prophesied the destruction of Nineveh, the oppressive world power of the time, shortly before that destruction took place in 612 B.C.*

Learn the main theme of the book

Before you begin reading the book, write out what the main theme of the book is and what the main points are that develop that theme in the outline. You will find this information in *Talk Thru the Bible* and in the introduction to the book in the BKC. As you study through the book, you will want to refine this thesis statement.

For example, one might say that the book of Joshua is the story of the entrance of Israel into the Promised Land, the conquest of the land, the settlement of the land, and the promise to be faithful in the land. That would suffice. It is important that this basic outline reflect your own observation (regardless of whether you initially got it somewhere else).

When you are done with the book, make sure you can state the main theme and the major outline points of the book from memory. The ability to remember the outline should come from personal familiarity with the book, not purely as a result of rote memory.

Learn to read the words of the book with accuracy and understanding

The procedure for this step and the next are to be followed paragraph by paragraph at the same time. Read each passage carefully. Make sure you know the proper pronunciation of each word. Use the pronunciation guide in *The New Unger's Bible Dictionary* (or some other source such as a study Bible). Be careful not to assume that, if someone else pronounces a word differently, he is necessarily wrong. Some words and names have more than one correct pronunciation. For example, the word *Amalekite* is correctly pronounced either \ə-mal'ə-kīt' or \am'ə-lə-kīt'. If you don't think you will remember the correct pronunciation or the definition of a word, make a note in your Bible that will help you remember the pronunciation or meaning the next time you read it. You should also make a note of it in your notebook. When it comes to geographical

terms, you don't have to know exactly where the places are, but you do need to have a general idea of where they are found on the map. If you don't know where they are, look them up in a Bible atlas or your Bible dictionary. It is assumed that when it comes to objects, such as animals, plants, minerals, as well as man-made items, you will have a general idea of what they are like. For example, at this level it may be enough to know that a sycamore is a tree, but it would be better to know that it produces figs and to be able to differentiate it from a pine or cedar tree. Also, if the color of some object is described by comparing it to a semi-precious stone, you need to know what that color is.

Learn the general message of the book

This step needs to be done paragraph by paragraph (or chapter by chapter) at the same time you do the previous step. Read the commentary (BKC) on the passage. The additional use of a Bible handbook and a good study Bible is also recommended. Make notes in the margin of your Bible and in your notebook on the points that you wouldn't otherwise be able to remember when you read the passage in the future. (Do not bother to make notes on things that seem obvious to you or that you know you will remember, unless you are preparing a study guide for others as described later). This notebook would be a good place to make a list of the words you have to look up. It can be a valuable study tool for helping others in their study.

Do not try to go into too much depth. While you should always feel free to delve more deeply into a passage, remember that the purpose of this course is to give you a general overview of the Bible. You will go into much greater depth in your study of the Bible in the courses *Bible Exegesis I* and *II*. So if you understand the main idea of the passage, but still don't understand everything in it, you should feel free to go on to the next passage. Beware of getting sidetracked or bogged down.

Finishing the Course

When you have finished doing your study this way for the whole Bible, you still have a few more things to do before you are done with the course.

Do a summary review of your notes

When you have finished studying the Bible on the survey level, you will need to review your notebook with the background information and the statements of the themes and major outline points of the books. Make sure you can give this information easily and accurately. Review it until it seems second nature. It is best to review the information you have gathered as you progress through your study. This way, by the time you finish with your study of the Bible, you will not have forgotten what you learned at the first, and your review time at the end will be cut to almost nothing. This frequent review also increases the likelihood that you will never forget the information you have worked hard to gather.

Take the final exam

When you are ready for it, you will be given a simple test. It will consist of writing out in order the names of all the books of the Bible (correct spelling is vital), writing out a simple background statement for each book, and writing out the theme and simple outline of the book (just the major points). You will be required to have the basic information correct for every book. While the quality of answers can vary from student to student and from book to book, the basic accuracy and sufficiency of the answers to this part of the

test must be 100% to pass. The student will be required to retake the text as many times as is necessary to get the answers right.

The test will also involve having you read some passages out loud to make sure you can read them with the correct pronunciation. You will be required to show general knowledge about geographical locations of Biblical sites (like, Where is Babylon?) and about objects mentioned in the text (like, What is an ox goad?). You will also be given a general knowledge Bible text of 150 questions. You will not need to get all of these questions correct, but it will help your study supervisor evaluate how well you have picked up some of the general and detailed information of the Bible. If you do not do well enough on this test, you will be required to do remedial study as designed by your study director.

Turn in your study log and notebook

You are to give evidence from your notebook and Bible that you have indeed done the study that is required. This will require that you turn in your study log and notebook.

Receiving Credit for the Course

When a student has finished his course work and turned it in for his study director's evaluation, his study director will review it. The study director may return it to the student for corrections or additional work to bring it up to the standards expected by DIBS. If this study director is someone outside of DIBS, then once he is satisfied with the work, he will send it to DIBS with his recommendation for approval.

If DIBS determines that the student's work still needs additional work, it will be sent back to the student so he may bring it up to the standards of DIBS.

Once DIBS determines that the student's work is satisfactory, the student will be sent a certificate showing that he has completed the course and received credit with DIBS for it.



Notice of right to change course requirements

DIBS reserves the right to interpret or change these course requirements as it deems necessary in order to maintain its academic excellence, Biblical faithfulness, and practical value for the students.

Finding the required texts

The following prices are those as of 9/96 from CBD. To order from CBD, call 1-508-977-5000. They will also charge you for shipping and handling, with rates (depending on the size of the order and the kind of delivery you select).

Book's author	Catalog #	Retail cost	Selling price
<i>Bible Knowledge Commentary</i>	#7800	\$76.98	\$39.90
<i>The New Unger's Bible Dictionary</i>	#90379	\$39.99	\$24.95
<i>Talk Thru the Bible</i>	#52865	\$29.99	\$17.95
<i>The Daily Bible</i> (NIV)	#7596	\$18.99	\$11.95

Special Situations

Students wanting to tutor other students

An optional task for the student is to develop a study guide which the student can use in tutoring other students. Remember that one of the objectives of DIBS is not only to teach the student, but to prepare him and give him the opportunity to teach others. Developing a study guide is an excellent way to help prepare the student to guide others. That study guide might include the kinds of notes that the student had to take in doing the study himself: definitions, pronunciations, explanations, and other kinds of observations. The student must type the study guide and turn in a copy of it for the school to keep. A sample study guide is given on page 12.

Students wishing to validate previous study

If a student has previously done some or all of the work required for this course, he may validate that work. This will require much less work than taking the course, but he will still need to do some work in order to verify that he has met the course objectives and to fill in any gaps in his study.

If the student has already read a commentary on a given book or passage (or if he has studied the book in a Bible class or even through expository messages), he does not need to read another commentary on it. But he does need to identify in his study log how he has met this aspect of the study requirement.

The student does need to be able to show that he knows the proper pronunciation and the meaning of all words in the text. He may find that it is best to quickly read through the text and make sure that he can do this.

The student will then have to take the final exam and turn in his study log (and study guide, if he has prepared one).

Bibliography of Additional Resources

In addition to the required books, the following books may be especially helpful in doing the study. These books are all optional, and the list is by no means complete. The student is encouraged to seek out additional resources, if he so desires.

Aharoni, Y. & M. Avi-Yonah. The Macmillan Bible Atlas. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1968.

An ideal book for seeing where everything happened. You'll want to get this book sooner or later.

Alexander, David & Patricia Alexander. Eerdmans' Handbook of the Bible. Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans, 1973.

An enjoyable and useful reference.

Hepper, F. Nigel. Baker Encyclopedia of Bible Plants. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1992.

A useful reference for seeing what the plants look like and how they were used.

The Illustrated Bible Dictionary. 3 vols. Wheaton: Tyndale House, 1980.

An excellent reference, though at times its interpretation of passages is less than reliable and is sometimes far from conservative.

Tenney, Merrill C., gen. ed. The Zondervan Pictorial Bible Dictionary. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1967.

A helpful reference tool.

Thompson, J. A. Handbook of Life in Bible Times. Downers Grove, Illinois: Inter-Varsity Press, 1986.

With lots of pictures and simple explanations, this book can give a lot of illumination.

Study Check List

The following table may be used to chart your progress on your survey of the Bible. Fill in the circles when you have completed each task. These tasks are defined above in greater detail. After the name of each book is the approximate number of hours it will take to complete the study of that book.

- You can state the general background of each book from memory.
- You can state the main theme and flow of thought of each book from memory.
- You understand and can correctly pronounce all the words in the book.
- You have read a general commentary on the book and have made explanatory notes to help you.

<i>Book</i>	<i>Hr.</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>C</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>Book</i>	<i>Hr.</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>C</i>	<i>D</i>
Genesis	21	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Nahum	1	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Exodus	17	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Habakkuk	1	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Leviticus	13	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Zephaniah	1	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Numbers	18	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Haggai	1	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Deuteronomy	15	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Zechariah	4	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Joshua	10	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Malachi	1	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Judges	10	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Matthew	14	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ruth	1	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Mark	9	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1 Samuel	13	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Luke	15	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2 Samuel	11	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	John	11	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1 Kings	13	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Acts	14	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2 Kings	13	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Romans	6	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1 Chronicles	12	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	1 Corinthians	6	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2 Chronicles	13	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	2 Corinthians	4	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ezra	4	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Galatians	2	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Nehemiah	6	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Ephesians	2	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Esther	3	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Philippians	1	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Job	12	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Colossians	1	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Psalms	31	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	1 Thessalonians	1	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Proverbs	11	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	2 Thessalonians	1	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ecclesiastes	3	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	1 Timothy	1	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Song of Solomon	2	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	2 Timothy	1	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Isaiah	24	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Titus	1	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Jeremiah	25	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Philemon	1	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lamentations	2	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Hebrews	5	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ezekiel	21	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	James	1	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Daniel	7	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	1 Peter	2	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Hosea	3	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	2 Peter	1	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Joel	2	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	1 John	2	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Amos	3	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	2 John	1	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Obadiah	1	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	3 John	1	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Jonah	1	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Jude	1	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Micah	2	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Revelation	7	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Sample Study Guide

In this section you will see first what elements are to go into a study guide and second a sample of such a guide. The examples deal with Genesis 1-2 in the Bible and the *Bible Knowledge Commentary*. If you are at the Bible Certificate level, you are not expected, however, to go into as much detail or have as many insights as are presented in this sample. Those working at higher-level degree-completion programs, on the other hand, will be expected to prepare study guides with the appropriate quality.

Read this article through carefully. Then try your best to incorporate all the kinds of elements of this study guide into your own guide or study notes. Use your creativity and make sure the guide reflects your own spiritual gifts and personality.

To help you understand what you need to include, imagine you are reading the Bible to a child of about 10 years of age. As you go through it, he asks you to explain what some words mean, like “cubit.” Then he also asks you to explain what some passages are talking about. Those are the kinds of things you will want to include in your study guide. If all you are doing is making your own notes, then you would only include those things that you had to look up and that you know you probably won’t remember later.

The Elements of a Study Guide

Overview of the elements

Your purpose in making a study guide is to show someone else (perhaps a future student of yours) three things: 1) **Directions**: what he is to do in his study, 2) **Definitions**: how to read the passage with understanding and the correct pronunciation, and 3) **Discussion**: what conclusions or observations you have made that will help him.

Of course, as you prepare your own study guide, you will find that you will benefit from it the most. And at this stage, that is the most important point. Your own study guide needs to reflect your own gifts and insights. Use your creativity to develop the guide.

The following notes illustrate one way that a study guide can be made. All references are to Genesis. “BKC” refers to the *Bible Knowledge Commentary*. The paragraph sign (¶) and the number after it refer to the paragraph in a given section of the BKC. For example, “BKC 2:8-10 ¶2” refers to the second paragraph in BKC under the entry for (Genesis) 2:8-10.

Explanation of the elements

There are three things you need to put into your guide:

1). DIRECTIONS

Clearly state what the student is to do. Tell him what to read in the commentary, in the Bible, and in the study guide. If he needs to look something up in a dictionary or map, say so. Examples:

- Read the BKC 1:1-2:25 along with the passage in the Bible and the comments in this study guide
- 2:14 “Tigris, Assyria, Euphrates” locate these on your Bible maps.

2). DEFINITIONS

If there is a word in the Bible or commentary that you think the student will probably not understand, define it. You want your guide to be “user friendly.” If there is a word which might be difficult to pronounce, give a pronunciation guide for it. The pronunciation key can be indicated either by using technical phonetic marks (in the samples below, these are placed between back-slashes: \), or by using non-technical hints such as spelling the word differently, but in a way that the reader will easily understand (in the samples below, these are placed between square brackets: [], and the accented syllable is capitalized). You should also reference each point. Examples:

- BKC 2:8-10 ¶2. “hubris” = exaggerated pride or self-confidence often resulting in retribution.
- 2:12 “bdellium” [DEL-ee-um] or \del’ē-əm\= a transparent yellow gum resin (sap) from various trees. It is similar to myrrh and was valued for perfume. Amber is the fossilized form of various kinds of resin. Both the gum and the fossilized form were highly valued during ancient times.
- 2:13 “Cush” = thought to be an area east of Mesopotamia from which Kassites descended. The KJV “Ethiopia” (the Hebrew word is “Cush”) is an attempt to identify “Cush” with the place in Africa with the same name. That is not impossible, but it is by no means certain.

3). DISCUSSION

If there is something that the commentator says (or doesn’t say) that you wish to comment on, do so. These comments could include things such as (1) an outline, (2) rebuttals against what the commentator says, or (3) notes about your own insights (these can be notes on interpretation as well as on application).

You don’t have to make many comments, but it is your opportunity to interact with the texts and to minister to the student. Beware of going into too much detail and depth with your comments. Remember, the goal is to get the student to be able to read the text with ease and understanding on a fairly simple level. After all, this is just a survey course. This example study guide probably goes into as much depth as you should try to go into. Examples:

- BKC 1:14 ¶2. “day” can be meaningful before this without the existence of the sun. God could have caused there to be day and night without the existence of a sun. Ross (the author of the BKC here) is guilty of the fallacy of insisting on a naturalistic explanation for a miracle. He tries to explain how something worked while creation was in process by how it worked once creation was finished.
- 2:18 The KJV “help meet” is misread by people who make it into a single term (“helpmeet”). The words are “a help (meet for him).” “Meet for him” means fit, fitting, or appropriate for him. Paraphrased it says, “a helper who is appropriate for him.” If I have a coat meet for me, I have a coat that is just right for me. But it would be goofy to call it a “coat meet.” It is just as uninformed to call a wife a “help meet.”

At the early stages of your Bible study, you may be better off just giving a summary statement of what a given section or chapter is about. For example:

- There are two ways that creation is presented: the first is chronological (1:1—2:3) and the second is topical, with special emphasis on the creation of man (2:4-25).

You will find examples of all three of these points in the sample study guide below. You may agree or disagree with the comments you find there. That’s fine. As you write your own study guide, you need to remember that directions and definitions are going to be fairly easy for you to write. The discussions are what call for your creativity and personal views. They can be difficult to write and can become too long.

Don't put down comments just for the sake of filling up space. Be careful not to go into too much detail or you will get bogged down in your study.

Example of a Study Guide for Genesis 1—2

Read the BKC 1:1—2:25 for Genesis along with the passage in the Bible and these comments.

I. *The creation* (1:1—2:25)

- There are two ways that creation is presented: the first is chronological (1:1—2:3) and the second is topical, with special emphasis on the creation of man (2:4-25).

A. *The seven days of creation* (1:1—2:3)

- According to Exodus 20:11 (“in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them”), everything in the universe was created in the first six days of creation by the direct, supernatural acts of God. The days were literal days, equivalent to our solar days of 24 hours, since that is how the original audience would have been expected to understand the terms.

1. *The first day (Sunday)* (1:1-5)

- BKC 1:1-2 ¶3. It is a gross exaggeration to say that this view cannot be sustained by the syntax or the vocabulary. The creation of the heavens and the earth were necessarily part of the first day of creation (Ex. 20:11). This also eliminates the possibility of there being a time-gap (as some have suggested) between verses 1 and 2.
- 1:1 “the beginning” = the beginning of creation, time being marked from the beginning of creation. This does not mean that time (which is inseparable from the sequence of events) did not exist before then. God was active before the “beginning” (see Eph. 1:4, John 17:5, 24). The concept that time had a beginning is a philosophical, not a Biblical, idea. The idea that time is a function of eternity is just as credible both Biblically and philosophically. Time is a measurement, not the thing being measured.
- 1:1 “heavens” included space (but not stars or planets, which were not created until the 4th day, acc. to Gen 1:14-19). The heavens would also include the supernatural heaven and the angelic beings, and probably also the form in which God manifests Himself and after which He created man.
- 1:3 “light” We do not know what the source of this light was, since the sun and stars did not yet exist (see the fourth day, Gen. 1:14-19).
- 1:5 “evening” can also be translated “night,” as it is in Job 7:4. There was no twilight at the beginning of the first day of creation.
- 1:5 “one day” There are at least three reasons to deny that the days were ages (as some allege): (1) a lexical reason: when the word “day” is used elsewhere in the Bible with a numerical adjective (a second day, third day) it always means a single calendar day; (2) a literary reason: the natural understanding of the passage is that it is referring to normal days, and it is in that sense that the original readers evidently understood it (cf. Ex. 20:8-11); (3) a theological reason: those who see the days as long ages say that the plants of day three, the aquatic life and birds of day five, and the land animals of day six underwent long ages during which endless cycles of life and death took place; yet the Bible teaches that death and decay

entered the world through the sin of Adam (Rom. 5:12, 8:20-21) and that before the sin of Adam everything was very good (Gen. 1:31).

2. *The second day (Monday)* (1:6-8)

3. *The third day (Tuesday)* (1:9-13)

4. *The fourth day (Wednesday)* (1:14-19)

- BKC 1:14 ¶2. “day” can be meaningful before this without the existence of the sun. God could have caused there to be day and night without the existence of a sun. Ross (the author of the BKC here) is guilty of the fallacy of insisting on a naturalistic explanation for a miracle. He tries to explain how something worked while creation was in process by how it worked once creation was finished.

5. *The fifth day (Thursday)* (1:20-23)

6. *The sixth day (Friday)* (1:24-31)

- BKC 1:24-31 ¶2. “image” It may also be that God created for Himself a bodily form so that He could be seen by His creation, and that man’s physical image is patterned after the likeness of God’s form. After all, God is frequently represented in Scripture as having a form. And while He may create a new form for each occasion, He may also have created one form in the beginning which He continually uses. This is not a contradiction to the statement in John 4:24 that God is spirit. For, any form He has or uses is still not Himself.
- 1:28 This is called the cultural mandate. It has never been rescinded, and it has much to say about population control, the treatment and care of the environment, and economic development.

7. *The seventh day (Saturday)* (2:1-3)

- BKC 2:1-3 ¶2. Heb. 4:8-10. The rest is not a present spiritual one. There is indeed a present spiritual rest which comes through walking by faith in Christ. However, Heb. 4 is speaking of a future, physical, millennial rest which is a reward for those who by faith are obedient.
- 2:1 “host” = army or multitude.
- 2:2 “to sanctify” something = to make it sacred.

B. The creation of Eden & Man (2:4-25)

- BKC 2:8-10 ¶2. “merism”? Can’t find it meaningfully defined in terms of its use here in any dictionary.
- BKC 2:8-10 ¶2. “hubris” = exaggerated pride or self-confidence often resulting in retribution.
- 2:11 “Pishon” [PIE-shawn] location unknown.
- 2:11 “Havilah” [HAV-i-lah] location unknown.
- 2:12 “bdellium” [DEL-ee-um] = a transparent yellow gum resin (sap) from various trees. It is similar to myrrh and was valued for perfume. Amber is the fossilized form of various kinds of resin. Both the gum and the fossilized form were highly valued during ancient times.
- 2:12 “onyx” = a translucent quartz in parallel layers of different colors, pale blue or gray with nearly waxlike luster.

-
- 2:13 “Gihon” = [GAI-hawn] location unknown.
 - 2:13 “Cush” = thought to be an area east of Mesopotamia from which Kassites descended. The KJV “Ethiopia” (the Hebrew word is “Cush”) is an attempt to identify “Cush” with the place in Africa with the same name. That is not impossible, but it is not probable.
 - 2:14 “Tigris, Assyria, Euphrates” — locate on Bible maps.
 - 2:14 “Hiddekel” [HID-e-cull] the Hebrew name for the Tigris found in the KJV.
 - 2:18 The KJV “help meet” is misread by people who make it into a single term (“helpmeet”). The words are “a help (meet for him).” “Meet for him” means fit, fitting, or appropriate for him. Paraphrased it says, “a helper who is appropriate for him.” If I have a coat meet for me, I have a coat that is just right for me. But it would be goofy to call it a “coat meet.” It is just as uninformed to call a wife a “help meet.”