EYEWITNESS BIBLE SERIES

Eternal Life
Episode 01
Thinking Differently

Study Guide

eyewitnessbible.org

Episode: Eternal Life Series No. 1
Narrator: Paul
Primary Scriptures: John 17:3
Story Summary: Paul discusses why the Bible is a challenging read for modern people
Location: Israel
Time: circa 50 BC
Suggested Memory Scriptures: John 17:3

The Bible is a "library" of sixty-six books. The books are compiled as the Old Testament and New Testament. The Old Testament was primarily written in Hebrew. It tells of the creation of the world, and the origin and history of the Hebrew people until about 400 BC. The New Testament was written in Greek and tells of Jesus, the early Church, and Christian teachings.

Jesus probably taught in Hebrew or Aramaic, but we don't have any of his original teachings in Hebrew, just translations of them into Greek. So, his teachings have been translated from Hebrew to Greek to a modern language, such as English or Spanish.

With just these few pieces of information, it is easy to see obvious challenges for readers and translators of modern Bibles. Many times, there is not an exact word or phrase to translate to. Sometimes, the original meaning of a Hebrew word is not known. And, when translating to and from multiple languages, it is easy for meaning to get lost in the translation.

The Bible was written to people with an "Eastern" worldview. When compared to many modern people with a "Western" worldview, they were less concerned with factual information and more concerned with the meaning of things. They were focused on community and less concerned with individual rights. They were more influenced by spiritual forces than by science.

For the first two decades after the death of Jesus, virtually all Christians were also practicing Jews. They were well grounded in the Old Testament and had a common understanding of the Scriptures and how they should be followed. They had a good understanding of God and his character. They understood the teachings of Jesus through the lens of the Old Testament. Starting in about 50 AD, Christianity started spreading more to the non-Jews. These people had little understanding of the Old Testament or the character of God. The writers of the New Testament and the leaders of the early church had to contend with teaching both groups while melding them into a unified church.

A last challenge awaits modern people intent on understanding the Bible. Modern cultures and societal norms are far different than they were in the various Biblical times and cultures. Imposing modern understandings on historical times can lead to erroneous understandings and conclusions.