

**THE BIG IDEA CURRICULUM**  
**How Do I Understand?**  
**Sermon 11.7.09**  
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**Small Group Study for Week of July 11-17**

**The Big Idea**

**There is a difference between having a simple faith and a simplistic faith. A simple faith as a famous theologian once said, is knowing that, “Jesus loves me this I know for the Bible tells me so.” A simplistic faith is when we are not willing to dig deep in the Word of God to gain an understanding of why we believe and practice what we do. When we find what we think are difficulties within the Bible what do we do? When we meet people who disagree with us, we should treat them courteously and present their arguments properly without ridicule.**

**Group Reads Genesis 14:13-16**

**Context – Abram’s (Abraham) nephew Lot, along with others, has been captured and Abram has gone to save them. Dan is a city that was not called Dan for centuries after this event. (Abraham had Isaac who had Jacob who had twelve sons, one of whom was Dan.)**

**Questions:**

1. Why do you think people would look at these verses and their first reaction would be to say, “this shows the Bible is false, you don’t need to follow it.”
2. How do you react to the idea that later Bible scribes changed the original towns name to Dan, because that was what it was now called? What type of changes would you not like scribes to make?

**Group Reads 2 Samuel 24:1-3 and 1Chronicles 21:1**

**Comment:** These two verses are describing the same event but were written at two very different times. Samuel was one of the first books of the Bible written, while Chronicles was one of the last books of the Old Testament written.

3. What was your initial reaction when you realised that one verse had God doing something and the next verse had Satan doing it? Did you react somewhat like people in question 1?

**Comment:** The word Devil is not mentioned in the Old Testament and Satan outside of Job is only mentioned four times. A principle of the Bible is that God reaches people where they are? Some say that the concept of the devil was not fully developed till quite late within the Old Testament but like the Jews today, the people had no trouble in saying God did good and bad. The explanation then would be that in Samuel, the idea of God doing evil was okay but in Chronicles people had learnt more. Notice how even Joab in Samuel knows what David is doing is wrong.

4. How comfortable are you with the above explanation? Why, why not?

5. What do you think of the concept that some ideas developed over time and didn't all appear as mature thoughts from day one. Eg slavery. Slavery is not condemned in the Bible but Wilberforce and others were able to use the Bible to show that slavery was wrong.
6. How does this principle help you in your understanding of such challenges as why did God in the Old Testament seem to want to kill so many people?
7. Many holy books are in existence today, the Koran, Bible etc. The Bible is unique in that it shows the so called, "holy," people warts and all. Can you give some examples and why is this relevant to us today?
8. Discuss the idea that the difference between Christianity and every other religion is as the hymn says, "my sin, Oh the bliss of this glorious thought, my sin not in part but the whole, was nailed to the cross and I bear it no more."