

INTRODUCTION TO THE BIBLE

This course is called "INTRODUCTION TO THE BIBLE." The course is designed to give the student a general knowledge about the Bible and the contents of the Bible. In the early lessons we will study about such things as who wrote the Bible, when it was written, and how we received the Bible. In most of the lessons we shall briefly study the individual books of the Bible. We will want to gain a general knowledge of the contents of each book of the Bible.

Since this course is an introduction to the whole Bible, we will not be studying each chapter and each verse of the Bible. That the student will do in courses on individual books of the Bible. Remember that this is an introduction course; we could also call it a general survey of the Bible.

You will have completed this course successfully if you learn how to make good use of your Bible for your own Bible study and for leading others into the Bible.

1. The name of this course is _____.
2. In the first lessons of this course we will study such things as _____
_____, _____, _____.
3. During most of the course we will study _____.
4. What other name could we give this course besides "Introduction To The Bible"?
_____.
5. Apart from a passing grade, I will show that I have successfully completed this course if
_____.

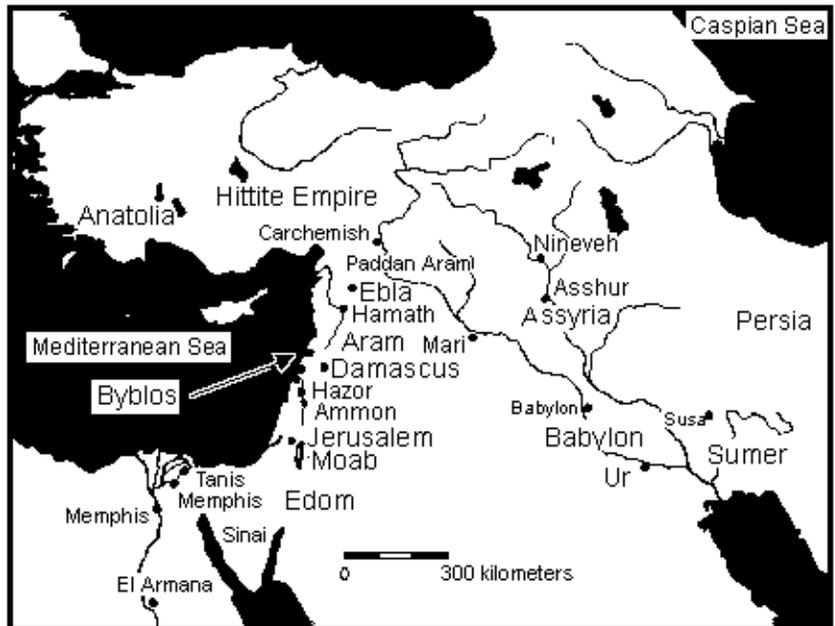
LESSON 1 - THE BOOK WE CALL THE BIBLE

In this lesson we will learn some general facts about the Bible. After you have carefully studied this lesson you should easily be able to answer these questions: How did the Bible get its name? What is the Bible? Who wrote the Bible? When was it written? What are the original languages of the Bible? How can the books of the Bible be divided? What are the Bible's chief teachings?

(PART A) NAMES FOR THE BIBLE

The word "Bible" comes originally from an ancient Phoenician city on the Mediterranean Sea in what is now the country of Lebanon. The name of the city was Byblos. The city of Byblos exported the paper on which ancient scrolls were written. "Biblia" became the Greek word for "books" or "scrolls." From the Greek word "biblia," comes our English word Bible. The Christians were the first people who cut up scrolls in strips and bound them together into the form of a book. They did this with the scrolls of the Old and New Testaments. Therefore, the Bible was the very first book and the name "The Book" or "Bible" became so closely associated with Scripture that the name has stuck ever since. The change from the use of scrolls to

The Ancient Near East



the use of one book with many pages bound together was both economical and also facilitated the study of the Bible. Recently it has been calculated that the change from scrolls to books resulted in a cost savings of 26%. Combined with the fact that passages could be found much more rapidly in a book, it is no wonder that the form of the book became the standard. Strictly speaking, our Bible is not just one book but many books put together in one volume. There are 66 books altogether in our Bible.

The Bible is also known by other names. We may call it the Scriptures or Holy Scripture. The word "scripture" comes from the Latin and refers to "writings." You may also hear the Bible called Holy Writ, the Book of Books, or the Word of God.

WHAT IS THE BIBLE? As these various names for the Bible show, the Bible is not just an ordinary book like all the other millions of books in the world. The Bible is unique; it is one of a kind. It is indeed the Book of Books. There is no other book like it. What is it that sets the Bible apart as a book without equals? It is the fact that God Himself is the real Author of the Bible. The Bible is the written word of God in which God reveals the true religion to us.

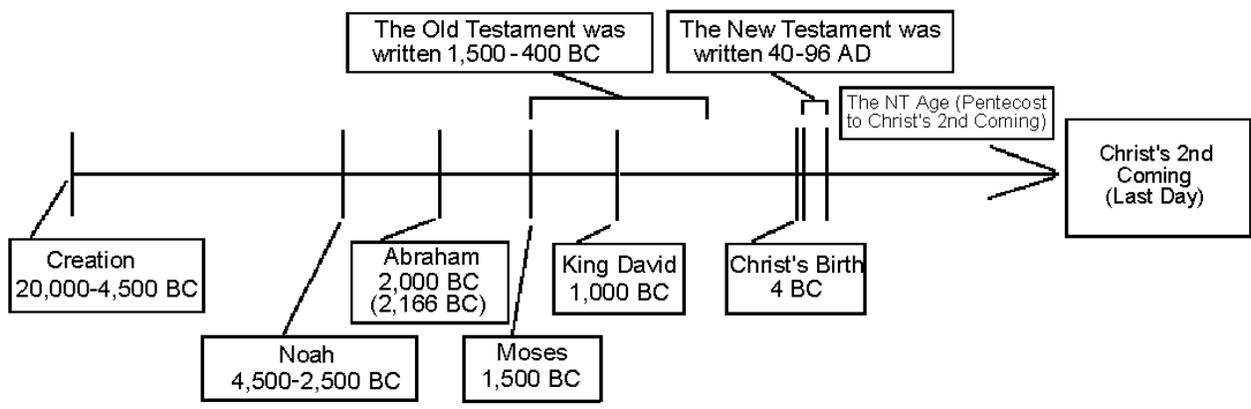
WHO WROTE THE BIBLE? We have already mentioned that God is the real Author of the Bible. However, God did not simply drop the Bible down from the heavens and deliver it to man. God made use of human writers. The Old Testament portion of the Bible was written by Moses and the Prophets. A prophet is someone who "speaks forth" on behalf of someone else. They do not say their own message, but the message of the one they represent. The Old Testament prophets were speaking and writing God's Words. The New Testament was written by the pens of the Evangelists and the Apostles. Evangelists were people who went about sharing the good news that Jesus Christ has taken away our sins and given us His righteousness. The apostles were especially selected from the disciples and appointed by Christ to spread the Word of God and prove that it was God's Word by doing special miracles. If one includes both the Old Testament and the New Testament, about 40 men were involved in writing the Bible.

When we ask the question, "Who wrote the Bible?", we really have to give two answers. First we will answer that God wrote the Bible; and then we will answer that God used humans to write the Bible.

Read the following Bible verses in your Bible and indicate whether each verse speaks about (1) God being the Bible's Author (2) the human authors of the Bible or (3) both the divine (Godly) and human authorship of the Bible:

- 2 Timothy 3:16 ___ 2 Peter 1:21 ___ 1 Thessalonians 2:13 ___ 2 Peter 3:15-16 ___
 Mark 7:10 ___ Mark 7:13 ___ 2 Samuel 23:1-2 ___ Daniel 9:2 ___

WHEN WAS THE BIBLE WRITTEN? Moses was the human author of the first book of the Bible, the Book of Genesis. Moses lived about 1,500 years before Christ. The Apostle John wrote the last book of the New Testament in about the year AD 96. Generally speaking, the books of the Bible were written between BC 1500 and AD 100. That means that the Bible was written over a period of about 1,600 years. That is the same amount of time as from the year 400 up to our time. Though the Bible was written over a period of many years, it is remarkable that the Bible speaks the same message throughout and never contradicts itself. This is certainly evidence of the divine authorship of the Bible.



WHY THE BIBLE WAS WRITTEN The Old Testament prophets wrote about the coming Savior under the Holy Spirit's direction (1 Pet 1:10-12, Acts 3:24) The New Testament apostles wrote about how Christ came and fulfilled His mission according to what God had revealed (Isa 45:24-26, Act 3:18). The whole Bible is centered around Christ (Luk 24:27, 44-48). God had the prophets write about the forgiveness of sins which would come through Jesus' sacrifice and about the good works that Jesus would do on our behalf so that we may have eternal life through believing in Jesus as our Savior (John 20:31). The Bible was written not only to give us faith in God, but to strengthen that faith so that we may remain in the faith till we die and go to be with God (1 Pet 2:2-3, 2 Pet 3:18). God wants all people to be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth (1 Tim 2:4). The only way a person can believe in God is through hearing the Gospel message (Rom 10:14,17) which itself creates faith (Jas 1:18, 2 Thess 2:13-14).

HOW THE BIBLE IS DIVIDED The Old Testament and the New Testament are the two general parts of the Bible. The Old Testament contains the 39 books that were written between the time of Moses (about BC 1500) and the time of Malachi (about BC 400). The New Testament contains the 27 books that were written at the time of Christ to about AD 100. You will notice that about 400 "silent years" come between the Old and New Testaments. (See the diagram on page 3.) God had said all that was necessary to await the coming of the Promised Savior. The two testaments of the Bible together contain 66 books. We now have all the information we need to await the second coming of Jesus Christ.

Some say that other books should be added to the books of the Bible and taught as being God's Word too. The Roman Catholic Church adds the books called the Apocrypha to the Bible. The Mormons add the Book of Mormon. However, the Bible contains all of what God wants us to know for salvation and life. Jesus never accepted the Apocryphal Books as coming from God. The Book of Mormon is clearly an invention of man. (Isaiah 8:20, Galatians 1:8, 2 Corinthians 11:14) There is no promise to us from God for any additional holy books like the books of the Bible. On the contrary, God has directed people of all ages to the books of the Bible for salvation and life. When the Bible was completed over the period of 1,600 years, the period of divinely given books was closed (Revelation 22:18-19).

THE LANGUAGES OF THE BIBLE The Old Testament portion of the Bible was written originally in the Hebrew language. This is the same language as is spoken by the Jews today in the country of Israel. A very small portion of the Old Testament was written in Aramaic, a language very similar to Hebrew. Hebrew and Aramaic were the languages commonly understood by the people living in the region of Israel during the Old Testament period. Below is a sample of the Hebrew language from Genesis 1:1.

בְּרֵאשִׁית בְּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת הָאָרֶץ:

The New Testament was written originally in the Greek language. A very few words of Aramaic are also found in the New Testament. Greek and Aramaic were commonly understood by people living in the area of Israel during the time of Jesus. Greek was commonly understood throughout the Roman Empire that existed at Jesus' time. Below is a sample of the Greek language from John 3:16.

Οὕτως γὰρ ἠγάπησεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν κόσμον, ὥστε τὸν υἱὸν τὸν μονογενή
ἔδωκεν, ἵνα πᾶς ὁ πιστεύων εἰς αὐτὸν μὴ ἀπόληται ἀλλ' ἔχη ζωὴν αἰώνιον.

Since both Hebrew and Greek were understood by many people at the time the Old and New Testaments were written, we can see that God communicated His word originally to people in languages that they commonly understood so that the great news of the Savior of the world could more easily be communicated.

ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS:

1. Where did the name "Bible" originally come from? _____
_____.
2. Tell in one sentence what the Bible is. _____
_____.
3. Who is the author of the whole Bible? _____.
4. Who are the human authors of the Old Testament? _____.
... of the New Testament? _____.
5. Over a period of how many years was the Bible written? _____.
6. Why should we not expect to receive additional holy books from God?
_____.
7. What are the two chief original languages of the Bible? OT _____.
NT _____.

(PART B)

To help us categorize the books of the Old Testament, the following divisions are helpful:

5	Genesis	5	Job	12	Hosea
LAW	Exodus	POETRY	Psalms	MINOR	Joel
	Leviticus		Proverbs	PROPHETS	Amos
	Numbers		Ecclesiastes		Obadiah
	Deuteronomy		Song of Solomon		Jonah
		5	Isaiah		Micah
	Joshua	MAJOR	Jeremiah		Nahum
	Judges	PROPHETS	Lamentations		Habakkuk
	Ruth		Ezekiel		Zephaniah
12	1 and 2 Samuel		Daniel		Haggai
HISTORY	1 and 2 Kings				Zechariah
	1 and 2 Chronicles				Malachi
	Ezra				
	Nehemiah				
	Esther				

To help us categorize the books of the New Testament, the following divisions are helpful:

4 BIOGRAPHY

Matthew
Mark
Luke
John

1 HISTORY

The Acts

13 PAULINE EPISTLES (Letters written by Paul)

Written to Churches:

Romans
1 and 2 Corinthians
Galatians
Ephesians
Philippians
Colossians
Thessalonians (2)

Written to Individuals:

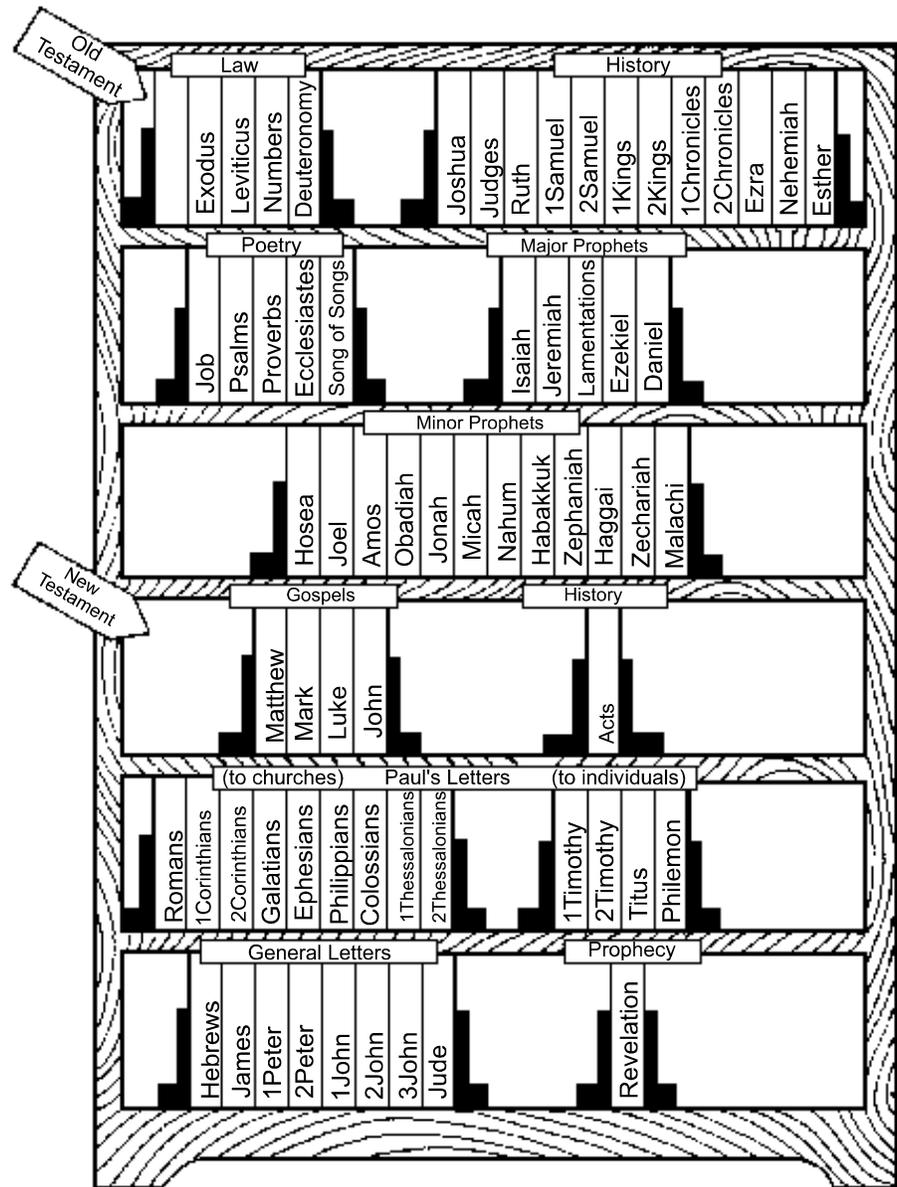
Timothy (2)
Titus
Philemon

8 GENERAL EPISTLES

Hebrews
James
Peter (2)
John (3)
Jude

1 PROPHECY

Revelation



CHAPTERS AND VERSES

The books of the Bible originally had no chapter and verse divisions.

The chapter divisions we use in our Bibles today were made by Stephen Langton, archbishop of Canterbury, who died in 1228. The verse divisions that we use today were done by Robert Stephanus, a printer in Paris, in 1551.

THE BIBLE'S TWO CHIEF DOCTRINES

Two doctrines stand out in the Bible like two mountain peaks. Those two doctrines are the LAW and the GOSPEL.

The LAW is that part of the Bible in which God tells man what to do, what not to do, and how to be. The chief purpose of the Law is to show us our sin (Romans 3:19-20, Romans 7:7). Both Old and New Testaments contain Law.

The GOSPEL is that part of the Bible that tells us the good news of our salvation in Jesus Christ. The word "gospel" is an old English word that means "good news." The purpose of the Gospel is to show us our Savior, bring us to faith in Him, and keep us in the saving faith (Luke 2:10-11, John 3:16, Col 2:13-14). Both the Old and New Testaments contain Gospel. (Luke 24:27,44)

The LAW: tells us what to do, what not to do, and how to be; it shows our sin; it shows we deserve God's eternal punishment because of the sins we have committed.

The GOSPEL: tells us the good news of our Savior Jesus Christ; gives us free salvation; keeps us in the faith; comforts us with God's unconditional love.

ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS:

1. There are _____ books in the OT, _____ books in the NT for a total of _____ books in the whole Bible.
2. List the 5 divisions we sometimes give to the OT books.

3. List the five divisions we can give to the NT books. _____

4. Who were the two men who gave us the chapter and verse divisions in our Bibles?

5. Write a brief definition for Law and Gospel.

The Law is _____

The Gospel is _____

Jesus said to His disciples, "This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms." (Luke 24:44)

ADDITIONAL ASSIGNMENT: Be able to recite and spell correctly the books of the Old Testament from Genesis to Esther.