

What is the Bible?

Chapter 1

Audio Lesson: Old Testament Survey lesson one



Objective: To understand what the Bible is and how it is organized.



The whole Bible was given to us by inspiration from God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives; it straightens us out and helps us to do what is right. It is God's way of making us well prepared at every point, fully equipped to do good to everyone.

—2 Timothy 3:16-17

The Holy Bible is actually a collection of books – sixty-six of them. The word “Bible” comes from the Latin word for “books,” and the word “holy” means “that which belongs to God” or “that which comes from God.” So the Holy Bible is literally a collection of books coming from God.

About forty men wrote the books of the Bible over a period of 1,500 years. They assure us that these are the words of God Himself, inspired by His Spirit and penned by human beings. The writers were “carried” by the Spirit as a boat is carried by the tide or the wind in its sails.

The sixty-six books of the Bible are arranged by type and message. The two main divisions are Old Testament and New Testament. The message of the Old Testament is Jesus is coming; will you believe in Him? The message of the New Testament is Jesus came; will you trust Him? The Old Testament tells how, through the coming of the redeemer, God will reconcile the “divorce” – the spiritual separation - between God and His creatures. The New Testament tells us how God reconciled the divorce: Jesus came and we must believe in Him and trust Him for our sins to be eternally forgiven and our relationship with a Holy God to be reconciled.

The Old Testament has five kinds of books: five books of Law, twelve books of History, five books of Poetry, four Major Prophets (one of them wrote two books), and twelve Minor Prophets.

The New Testament also has five kinds of books: four biographies of Jesus (the Gospels), one history book (Acts), thirteen epistles of Paul, eight general epistles, and one book of prophecy (Revelation).



The Bible

Choose one best answer unless instructed otherwise.

1. What do we mean when we call the Bible “holy”?
 - a. Only holy people should read it.
 - b. It comes from God.
 - c. It is too hard to understand.
 - d. Everyone who wrote it was perfect.

2. What does 2 Timothy 3:16-17 say about the Bible?
 - a. It is inspired by God.
 - b. It is useful for correction.
 - c. It teaches us righteousness.
 - d. It equips us for good works.
 - e. All of the above.

3. When people wrote the books of the Bible, where did their thoughts come from?
 - a. Their own creativity and understanding.
 - b. Tradition.
 - c. They did a lot of study research.
 - d. They were “carried” by the Holy Spirit of God. He breathed His thoughts into them.

4. True or false? Jesus is the living Word of God, and the Bible is the written Word of God.

The Old Testament

The Old Testament tells us how human beings rebelled (sinned) and why there is separation between God and us – all mankind. The divorce between God and men is the fundamental problem with which all of Scripture deals. The primary message of the Old Testament is Jesus is coming to reconcile us to God.

Law	History	Poetry	Prophecy
Genesis	Joshua	Job	<i>Major Prophets</i>
Exodus	Judges	Psalm	Isaiah
Leviticus	Ruth	Proverbs	Jeremiah
Numbers	1 Samuel	Ecclesiastes	Lamentations
Deuteronomy	2 Samuel	Song of Solomon	Ezekiel
	1 King		Daniel
	2 King		<i>Minor Prophets</i>
	1 Chronicles		Hosea
	2 Chronicles		Joel
	Ezra		Amos
	Nehemiah		Obadiah
	Esther		Jonah
			Micah
			Nahum
			Habakkuk
			Zephaniah
			Haggai
			Zechariah
			Malachi

5. True or false? The Old Testament is arranged chronologically – arranged in the order they were written.

6. True or false? The Old Testament books are divided into five different categories.

7. True or false? The main difference between the Major Prophets and the Minor Prophets is the length of their writings.

8. Draw a line from each of the following categories to the corresponding number of books it has:

- | | |
|-------------------|--------|
| a. Law | i. 5 |
| b. History | ii. 5 |
| c. Poetry | iii. 5 |
| d. Major Prophets | iv. 12 |
| e. Minor Prophets | v. 12 |

9. In which type of book did God first tell His people the difference between right and wrong?

(Law, History, Poetry, Major Prophets, Minor Prophets)

10. The primary message of the Old Testament is

- a. Man needs to obey God's laws and live a perfect life to be acceptable to a perfect God.
- b. God is love and will bless all men.
- c. Jesus is coming, and He is going to reconcile the separation between God and His creatures.
- d. Not important. Only the New Testament is important.

The New Testament

The New Testament tells us of the life of Jesus – His miracles, His teachings, and His crucifixion and resurrection. It also tells us how the Holy Spirit came into the lives of believers and what the early church was like. More than half of the New Testament consists of letters written to churches established after the Resurrection. Most of these letters were written by Paul.

History	Pauline Letters	General Letters	Prophecy
Matthew	Romans	Hebrews	Revelation
Mark	1 Corinthians	James	
Luke	2 Corinthians	1 Peter	
John	Galatians	2 Peter	
Acts	Ephesians	1 John	
	Philippians	2 John	
	Colossians	3 John	
	1 Thessalonians	Jude	
	2 Thessalonians		
	1 Timothy		
	2 Timothy		
	Titus		
	Philemon		

11. True or false? The primary message of the New Testament is that Jesus came.

12. True or false? The New Testament is the only part of the Bible about Jesus.

13. True or false? Biographies of Jesus in the Bible are called "Gospels."

14. Draw a line from each of the following categories to the corresponding number of books it has:

- | | |
|------------------------|--------|
| a. Biographies/Gospels | i. 1 |
| b. History | ii. 1 |
| c. Letters of Paul | iii. 4 |
| d. General letters | iv. 8 |
| e. Prophecy | v. 13 |

15. In which type of book is the story of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection found? _____
(Gospels, History, Letters of Paul, General letters, Prophecy)



In the message we heard, what story do the Old and New Testaments have in common? What does this tell you about the importance of this subject? Why is the study of this subject important to you?



Praise God for His Word and ask Him how to know and love Him more by studying His Word. Ask Him to help you understand what it says, what it means, and how to apply His Word to your life each day.



Going Deeper

1. Based on what Paul wrote to Timothy, what are some of the objectives of the Word of God?

2. How should the objectives in question #1 impact the way we value applying what we find in the Bible? _____

3. What kind of truth should we expect to find in the Bible? (Discuss John 17:17; 7:17) _____

4. When we find truth in the Bible, how important is it that we should know what to do with it? Why? _____

5. What is your own personal definition of inspiration as it applies to the Word of God? _____

6. How should you expect the Word of God be changing your life as you read it? _____

7. Is the purpose of God's Word to bless us or to make us a blessing? Explain. _____

8. What is the fundamental problem addressed by the Old Testament? _____

9. What is the Old Testament really all about? (Can you answer in three words?) _____

10. How should we approach the five different kinds of books in the Old Testament? _____

11. Why should we study Hebrew history? (Discuss 1 Corinthians 10:11) _____

12. Is there any history in the Law Books? Explain. _____

13. Imagine a nation with no laws at all. Describe what it would be like. _____

14. When you go to church, would you rather hear a Major or a Minor prophet? Why? Explain how they differ and how they are alike. _____

15. In two words, what is the New Testament really all about? _____

16. Why are the first four books of the New Testament called "Gospels"? In what ways are they more than biographies? _____

17. In what ways are the Letters of Paul different from the General Letters? _____

18. How does the book of Acts prepare us for our study of the New Testament letters? _____

19. Just as there is history in the Law Books, you will find history in the Gospels, the letters, and in Revelation. Should we approach these historical passages as we are instructed to approach history in the Old Testament? (1 Corinthians 10:11) Why or why not? _____

20. What is a key that Jesus gave us to all of the Scriptures? (Discuss John 5:39, 40) _____

21. What are the five kinds of books that are found in the New Testament? _____
