



INTRODUCTION TO THE BIBLE

What is this book called the Bible? It is a collection of books written by 40 different men over a period of 1,600 years (from about 1,500 B.C. to A.D. 100). These men did not write down their own wisdom or knowledge for others to learn. They were inspired by God to write the words they did.

"For prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit" (2 Peter 1:21).

Another verse tells us that: *"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work" (2 Timothy 3:16-17).*

Although these words were written down by men, the author of the message is God. The Bible reveals the truths that mankind needs to know. Because of the importance of the Bible's contents, God gave us warnings to make sure that we do not change the meaning of His revelation to us.

Part of God's law which Moses delivered to Israel stated: *"You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take anything from it, that you may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you" (Deuteronomy 4:2).*

It is important to know exactly what the Bible teaches; otherwise, we will not be able to know the will of God or be able to please Him. God will only reward those who have loved Him and done His will.

"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven" (Matthew 7:21).



WHICH GOD?

In today's world there are many gods; the question comes to mind: "What god are you talking about?" The apostle Paul faced this question 2,000 years ago when he came to the city of Athens. The city was *"given over to idols"* (Acts 17:16). Paul was preaching about Jesus (who is the subject of lesson two in this series). But since this teaching was strange to their ears, the people asked Paul to explain further.

"Men of Athens, I perceive that in all things you are very religious; for as I was passing through and considering the objects of your worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Therefore, the One whom you worship without knowing, Him I proclaim to you: God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands. Nor is He worshiped with men's hands, as though He needed anything, since He gives to all life, breath, and all things" (Acts 17:22-25).

The God of the Bible is not a local deity, or one among many; He is the God of the universe, the One who made all that you see on the earth and in the heavens. In fact, the very first verse of the very first book of the Bible declares this truth.

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Genesis 1:1). That same first chapter of Genesis reveals to us that God is plural. Not only do we read about the Spirit of God (Genesis 1:2), but we also read, *"Let Us make man in Our image"* (Genesis 1:26). In fact, there are three who share the essence of Deity: the Father, the Word (Jesus in the New Testament), and the Holy Spirit. These three are one. *"Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is One!"* (Deuteronomy 6:4).

The Bible also tells us that God is not like man. We are flesh and blood outwardly (our spirit residing within), but *"God is Spirit"* (John 4:24). Since we, the creation, are on a different level from God, our Creator, we may never fully understand His nature while we live in these physical bodies, but we can know His character and His will--because these things He has revealed to us in the Bible.



WHAT IS THE BIBLE?

The Bible is divided into parts. The Old Testament and the New Testament are the two main divisions. There are 39 Old Testament books and 27 New Testament books, making a total of 66 in all.

The Old Testament books were written from about 1,500 B.C. to 400 B.C. and are further divided into four main groups. The first group consists of five books written by Moses, called the Law. Genesis, the first of these, describes the creation of this world and provides a summary of important events during the first 2,000 years of man's existence, including a worldwide flood, which destroyed all but eight people.

After the flood man again rebelled against God; so He chose one man, Abraham, for a special purpose. His descendants (who came to be known as the nation of Israel) became God's special people. God gave his holy law to them through Moses. And they had the privilege of being the nation through whom Jesus would be born into this world. Jesus is the One who came to pay the price for our sins, so that we might have the opportunity to be forgiven of them.

As the book of Genesis closes, God's people are living in the land of Egypt. In Exodus we find that the Israelites have been made slaves; God sends Moses to free them. God then gives them His law and the way He wants them to worship (Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy).

The next twelve Old Testament books (Joshua through Esther) record the history of the nation of Israel during the next one thousand years. Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon, are described as "wisdom" literature. They are poetic in nature, consisting of songs, drama, and proverbs. The final seventeen books are written by the prophets who lived and taught during that thousand year period of history.

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The New Testament focuses our attention on Jesus, who came to redeem us from our sins. His earthly life is the subject of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. These books contain the account of His virgin birth, His teachings, His death on the cross for our sins, His burial in a tomb, and His resurrection from the dead.

The book of Acts begins with the good news being preached to mankind--that Jesus has saved us from our sins. Forgiveness is available! Furthermore, God puts all of those who are saved into the church, a body of believers, over which Jesus is the Head.

Romans through Jude explain the Christian system, including how we are to worship and serve God until the Second Coming of Christ, when this world ends and all are judged according to their works. The book of Revelation is prophetic; it assures us all that God cares for and rewards His faithful children despite the trials that we face in this life. All New Testament books were written between A.D. 40 and A.D. 100.



WHAT WE HAVE LEARNED



FILL IN THE BLANKS WITH THE PROPER ANSWER

1. The Bible is a collection of _____ books written down by about _____ men from _____ B.C. to A.D. _____.
2. Holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the _____.
3. All Scripture is given by _____ of God.
4. Only by knowing what the Bible teaches can we _____ God.
5. There is only one God who made the _____ and everything in it.
6. In the beginning God created the _____ and the _____.
7. The three who share the essence of Deity are _____, _____, _____.
8. The Old Testament contains _____ books; the New Testament has _____.
9. The first five books are called the _____, and they were written by _____.
10. God chose a man named _____ for a special purpose. His descendants would be called the nation of _____. Through that nation _____ would be born into the world.

MARK THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS TRUE OR FALSE

1. The writers of the Bible wrote down their own ideas rather than God's. _____
2. God does not care if man changes His word to suit himself. _____
3. Only the one who does the will of the Father pleases Him. _____
4. It does not matter what god we worship or serve. _____
5. The God of the universe does not need anything. _____
6. God is Spirit, not flesh and blood. _____
7. The Old Testament contains sections of history, poetry, and prophecy. _____
8. The New Testament is about Jesus; all books were written between A.D. 40 and 100. _____
9. Romans through Jude explain the Christian system. _____
10. The New Testament book of history is called Revelation. _____

Please use the space below for any questions or comments you may have concerning this study.

Please Note:

You can e-mail your answers to the above questions to mike@greatbarrchurchofchrist.com for marking and I will happily send you your mark and the next lesson in this series.

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