

HOME BIBLE STUDY

LESSON ONE

THE BIBLE -- ITS PARTS AND ARRANGEMENT

THE BIBLE, GOD'S WORD, IS OUR SOURCE OF AUTHORITY

The Bible is a book of books. The Greek word "βιβλία" means "books". In today's times, the word "bible" conveys the idea of authority. Terms, such as *The Fisherman's Bible* or *The Shooters' Bible*, express the idea of a book that contains all the information one would need to know about fishing or using guns. The Bible for this study consists of 66 books which were written by God's inspiration. The Bible is complete and final, the only standard of authority for mankind's relationship with God.

THE BIBLE IS COMPLETE AND SUFFICIENT

Beloved while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints

-- Jude verse 3

As his divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue. -- II Peter 1:3

We certainly get a picture of the Bible's authority, universal application, and completeness with the expressions, "*common salvation*", "*faith which was once for all delivered to the saints*", and "*all things that pertain to life and godliness*". Many more scriptures could be given, but it should be plain that we must be guided by the Bible and the Bible only in our efforts to please God.

GUIDANCE IS NECESSARY

Many want to do what God expects of them but are hindered by frustrations and confusion as they begin to read the Bible. Notice again a statement from the Bible.

So Philip ran to him, and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah, and said "Do you understand what you are reading?" and he said, "How can I unless someone guides me?" And he asked Philip to come up and sit with him. -- Acts 8:30-31

This text in the account of the Ethiopian eunuch's conversion demonstrates the need of a teacher. The eunuch did not know the scripture he was reading in Isaiah had been fulfilled. Philip began at the passage and taught to him Jesus. The eunuch then wanted to be baptized. Many today have difficulty understanding the Bible. Just a little guidance can sometimes open the door to a large amount of understanding.

SOME SCRIPTURES ARE DIFFICULT TO UNDERSTAND

...and account that the long-suffering of our Lord is salvation -- as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you, as in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which those who are untaught and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the scriptures.

-- II Peter 3: 15-16

Notice the unstable and the untaught are the ones who twist these and other passages of scripture *to their own destruction*. The more we learn about the Bible, the easier it becomes to understand even the most difficult passages of scripture.

THE BIBLE'S BOOKS ARE ARRANGED BY GROUPS

OLD TESTAMENT BOOKS

Books of Moses

Genesis
Exodus
Leviticus
Numbers
Deuteronomy

The first five books were written by Moses and contain the history of the beginning of mankind and the earth, the wilderness wanderings of the Israelites, the law of Moses, and the development of Israel as a nation. These books are sometimes called the *Books of Law*.

Books of History

Joshua
Judges
Ruth
I & II Samuel
I & II Kings
I & II Chronicles
Ezra
Nehemiah
Esther

These books tell about the conquering of the promised land and Israel's developing into and existence as a nation. As a nation, Israel divided into two kingdoms. Each kingdom fell due to sin and was carried away to serve other nations. A few were allowed to return to rebuild the temple at Jerusalem and the city walls. These books cover a period of history from approximately 1450 BC to 450BC.

Books of Poetry

Job
Psalms
Proverbs
Ecclesiastes
Song of Solomon

Filled with beauty, wisdom and inspiration, these books bring comfort and happiness to people now just as they must have to the people who read them when they were written. Job is often praised for his patience and Solomon for his wisdom. Many songs that we sing today contain phrases from the Psalms.

Books of Prophecy

Isaiah
Jeremiah
Lamentations
Ezekiel
Daniel
Hosea
Joel
Amos
Obadiah

Jonah
Micah
Nahum
Habakkuk
Zephaniah
Haggai
Zechariah
Malachi

These prophets lived and taught during the latter years of Israel's existence as a nation before their captivity. They warned the people that they should serve God and foretold of future events extending to 70 AD.

Gospels

Matthew
Mark
Luke
John

These books tell about Jesus and his life on earth. Having been written to establish belief in Christ, they show that Jesus fulfilled the Old Testament prophecies and establish him as the Son of God. These books are often referred to as *The Gospels*.

History

Acts

The book of Acts contains the early history of the only church Jesus ever built, the one for which he died.

Epistles

Romans
I & II Corinthians
Galatians
Ephesians
Philippians
Colossians
I & II Thessalonians
I & II Timothy
Titus
Philemon
Hebrews
James
I & II Peter
I, II, & III John
Jude

The *Epistles*, sometimes called *Letters*, were written to local churches and individual church members, telling them how to live and conduct themselves as churches of Christ, and how to live righteously as individual Christians.

Prophecy

Revelation

Revelation is the last book of prophecy. It is misunderstood by many who do not properly respect its symbolic language. It is indeed difficult to understand. Proper understanding is best achieved through knowledge and understanding of the rest of the Bible.

A SHORT ACCOUNT OF THE OLD TESTAMENT RECORD

The Bible begins with the creation of the universe, plants, animals and finally man. The first man Adam was given a suitable mate named Eve to be his wife. The story of Adam's fall caused by the sin of eating the forbidden fruit at his wife's encouragement is well known. in God's eyes. Noah built an ark at God's direction and when, according to God's plan, a great flood came, Noah, his wife, his three sons and their wives were allowed to enter the ark and by water were saved from the sinful world who perished in the flood. (I Peter 3:20)

After several generations, the population of the earth had grown and along with it, sin. The people of the earth became so wicked that God was sorry he had made man and decided that the world must be destroyed. Noah, however, was a righteous man who found grace Abraham follows several generations after Noah and was a great man of faith who traveled when God told him to travel without knowing where he was going. Abraham was promised that through him all nations of the

earth would be blessed. That promise was fulfilled in Christ Jesus, about 2000 years after Abraham died. Jacob, Abraham's grandson through Isaac, had his name changed to Israel by God. His descendants, the *Israelites*, became the nation chosen by God to be his special people. The 12 sons of Jacob became known as the 12 tribes of Israel.

Judah, one of Israel's sons was the father of the rulers of Israel. Hundreds of years later, Jesus came through Judah's seed to bless the world with the forgiveness of sins and set up a new kingdom. The kingdom of Christ is for all people of all nations.

The story of Joseph, another of Israel's sons, is very interesting. Joseph, after being sold as a slave, rises to be second in command to Pharaoh, the ruler of Egypt. During a famine Jacob, now named Israel, moves his family to Egypt, where, after Joseph's death, they become slaves. The book of **GENESIS** ends shortly after Joseph has helped his family move.

Approximately 400 years after Abraham, Moses is selected by God to lead His people out of Egypt. Moses gives the people a law from God. Because Moses gave the law it is sometimes called the *Law of Moses*. The Ten Commandments are a part of the *Law of Moses*.

The books of **EXODUS**, **LEVITICUS**, **NUMBERS**, and **DEUTERONOMY** contain the history of the *Israelites* being lead out of Egypt, the giving of the law, their wanderings in the wilderness, and the death of Moses. Joshua takes over as leader after Moses' death. The book of **JOSHUA** tells how the Israelites conquered the land of Canaan. They were to *drive out* the people of the land because they were so wicked. The book of **JUDGES** tells how the evil people of the land who were *not driven out* caused Israel to sin. Sin brought the Israelites into oppression from those wicked nations. When the Israelites repented, God sent Judges to deliver them. The oppression, followed by repentance, followed by deliverance happened many times.

The books of **RUTH** and **I & II SAMUEL** tell of David's lineage, how he became King, and how he and his descendants would rule instead of Saul, the first king of Israel. David is described as *a man after God's own heart*. The books of **I & II KINGS** and **I & II CHRONICLES** cover Israel's greatness during the reign of David's son, Solomon. They also tell about Israel's division into a north and south kingdom after Solomon's death. They conclude with the fall and foreign bondage of each kingdom. **EZRA** and **NEHEMIAH** complete the history by telling about the return of a remnant of the Southern kingdom or *Judah*, so named for the ruling and prevalent tribe. The Northern kingdom was not allowed to return. These books cover a period of about 600 years beginning just before 1000 BC.

ESTHER is a wonderful story that tells how a woman saved her nation. It shows God's protection for his people during the time of foreign captivity.

The prophets lived and wrote primarily during the period of Israel's fall and captivity. They foretold events and warned the people to repent. For the most part no one listened and the nation of Israel fell just as God had warned since the time of Moses.

Because you did not serve the Lord your God with joy and gladness of heart, for the abundance of all things, therefore you shall serve your enemies, whom the Lord will send against you, in hunger, in thirst, in nakedness, and in need of all things; and He will put a yoke of iron on your neck until he has destroyed you.

-- Deuteronomy 28:47-48

The **OLD TESTAMENT** history ends with warnings from the prophets to live righteously and the promise of a *Savior* for all the world. The **TIME CHART** on the next page will help put things in proper perspective.

TIME CHART

| | |
|--|-----------------------------|
| CREATION PHYSICAL PROPERTIES, EARTH, UNIVERSE, PLANTS, ANIMALS AND MAN ADAM AND EVE ARE PLACED IN THE GARDEN OF EDEN | In the Beginning |
| ADAM SINS DEATH COMES INTO THE WORLD FIRST PROPHECY OF CHRIST GENESIS 3:15 | |
| THE FLOOD NOAH - A RIGHTEOUS MAN AND HIS FAMILY ARE SAVED FROM THE SINFUL WORLD | 2340 BC |
| ABRAHAM FATHER OF THE FAITHFUL | 1900 BC |
| JACOB NAMED ISRAEL FATHER OF 12 SONS WHO BECOME THE 12 TRIBES OF ISRAEL--GOD'S CHOSEN PEOPLE | 1700 BC |
| EGYPTIAN BONDAGE PHARAOH OPPRESSES GOD'S PEOPLE | 1570 BC |
| MOSES DELIVERER, LAWGIVER, LEADS ISRAEL TO THE PROMISED LAND | 1450 BC |
| JUDGES GREAT LEADERS RAISED UP BY GOD DELIVER HIS PEOPLE FROM THEIR ENEMIES | 1200 BC |
| KINGS THE NATION DIVIDES INTO A NORTHERN KINGDOM AND A SOUTHERN KINGDOM | 900 BC |
| SIN AND BONDAGE NORTHERN KINGDOM SOUTHERN KINGDOM ASSYRIAN CAPTIVITY BABYLONIAN CAPTIVITY 734 BC 587 BC | |
| BABYLON FALLS TO MEDES & PERSIANS DANIEL PROPHECIES CONCERNING FUTURE KINGDOMS | 538 BC |
| A REMNANT RETURNS ZERUBBABEL, NEHEMIAH, EZRA, GUIDE THE PEOPLE TO REBUILD THE TEMPLE AND WALLS OF JERUSALEM AND RESTORE WORSHIP TO | 440 BC |

THE NEW TESTAMENT RECORD

In this section we want to tell the first century history as it is revealed in the New Testament. Included are some general considerations for understanding the New Testament.

Only two of the gospels, Matthew and Luke, give details about the birth and childhood of Jesus. The gospel of John begins an unknown length of time before Jesus' birth with the statement, "*in the beginning*". In John's gospel, Jesus is presented as the *WORD*.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. -- John 1:1

Jesus was born in Bethlehem just as the prophet Micah had foretold -- Micah 5:2. Joseph and Mary, his earthly parents, soon had to flee with Jesus to Egypt to escape the great slaughter in Bethlehem. When *wise* men, in their search for the one *born king of the Jews*, visited Herod, *he* became troubled at the announcement of another King. He then requested that the *wise* men, after visiting Jesus, return to tell him where Jesus could be found. The *wise* men, however, being warned in a dream departed the country another way. Herod then, in Bethlehem and all its districts, had all the male children, 2 years old and under put to death. This also had been foretold in Jeremiah 31:15. After Herod's death, Joseph, Mary, and Jesus came back to the land of Israel and lived in Nazareth. After the return from Egypt, little is known about the events in the childhood of Jesus. An exception in Luke's gospel records a visit to Jerusalem when Jesus was 12 years of age.

Jesus' period of public ministry lasted about three and a half years. In preparation for Jesus' work and the coming kingdom, John the baptizer preached a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. John's preaching is foretold in Isaiah 40, verse 3.

The teaching of Jesus is characterized by parables, very pointed direct statements to those in error and correct explanations of Old

Testament passages. Apostles were appointed who would continue the work after his death, resurrection and ascension into heaven. Jesus promised that the gates of *Hades* would not prevail against the establishment of his church, the promised kingdom. Correctly considering him a dangerous threat to their authority and teaching, the leaders of the Jewish religion eventually had him put to death. The death of Jesus had been foretold in Isaiah 53.

Jewish leaders were totally confounded by the resurrection of Jesus. The miracles used by the apostles to confirm their testimonies that Jesus had been raised from the dead were irrefutable. Old Testament prophecies added even greater proof to the apostles' teaching. Peter used the prophecy of David, recorded in Psalms 16, verses 8 through 11 to declare the resurrected Jesus as Lord and Christ in the first Gospel sermon -- Acts chapter 2. The second chapter of Acts, an important link in the New Testament, is a record of the beginning of the church or kingdom. Terms of membership were clearly laid out for the promised kingdom which was in existence and its gospel being preached. The fulfillment of many prophecies, concerning the kingdom and the forgiveness of sins -- Jeremiah 31:34, were explained by Peter as he, in this first sermon, declared the good news of Jesus. The book of Acts is a history of the spread of the gospel. It tells about many who responded to the *gospel*.

In the letters, or epistles, we have a record of Christians working together. Paul and others teach the members of the kingdom how to live godly lives and detail the operation of each local church.

Revelation, a book of prophecy, provided comfort for the persecuted Christians. Some believe it details the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. as foretold by the prophets and by Christ in Matthew chapter 24.

MATCHING (Select from the list on the right where you would find the book on the left.)

- | | | |
|------------------|-------|---------------------------------|
| 1. Judges | _____ | A -- Books of Moses |
| 2. Psalms | _____ | B -- Books of History |
| 3. I Chronicles | _____ | (Old Testament) |
| 4. I Timothy | _____ | C -- Books of Poetry |
| 5. Matthew | _____ | D -- Books of Prophecy |
| 6. Deuteronomy | _____ | E -- Gospels |
| 7. Isaiah | _____ | F -- History of Christ's church |
| 8. I Corinthians | _____ | G -- Epistles (Letters) |
| 9. Acts | _____ | H -- Prophecy |
| 10. Malachi | _____ | (New Testament) |
| 11. Revelation | _____ | |

NUMBER IN ORDER OF OCCURRENCE

- ___ Moses leads the Israelites out of Egypt
- ___ Abraham receives a promise
- ___ Christ is crucified
- ___ Joshua leads the people into the promised land
- ___ Christ teaches in parables
- ___ Beginning of the church
- ___ Noah builds an ark
- ___ Paul writes to Christians telling them how to live
- ___ David is king of Israel

TRUE OR FALSE

- ___ 1. After Noah built the ark, 8 people were saved by water.
- ___ 2. The promise to Abraham was fulfilled about 2000 years after Abraham died.
- ___ 3. The book of Judges tells how the nation of Israel was delivered many times.
- ___ 4. God expected Israel to do exactly as he said; they did not need to be happy about it.
- ___ 5. The southern kingdom of Israel was taken into captivity before the northern kingdom.
- ___ 6. Jacob was one of Israel's 13 children.
- ___ 7. The prophet Isaiah foretold the death of Jesus.
- ___ 8. Jewish leaders were looking forward to the death and resurrection of Jesus.