

LESSON 4: THE BIBLE

What is the "authority" in your life? Those who believe something must have a reason for their beliefs. Just as there are standards in the business world, in government, and in education - the Christian needs an absolute standard for his beliefs, his duties - indeed, his whole conduct.

Many people have as their authority their inner CONSCIENCE. "let your conscience be your guide!" they say. This sounds good, but according to Titus 1:15 the conscience may be _____; according to 1 Timothy 4:2 _____ and according to 1 Corinthians 8:7, _____. Other people, especially religious folk, have the 'CHURCH' or man-made CREEDS as their authority. Again, such standards are unreliable because man is involved. Colossians 2:8 warns us against _____ and _____. Look up and read Matthew 15:3,6,9)

For the Christian, only the BIBLE, the Word of God, is the unchanging authority for faith and practice.

This next study will teach you what the Bible is, why you can take it as your authority and how to use it as a child of God.

WHAT IS THE BIBLE?

A. The Bible is a collection of _____ (how many) books, divided into two major sections known as the ___AND THE_____.

B. Other names given to the Bible are:

1. The _____ Romans 10:17

2. The _____ 2 Timothy 3:15

C. The Books of the Bible are not arranged chronologically, but rather topically. Both testaments have their Books set in groups, as shown below.

(All new Christians experience difficulty at first in finding the Books of the Bible, especially during a preaching service. Don't be embarrassed to use the index in the front of your Bible or to accept the assistance of another Christian. The more you use your Bible, the sooner you will become familiar with the location of its Books.)

LAW - Genesis - Deuteronomy

HISTORY - Joshua - Esther

OLD TESTAMENT POETRY and WISDOM - Job - Song of Solomon

MAJOR - Isaiah-Daniel

PROPHECY

MINOR - Hosea-Malachi

From the close of the Old Testament (Malachi) to the birth of Jesus Christ (Matthew), over 400 years transpired. These years are called the "Silent Years."

GOSPELS - Matthew- John

HISTORY - Acts

PAULINE - Romans - Philemon

NEW TESTAMENT EPISTLES

GENERAL - Hebrews - Jude

PROPHECY - The Revelation

HOW DID WE RECEIVE THE BIBLE?

The Bible is not just a book. It is **THE BOOK** - different from any other book that has or will be written. The Bible is a **SUPERNATURAL BOOK** because of the way in which God gave it to mankind.

A. Look up and write out 2 Peter 1:21.

This verse of Scripture teaches us three vital facts concerning the Bible:

1. It wasn't made up by men. "...came not by the will of men."
2. Men of God wrote the Bible. "...holy men of God spake..."
3. God authored the Bible. "... as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

B. God used human writers to pen His Words.

1. God used about 40 different men from all walks of life to write down the Bible. This was accomplished over a period of some 1,600 years.
2. Most of the Old Testament was originally written in HEBREW. The New Testament was originally written in GREEK.

C. God authored the Bible.

A good way to illustrate this miracle is to consider how you write things down on paper. First, it is the **PEN** that actually does the writing - but it only writes as **YOU** move it. Secondly, the characteristics of the script will depend on the kind of pen or writing instrument you use. Write your name down on paper using a fine ball-point pen, a felt marking pen, and a paint brush. The words will be the same words, but they will have a different appearance!

1. The Holy Spirit moved the human writers of the Bible in such a way that they recorded the very words of God yet God used each writer's own literary style.
2. The way in which God gave us the Bible is called **INSPIRATION**.

Because the Bible is the **INSPIRED** Word of God, we can take it as the authority for all we believe and do. **BEWARE** of men who say, "The Bible **BECOMES** the Word of God" when it speaks to you personally. Look up Matthew 24:25 and 1 Corinthians 2:13. According to these passages, God has inspired the _____ (not just the ideas and thoughts). **BEWARE** of men who say "the Bible **CONTAINS THE** Words of God," meaning there are parts of it which are not God's Word. Look up 2 Timothy 3:16. According to this Scripture verse how much of the Bible is inspired? _____

b. Because the Bible is inspired of God, it is _____ from beginning to end. Psalm 119:160

DO WE HAVE THE BIBLE TODAY?

The original manuscripts of the Bible have long been lost. Does this mean we no longer have the pure Word of God?

What has God promised us concerning His Word?

Look up Psalm 12:6,7 and Matthew 24:35. Not only did God give us His Word, but He also promised to _____ it until the end of the world.

B. How has God preserved His Word?

God has providentially kept His Word from destruction and corruption in two ways:

1. Down through the centuries, the Lord has raised up men with a love for His Word to keep it from harm. Zealous Jewish scribes who loved God's Word kept the Scriptures available to all generations by meticulously copying the Word of God by hand. They were so careful in copying that they counted every word in each book and would destroy a finished copy if it did not contain the exact number of words. Satan has on numerous occasions attempted to remove the Bible from the face of the earth. Hellish decrees have seen the Bible banned, burned, banished, and battered by scornful men. But God's Word shall stand forever! Isaiah 40:8

2. The Hebrew text of the Old Testament has been faithfully preserved by fastidious Jewish scribes. It is called the Masoretic Text. The Greek text of the New Testament has been faithfully preserved in more than 3000 manuscripts which have been carefully examined by qualified Greek scholars. One of the sets of texts is called the Textus Receptus.

C. Do we need to know Hebrew and Greek to understand the Bible?

No! The preservation of God's Word extends to our English Bible. When you hold a copy of a reliable translation such as the King James Version, the New King James Version, or the New American Standard Version, you hold in your hands the word of God.

Beware of substituting a good translation of God's word with a paraphrase such as the Living Bible or a poor translation such as the Revised Standard Version.

If you don't already possess a Bible, your pastor recommends you purchase one. Make sure the type is readable.

WHY DO WE NEED THE BIBLE?

A. Look up 1 Peter 2:2, Matthew 4:4; 1 Corinthians 3:2; Hebrews 5:12,13; Psalm 19:10; and Jeremiah 15:16. According to these Scriptures, the Bible is our spiritual _____.

B. Look up Hebrews 4:12 and Ephesians 6:17. The Bible is our spiritual _____.

C. Look up Psalm 119:11. This verse says that Bible keeps us from _____.

D. Look up Psalm 119:105. According to this Scripture, the Bible is life's _____ (Use your own words.)

E. Look up 2 Timothy 3:16 again. The Bible is profitable for:

_____, (what is right)

_____, (what is not right)

_____, (how to get it right) and

_____, (how to keep it right).

F. Look up 1 Thessalonians 4:18 and Psalm 119:50. The Word of God is for our _____

WHAT SHOULD WE DO WITH THE BIBLE?

A. John 5:39; Acts 17:11

B. 2 Timothy 2:15

C. James 1:22

D. 1 Corinthians 2:13d

E. 2 Timothy 4:2

F. Psalm 1:2; Joshua 1:8

G. Colossians 3:16a

H. Psalm 119:11

You may want to write the following statement in your Bible as a wise reminder:

"THIS BOOK WILL KEEP ME FROM SIN - OR SIN WILL KEEP ME FROM THIS BOOK."

READING ASSIGNMENT:

Read through Psalm 119 (24 verses a day). This Psalm is called the "Word of God Chapter" and is the longest chapter in the Bible.

MEMORIZATION:

Try to memorize Psalm 119:9,11