

UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLE - LESSON 2

HOW DID THE BIBLE COME TO US?



The answer is clearly given in 2 Peter 1:21: "...men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God."

The 66 books which make up our Bible were written by men during the course of human history. As they wrote, they spoke of events which surrounded them and they used their own styles and forms of expressions. The Holy Spirit supervised and guided this process so that the end result was God's Book.

Some of the books of Scripture are historical accounts. Some, like the Psalms, are poetry. Others, like Paul's writings, are personal letters. The book of Revelation is the record of a vision seen by the Apostle John.

The writing of the Old Testament began about 1550 BC with the five books of Moses: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. Throughout Israel's history other books were written, recognized as scripture, and added to Israel's sacred writings. Jewish tradition holds that about 400 BC, a man named Ezra gathered together the writings we know as the Hebrew Bible. These writings, although arranged differently, contain the same material as the 39 books of our Old Testament.

The New Testament was written from about 45 AD to 95 AD. Many books are letters written to churches or pastors. These letters deal with specific problems in the churches and also contain much teaching about God, the way of salvation, the life of the Christian and life after death. The first four books of the New Testament, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, tell the story of the birth and earthly ministry of Jesus Christ.

Men did the writing, God directed their thoughts. The end result was our Bible--God's letter to mankind.

In the last lesson, we took a broad look at the content and teachings of the Old Testament. In this lesson we will take an overview of the New Testament.

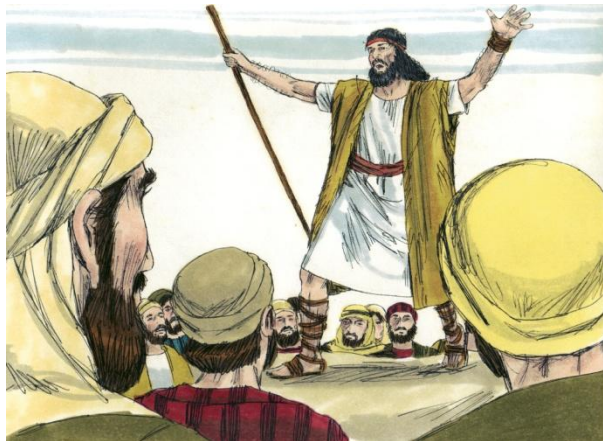
SECTION 2: THE NEW TESTAMENT



Note: The titles Old Testament and New Testament are not accurate designations of the two sections of the Bible which they are supposed to represent. As to the new covenant; this was not made until the death of Christ. "...He is the Mediator of the new testament [covenant] that by means of death ... they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance" (Hebrews 9:15). It was in the shadow of the cross, as our Lord communed with His disciples, that He said: "This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you" (Luke 22:20). This means that the greater part of the four gospel records actually covers old testament rather than new testament history and that our Lord and His disciples all lived under the old covenant at that time. Hereinafter we nevertheless use the terms *Old Testament* and *New Testament* in the accepted sense by way of accommodation.

MESSIAH COMES TO ISRAEL

The Old Testament closes about 425 BC with the book of Malachi. Within the pages of the Old Testament are many prophecies of an Anointed One, the Messiah who would come and redeem the nation. Four hundred years pass without a prophetic word from God. Then, as the New Testament begins, we see the birth of the forerunner, the one who comes to prepare the way of the Lord, and of Israel's Messiah, Jesus Christ.



1. (Matthew 1:1-25) Please read. _____ (check)
2. (vs. 18-19) Why did Joseph plan to send Mary away (divorce)?

3. (vs. 20) What stopped him from carrying out this plan?
_____.
4. (vs. 21-23) Two names for the child are given. List these two names along with the meaning or the reason for each.
1) _____;
2) _____.
5. Matthew gives the abbreviated version of Christ's birth.
For more detail please read Luke 1 and 2. ____ (check)
6. (Luke 1:5-23) Name the man to whom the angel spoke. _____.
What was this man's position? _____.
7. (Luke 1:13-17) Name the son who would be born to this couple. _____.
Give two facts concerning him.
1) _____;
2) _____.
8. (Luke 1:26-38) Name the angel who appeared and spoke to Mary. _____.
9. (Luke 1:32-33) What would her son be called according to these verses?
_____.
What position would He occupy? _____.

Note: This passage is important to our understanding of Jesus Christ. Here, He is clearly identified as the Messiah for whom Israel had long awaited. He was the Son of God and the son of David who would sit on the throne of Israel.

10. (Luke 1:34) What question did Mary ask? _____.
11. (vs. 35) What answer did Gabriel give?
_____.
12. (Luke 2:1-7) Why had Joseph and Mary traveled to Bethlehem?
_____.
13. (vs. 25-32) Name the man whom Joseph and Mary encountered when they took Jesus to the temple. _____.

THE EARTHLY MINISTRY OF JESUS

Scripture records the events surrounding the birth of Christ. However, except for an incident which happened when Christ was 12 (Luke 2:41-52), nothing is recorded of His childhood. This is deliberate on the part of God. The childhood of Christ had no bearing on His ministry as Messiah and Saviour. We do know from brief references during His earthly ministry that He was a carpenter and that He had younger brothers and sisters (Mark 6:3).

14. (Mark 6:3) Name the younger brothers of Jesus who are listed here.
-

When Jesus was about 30 years old He began His public ministry in Israel.



15. (Matthew 3) Please read. _____ (check)
16. (vs. 15) We know that Christ did not need to be baptized because of sin (2 Corinthians 5:21). According to Matthew 3:15, why was Jesus to be baptized?
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Note: Christ was a Jew. It was necessary for Him to fully identify with the Jews by fulfilling all legal requirements. The words in vs. 15 which are translated "to fulfill all righteousness" could be rendered "to complete every righteousness," i.e. every requirement of the Jewish law.

Water baptism for cleansing was well-known to the Jews. It was part of their law (Heb. 9:10; Ex. 30:17-21). Christ was born as a Jew. He lived under the Mosaic law and kept it faithfully (Galatians 4:4, Matt. 5:17-20).

If the Mosaic law required something of a Jew, as a Jew, Christ obeyed it. If John the Baptist required water baptism of the Jews, Christ would obey....not because He needed to demonstrate repentance, but because He needed to fulfill everything required of the Jews...i.e. to "fulfill all righteousness."

Christ had to be fully identified as a Jew in order to present Himself as Messiah. As a Jew He was circumcised (Luke 2:22), and He was baptized by John the Baptist for the same reason. He was a Jew and it was necessary that He fulfilled all Jewish requirements.

17. (Matthew 4:17) What message did Jesus preach as He ministered in Israel?

_____.

18. (John 4:25-26) Who did Jesus claim to be? _____.

19. (John 5:17-18) Why were the Jews seeking to kill Jesus?

_____.

20. (vs. 23) How are all men to regard Jesus?

_____.

21. (John 10:31-33) Why did the Jews seek to stone Jesus?

_____.

22. (Mark 14:61-62) What question did the High Priest ask Jesus?

_____.

What answer did Christ give? _____.

Note: Christ preached that the Kingdom promised to Israel from the Old Testament was "at hand." He claimed to be the Messiah. He claimed to be the Son of God, a title which means that He is equal with God. Christ proved His claims by the miracles which He performed.

23. (Matthew 4:23-24) What was Christ doing in addition to His preaching?

_____.

_____.

24. (John 10:25) What purpose did Jesus' miracles serve?

_____.

25. (John 20:30-31) Did Jesus perform more miracles than the ones recorded in scripture? ____.

Why were the miracles in the book of John written down?

_____.

What will happen to those who believe?

_____.

MANY JEWS BELIEVE BUT THE NATION REJECTS THE MESSIAH



26. (Matt. 16:13-16) Who does Peter say that Jesus is?

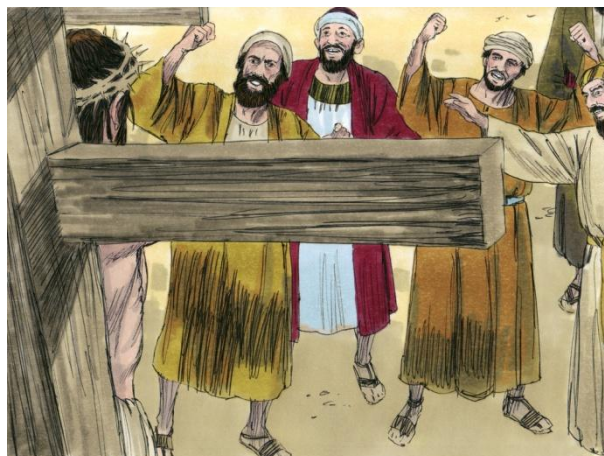
27. (Matt. 16:21) What does Jesus begin to teach His disciples?

28. (Matt. 17:1-8) This records the transfiguration of Jesus.

What did He instruct His disciples to do in vs. 9?

(vs. 12) What did Christ predict about Himself in the last part of the verse?

THE BETRAYAL AND CRUCIFIXION OF JESUS

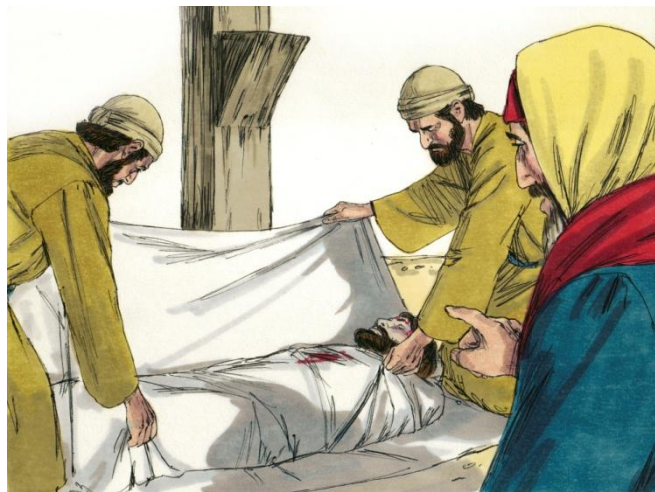


Each of the gospel writers tells the story of Christ's crucifixion. Many details overlap. Sometimes one writer includes information that another did not. To get all the details it is necessary to compare all four accounts.

Note: Remember that speed and distance are not as important as understanding and appreciation in studying scripture. For questions 29-32 think as you read.

29. (Matthew 26-27) Please read. _____ (check)
30. (Mark 14-15) Please read. _____ (check)
31. (Luke 22-23) Please read. _____ (check)
32. (John 18-19) Please read. _____ (check)

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF JESUS' DEATH



33. (John 19:30) Give the words which Jesus spoke just before He gave up His spirit.

Note: The Greek word used in this statement by Christ is one often used in business transactions. It has the idea of "completed," or "paid in full." At the moment when Jesus spoke, He knew that He had finished the work of redemption; He had completely paid for our sins. His work was finished.

34. (Romans 3:21-26) Please read. _____ (check)

(vs. 24-25) How are we justified before God?

Note: Propitiation means "satisfaction;" that is, the blood of Christ was the satisfaction of God's holy and just demand that a price must be paid for sin.

35. (Ephesians 1:7) What have we received through His blood?

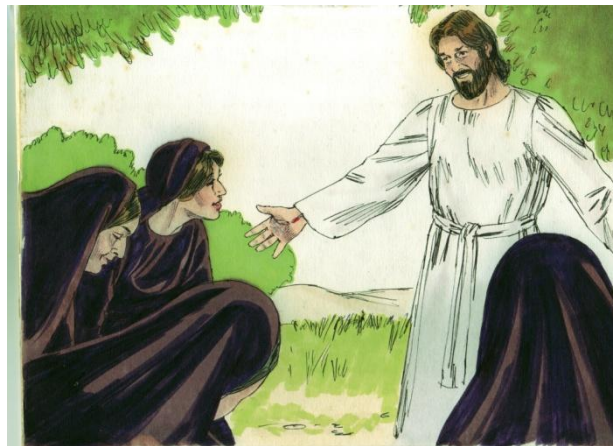
36. (2 Cor. 5:14-21) Please read. _____ (check)

(vs. 19) What was God doing in Christ?

(vs. 21) What did God make Christ to be?

(vs. 21) What is the benefit to us?

THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST



The resurrection of Jesus Christ proves that His claims are true and that He is worthy to be trusted as our Saviour. According to Romans 1:4, He was "declared to be the Son of God with power...by the resurrection from the dead...."

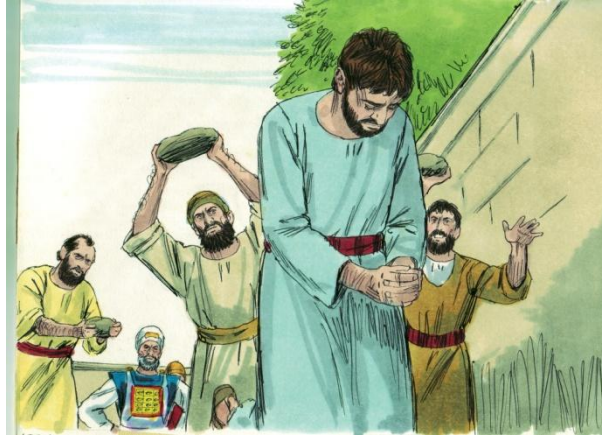
37. (Matt. 28) _____ (check) (Mark 16) _____ (check) (Luke 24) _____ (check)
(John 20-21) _____ (check) Please read.

38. (Acts 1:9-11) Refer to the account of Christ's ascension into heaven. According to the last part of verse 11, what would be the manner of Christ's return?

39. (Hebrews 1:1-4) Please read. _____ (check)

Where is Jesus Christ at this moment?

ISRAEL REJECTS THE MESSIAH AGAIN



After Christ ascended into heaven His Apostles chose a man named Matthias to replace Judas, who had betrayed Christ. This choice was directed by God so that there would again be twelve Apostles (Acts 1:12-26).

During the early chapters of Acts these men went once again to the nation of Israel and offered that nation yet another opportunity to believe in the Messiah. If the nation as a whole had repented and believed at this time, Christ would have returned and set up the Messianic Kingdom promised in the Old Testament (Acts 1:6; 3:19-21).

The nation did not believe, however, and God set them aside temporarily (Romans 11:11,12). Today, in the place of Israel, God is working through His church, the Body of Christ.

40. (Romans 11:25-27)

(vs. 25) What has happened to Israel?

(vs. 25) How long will this condition last?

(vs. 26) Then what will happen?

THE BODY OF CHRIST



The Body of Christ is different from the nation of Israel. Israel is now set aside from the direct purposes of God. The Messianic Kingdom is postponed until a future time of God's choosing. In Israel's place, God has raised up the Body of Christ. In the Body of Christ there is no distinction between Jew and Gentile. All men, women, and children of every nation and skin colour who believe in Jesus Christ alone as their personal Saviour from eternal death, become members of the Body of Christ.

41. (Colossians 1:23-29) Please read _____ (check)

(vs. 23) Who is speaking in this passage?

(vs. 18a, 24) What is he speaking about?

(vs. 25) What responsibility has this man been given?

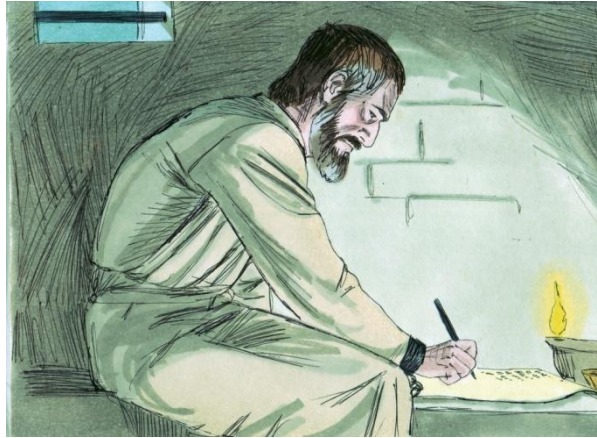
Note: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John tell the history of Christ's earthly ministry, His presentation to Israel as their Messiah and their rejection of Him. His death on the cross and His resurrection from the dead are also described.

In the early part of Acts, Peter and the other disciples present Israel with a final opportunity to receive their Messiah but again they reject Him and are temporarily set aside. In the latter part of Acts, the Apostle Paul becomes prominent. He is the man to whom God gave the responsibility for preaching the truths concerning the Body of Christ.

Paul's epistles for the Body of Christ are Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus, and Philemon.

All scripture is important to us and must be studied. But these books of the Bible apply in principle directly to believers in our day and must be studied most carefully.

THE RAPTURE OF THE BODY OF CHRIST



When the fullness of the Gentiles has come in, as Paul states in Romans 11:25, God will remove the Body of Christ from the world. This event is known as the "rapture."

42. (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18) _____ (check) (1 Corinthians 15:51-58) _____ (check)
(Philippians 3:17-21) _____ (check) Please read.

THE TRIBULATION PERIOD

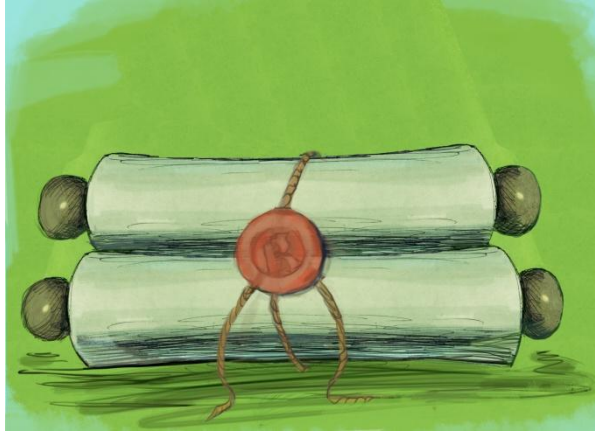


After the Body of Christ is taken out of the world (1 Thess. 5:9) and after the prophesied gap (see www.badnewsgoodnews.net/english/bible_course/lesson25.pdf), a time known as "the tribulation period" will begin. This time was prophesied in the Old Testament. The prophet Joel refers to it as the "great and terrible day of the LORD" (Joel 2:31). Jeremiah refers to it as the "time of Jacob's trouble" (Jer. 30:7). It is also the "70th week of Daniel" (Daniel 9:24-27). The tribulation period marks the resumption of God's dealings with Israel as a nation.

43. (Matthew Ch. 24) Please read. _____ (check)
Christ speaks to Israel concerning the tribulation period.

Note: Other major New Testament references to the tribulation period are: 1 Thess. 5:1-11, 2 Thess. 2:1-12 and especially the book of Revelation. The frightening and difficult pictures and events of Revelation 4-19 portray vividly the tribulation period.

THE SECOND COMING OF JESUS CHRIST, THE 1000 YEAR MESSIANIC KINGDOM AND BEYOND



Revelation 4-19 contains descriptions of events during the tribulation period. As we come to Revelation 19:11 and following we see the second coming of Jesus Christ. Revelation 20-22:21 gives the order of events after Christ's return including the 1000 year Kingdom, the final Judgment at the Great White Throne, and the eternal state, "a new heaven and a new earth" (Revelation 21:1).

Note: The second coming of Jesus Christ should not be confused with the rapture in which the Body of Christ is caught up to meet Christ in the air. The rapture will occur prior to the tribulation period. The second coming of Christ will occur at the end of the tribulation period when Christ will return to earth and establish His Messianic Kingdom.

44. (Revelation 19:11-21, 22:20) Please read. _____ (check)
45. (Revelation 20:11-15, Romans 8:1) A great judgment is to fall upon the unbelieving of all dispensations. Those whose names are not found in the book of life will be cast into the lake of fire.

Write out Romans 8:1 in your own words.

MEMORY VERSE FOR SECTION TWO IS 2 PETER 1:21

46. (2 Peter 1:21) Please write out the memory verse for this lesson.

Use the space below for any Questions or Comments:

Which version(s) of the Bible did you use to complete this Bible lesson:

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