

Lesson 1 - The Bible

Introduction

The word "Bible" comes from the Greek word biblia, which means "books." All of the books through which God has chosen to give a revelation to humanity are contained in the Bible. Several titles are given to the Bible such as "the Holy Scriptures"; "the word of God"; and "the scripture of truth."

There are 66 books in the Bible. Commonly called the Old Testament, the first portion of the Bible contains 39 books. The remaining 27 books are called the New Testament.

The Bible was written over a period of more than 1500 years by about 40 authors. Almost all of the Old Testament was originally written in Hebrew and the New Testament was written in Greek (a small portion of the Old Testament was written in Aramaic).

Revelation

The Bible is God's revelation to mankind. God reveals Himself and His will through the Bible. Paul, the apostle, writes, "How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery" (Ephesians 3:3). When writing about how he received the gospel, Paul further states, "For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ" (Galatians 1:12). God manifested himself and disclosed His will to Paul and the other writers of the books in the Bible.

How did God reveal Himself and His will to the writers of the books in the Bible? He spoke to Moses "face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend." Isaiah received a vision from the Lord. The disciples who followed Jesus Christ saw many signs and wonders. The Lord spoke to Paul from heaven. Thus, God revealed Himself and His will to the Bible writers in many different ways.

Inspiration

It is very important to understand the inspiration of the Bible. "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" (2 Timothy 3:16). Notice that it is not the writers who were inspired, but the words (the scripture). The word "inspiration" means that God had a divine influence on the Bible writers so that they always wrote the words chosen by God.

There are many false ideas concerning the inspiration of the Bible. Some teach that only certain parts of the Bible are inspired, but 2 Timothy 3:16 says "All scripture." Some say that the Bible writers were inspired in a natural way like many other great authors such as Shakespeare, Milton, Homer, Confucius, etc. However, the Bible plainly states that it was "given by inspiration of God" and is therefore a supernatural book. Still others teach that God gave men a spiritual viewpoint and that these men then wrote with their own words. However, those who teach this are seriously mistaken.

God did not merely give thoughts or ideas; He gave words. Thus every word written was the precise word that God willed to be written.

The proper understanding of the inspiration of the Bible is sometimes called "plenary, verbal inspiration." Plenary means "full" or "complete." The entire Bible was given by the inspiration of God. Verbal means "in words" or "by means of words." God gave specific words to the Bible writers, not just thoughts or ideas.

Review Questions Lesson 1 - The Bible

True or False

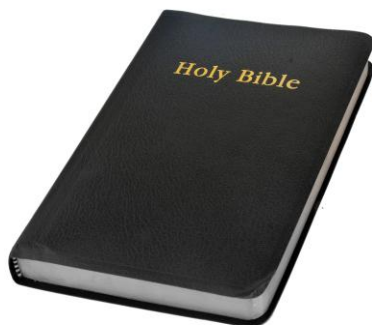
1. The statement "How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery" was written by Peter.
2. 2 Timothy 3:16 says, "All scripture is given by revelation of God."
3. The word "Bible" comes from a Greek word meaning "books."
4. Bible writers received God's thoughts and then wrote their own words.

Multiple Choice

5. Paul, the apostle, says that he received his gospel by:
 - a. reading the Old Testament
 - b. talking to Peter
 - c. the revelation of Jesus Christ
 - d. talking face to face with God
6. The word "inspiration" means:
 - a. God chose some of the words written by Bible writers
 - b. God chose every word written by the Bible writers
 - c. God motivated the Bible writers and gave them ideas
 - d. God enlightened the Bible writers so that they would know His thoughts
7. God's revelation came to humans:
 - a. through nature
 - b. through miracles
 - c. through visions
 - d. in many different ways

Fill in the Blanks

8. Another name for the Bible is the holy _____ .
9. _____ Scripture is given by the inspiration of God.
10. God gave _____ to the Bible writers, not just thoughts or ideas.



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Further Study

2 Timothy 3:16, Genesis 6:13; Exodus 14:1-2; Isaiah 2:1; Matthew 10:5-6; Romans 11:13
2 Peter 1:21, Titus 1:2, 2 Corinthians 2:17
Revelation 19:13, Hebrews 4:12; Hebrews 7:25, James 1:21; Acts 17:31, John 12:48
John 3:12; John 17:17; 2 Timothy 3:16,
Mark 12:35-36; Acts 1:16; Acts 28:25;
Hebrews 3:7.