

## CHAPTER 1

### THE BIBLE -- OUR AUTHORITY

To get the most out of this study, I have a few suggestions which will be helpful.

1. It is best to study together with your husband or wife, if you are married.
2. It is best not to have any distractions as you study. (such as T.V. or radio)
3. If you have pencil or pen write down questions which arise during the course of the study.
4. I believe the lesson will be self explanatory.

In the front of your Bible there is a listing of all of the books of the Bible. We will be making reference to these books as we progress through the study.

There should be a complete list of the books of the Old Testament and of the New Testament. If you have only a New Testament ask your facilitator for a Bible with both Testaments before the next study.

Your Bible may have the 66 books of the Bible listed alphabetically. Please turn to find the listing of the Old Testament books beginning with Genesis and ending with Malachi. Opposite the title of each book should be the page number where you can find that book. Use this aid to locate a book as we make referenced to it in our study.

Below the 39 Old Testament books, or on the next page, you should find the 27 New Testament books: beginning with Matthew and ending with Revelation, or The Revelation, or sometimes called The Apocalypse. Do not be concerned about the different titles of this book for the contents are the same.

There are 39 Old Testament books and 27 New Testament books making a total of 66 books in the Bible. Some Bibles will include 15 other books called the Apocryphal books. Most evangelical scholars do not accept these books to be in the Bible for at least three reasons: 1. Jesus never referred to these books as part of the Bible, 2. Jews of Jesus' day did not accept these books as part of the Bible, and 3. the early disciples did not accept these books as part of the Bible. Therefore, most evangelical scholars reject these as part of the Bible.

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It is now time to do your first self-check.  
Self Check Number 1

1. The Bible contains \_\_\_\_\_ books.
2. The Old Testament, beginning with Genesis and ending with Malachi contains \_\_\_\_\_ books.
3. The New Testament, beginning with Matthew and ending with Revelation, contains \_\_\_\_\_ books  
(see answers in Outline and Study Guide 2)

Now let's turn our attention to the Bible itself. The Bible claims to be the Word of God. However, it contains the words of men, of Satan, of angels and of God. But all of these words, regardless of their source, are given to demonstrate the truth of God to men. By way of illustration, turn to the first book, Matthew in the New Testament to the second chapter and verses 7 through 18. Read these verses noting the deceptive words of Herod the king and his encounter with the wise men who came to worship Jesus at his birth.

Note these facts:

1. Herod lied to the wise men. He stated that he wanted to worship the child Jesus, but in reality he wanted to kill the baby (verse 13). See what he did to all the babies under two years of age in verse 16. He killed all of them in the region of Bethlehem.
2. Notice that God fulfilled prophecy given in the Old Testament from the book of Jeremiah, chapter 31 and verse 15, which was written about 600 years before Jesus was born.
3. God used an ungodly man who did not know Bible prophecy to fulfill His written words.
4. God protected His beloved son, Jesus, even though an ungodly king tried to harm Him.

In this passage, we have the words on an ungodly man used to demonstrate two truths of God. The first truth is that God will fulfill the prophecies of the Bible. The second truth is that God will protect those are His. Read Psalms 91:10-15.

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Note the claims of the Bible. You will find the words such as "the word of the Lord came to him," "the word of the Lord," and "the word which I command you." The phrase "Thus saith the Lord" is used about two hundred times in the Old Testament. In the New Testament, we find passages which refer to the entirety of the Bible as inspired of God.

#### Reference Group Number 3

Genesis 15:1 & 4	2 Timothy 3:16
Exodus 4:28 & 30	Hebrews 1:1
Deuteronomy 4:2	2 Peter 1:21

Let's turn our attention to how we got our Bible. God used men to give us this book. We are not certain who wrote some of the books, but it is believed that about forty different men wrote books. They came from all walks of life. Some were shepherds, kings, farmers, peasants, princes, fishermen, prophets, and lawyers. These men did not write these books of the Bible in conjunction with one another. "They wrote independently of one another. In fact, they lived and wrote over a period of about fifteen hundred years. The book of Genesis was recorded by Moses about fourteen hundred years before Jesus was born. The book of Revelation was not completed until about one hundred years after Christ was born. Thus, we generally refer to the period between 1400 B.C. and 100 A.D. as the time of the Bible revelation. Obviously, if the men wrote over such a long period of time, they could not have known one another. Some of these men lived in the deserts and some lived in the hustle and bustle of the capitals of the world. Some lived during the time of Egyptian power and rule while others lived and wrote during the days of Babylonian or Roman power. These men from such varied backgrounds and historical settings all wrote about the most controversial subject in all the world, God, and were in complete agreement. This in itself is a miracle! A teacher cannot lecture to a class of forty students about life in a college dormitory and get all forty students to agree on what the teacher said.

If you took a survey of your neighborhood today, it would be doubtful you could find any who would agree as to who God is. In fact, you might find several neighbors who are contemporaries, who live in the same society, who belong to the same clubs or organizations, who actually would contradict one another when talking about God. But these men who wrote

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the Bible not only agreed with one another, they complimented each other in their doctrine of God. They were in absolute harmony.

There can only be one answer to this. There was really just one author. That was the Holy Spirit. You remember 2 Peter 1:21 states: "Holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit." One translation has this verse to read, "For prophecy never had its origin the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit." They were "carried along by the Holy Spirit." So it was the Holy Spirit who was speaking through these men.

I have often compared the Bible to an orchestra. Each man is like one of the players in a great orchestra. The conductor is the Holy Spirit. Each part, when played, is not the whole song. When one instrument, like the tuba, is played alone, it may not sound too good. But when all of the orchestra plays together under the direction of the conductor, there is one grand harmony. God took all of these men--Peter, a fisherman; David, a king; Nehemiah, a servant; Luke, a doctor; Moses, a shepherd; Paul, a lawyer, etc. and He used these men to give us one harmonious chord about God and His plan of redemption for men. The Bible is God's Word!

#### Do self check Number 2.

1. About how many men were used to write the Bible? \_\_\_\_\_
2. It took these men approximately \_\_\_\_\_ years to write the Bible.
3. The real author of the Bible is the \_\_\_\_\_.
4. The books of the Bible: (cross out the wrong answer.)
  - a) often contradict themselves.
  - b) are in complete harmony when they talk of God.

(answers in Outline and Study guide 2)

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Not only did the men who wrote the Bible agree on the subject of God, but these men touched almost every science today and were 100% correct on every subject in which modern science has facts. They touched upon astronomy, chemistry, geography, geology, hygiene, medicine, physics, surgery, and many other subjects with an infallible accuracy. The Bible was not written to be a scientific textbook. However, when it touches one of the sciences, you can be sure it is true.

For instance, the Black Death or Black Plague of the 14th century killed millions of Europeans. Every family was touched by the plague. there were two main types of the plague--pneumonic and bubonic. Both were highly contagious. It first broke out in England in august of 1348. It was carried by ship to Norway where it spread to the continent. It spread rapidly from the sick to the well. Contact with clothes or other articles which had been used by the infected induced the disease. By 1350, nearly twenty-five million people had died. In Norway alone, two-thirds of the population was affected.

Yet, in the Bible times, they had very contagious diseases. One of them was leprosy. Read Leviticus 13:38-52.

Notice in verse 45 the person was to cry out "unclean" so that no one would come close to him. Verse 46 states "he was to dwell alone" and he was to be "outside" the camp. This was for the protection of the other people. If he was healed of his condition, he could come back into his house and be restored to his former position. However, if the leprosy persisted, he was to dwell outside the camp and his clothing was to be burned. These precautions helped to hold down the spread of contagious diseases among the people of Israel. Remember, this was written 3,500 years ago. Just six hundred years ago, modern science started quarantining an individual with a contagious disease.

We might bring this even closer home. Less than two hundred years ago, on December 13, 1799, George Washington had a slight sore throat but walked out into the snow to mark a few trees he wished to have cut. Later that night, his voice was quite hoarse as he read to his wife, Martha. Later, the next morning, he awoke between two and three o'clock. He wa having difficulty breathing and his throat was bothering him a great deal. In the morning, after they had summoned a doctor (but before his arrival,

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Washington asked his secretary, Tobias Lear, to bleed him they bled about a half a pint before they stopped. When his doctor and friend, Doctor Craik, arrived he drew blood from Washington's throat for this was the blood closest to the infected area. He took more blood from Washington's arm also. Later, two more doctors arrived and after consultation, they drew more blood from the throat and arm. Altogether, it was estimated that they drained eighty-two ounces of blood from the General and first President before he died.

Although we are alarmed at this practice, it continued to be used as a means of cure for nearly fifty years after Washington's death.

Yet, in the Bible it states in Leviticus 17:11, "The life of the flesh is in the blood." The Bible was 3,500 years ahead of modern science. Every time the Bible touches a subject, it is scientifically accurate.

It should also be noted that the Bible does not have any of the foolish prescriptions for diseases that were common in other writings when the Bible was being written. In a medical book written in Egypt about the time when Moses lived, a prescription was given for people losing hair: "When it falls out, one remedy is to apply a mixture of six fats, namely, those of the horse, the hippopotamus, the crocodile, the cat, the snake, and the ibex. To strengthen it, anoint with the tooth of a donkey crushed in honey." If a person had an embedded splinter, they should apply worms' blood and donkey dung. Since dung is loaded the tetanus, it is little wonder that lockjaw killed so many who had splinters.

Some have complained that the Bible teaches that God created things out of nothing, whereas, modern biology states that things have evolved. However, it should be pointed out that evolution is a theory of the beginning of things and not an established fact. When a person approaches the origin of the earth and universe, he must start with an assumption that either God exists and can create or that there is no God; hence no Creator. It is scientifically impossible to prove evolution or creation for the history of the earth and its inhabitants cannot be made subject to scientific experimentation.

In Genesis chapter 1, we are told that God created the earth and the things we see all around us. It is interesting to note the order of creation is the same as evolutionists believe it to be. First, He created the lower form of life then the greater; finally culminating the creation with man.

It takes faith to believe God created the things which exist out of nothing. He simply spoke and it came into being. I admit I do not understand this.

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In Genesis chapter 1, it also states that everything begets "after its kind." Everything in our experience does just that. Never in all the experimentation of man has there been the reproduction of a new kind or species. There have been changes within a kind of animal or plant but never a change from one kind of creature to another. When a man plants corn, he gets corn. The most devout evolutionist would be surprised if he got anything else.

One man said to me, "I'd believe the Bible to be the Word of God if you can show me where it speaks about dinosaurs." I could not show him where it mentions dinosaurs because the Bible says nothing about them. As far as that goes, it doesn't mention kangaroos, elephants, or giraffes either. There is a reason for this. It is because kangaroos, elephants, giraffes and dinosaurs have nothing to do with God's plan of redemption,. The only animals mentioned by name are those which touch men who were in God's plan of redemption. You see, the Bible was not written to be a biology handbook, but it was written to give man a hope for eternal life and deliverance from his present problem of sin.

\*1. I would like to point out one final truth. The Bible was not written in English originally. The Old Testament, for the most part, was written in Hebrew and the New testament was written in Greek. I am often asked, "Why do we have so many different Bibles today?" All of these Bibles are efforts of men to bring out the original meaning of the Bible in a clearer way. You see, it is impossible to always find an exact English meaning for every Hebrew word. In fact, there are a few Greek and Hebrew for which we do not have any English equivalent. All we can do in such cases is to translate the word by a phrase in English that is as close as possible to the original Hebrew or Greek meaning.

I can safely say that it does not matter which translation you have. The basic message of the Bible comes through so many different ways that it is impossible to miss what God wants us to know.

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#### Do self check number 3

1. Was the Bible given to be a science text book? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Is the Bible scientifically accurate? \_\_\_\_\_
3. It takes \_\_\_\_\_ to believe God spoke and the worlds came into existence.
4. The Old Testament was originally written in the \_\_\_\_\_ language.
5. The New Testament was originally written in the \_\_\_\_\_ language.  
(answers in Outline and Study Guide 2)

During the course of these studies, I would like to have you read the Gospel of John. In some Bibles, it is entitled St. John. there are twenty-one chapters in the book. and it is not to be confused with the Epistles of John which are much shorter. I have included a brief outline in your Study Guide which I hope will be a help to you. Read the first five chapters of John's Gospel before the next study.

\* 2. In our next study, we want to answer the question of sin. What is sin? Why did God allow sin? How did it get started? Why didn't God just destroy the first people and start all over again? The answers to these questions are basic to your understanding of God's purpose for you.

Don't forget. If you have questions about this study or other questions about the Bible which we did not touch, be sure to write them down to ask your facilitator.

I would like to close our study on the Bible with a brief prayer:

"Heavenly Father, thank you for your divine revelation to man. Help me to understand its meaning and come to know You and your Son, Jesus Christ, in a better way. I thank You for the things we have learned. We praise You in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen."