

BIBLE TRAINING COURSE

Lesson I

September 18, 2023

**How We Got the Bible
Presented by**

**The Way, The Truth, and The Life Christian Center, Inc.
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9/18/23 LESSON I OUTLINE

I. How the Bible Came to Be

- A. Bible (*Biblios*)
- B. The Development of Writing
- C. The Advancement of Writing Material
 - 1. Stone
 - 2. Clay
 - 3. Wood
 - 4. Leather Scrolls
 - 5. Parchment
 - 6. Papyrus
 - 7. Papyrus Codex
 - 8. Vellum Codex

II. Languages of the Bible

- A. The Old Testament was written in the **Hebrew** language.
- B. During the exile, some portions of Scripture were written in **Aramaic**.

C. The New Testament was written in **Greek**.

III. Structure of the Old Testament

- A. Structure (TANAK)
 - 1. Law (Pentateuch, Torah)
 - 2. Prophets (Nevi'im)
 - 3. Writing (Ketuvim)
- B. Work of Scribes in the Old Testament

IV. Structure of the New Testament

- A. New Testament Divisions
 - 1. History
 - 2. Letters
 - 3. Prophecy
- B. Work of Scribes in the New Testament

V. Oral Tradition (The Art of Story Telling)

VI. How the Bible Came Together (Canonization)

VII. Q/A

INTRODUCTION

It is the Word of “life” *It came out of God’s mouth. It is God-breathed (2 Tim 3:16):*

“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:”

It is the Word of “life” because it contains truth regarding where life may be found—Life may be found in Christ. *John 1:4, In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.*

INTRODUCTION

(1 John 1:1) That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life;

It is the Word **for** life. We are to live by it.

Luke 11:28 “Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it.”

The Word of God.. How did we get this precious, powerful, insatiable, eternal Word in our hands today? That’s the question behind our lesson tonight.

I. How the Bible Came to Be in Our Hands

A. Bible / *Biblios*

The word itself derived from a Greek word *bíblōs* (βίβλος), meaning "book." So the Bible is, quite simply, *The Book*.

The Word Bible is not in the Bible; it is not a sacred Word. Placing Holy in front of it helps a little.

1. The Greek word *biblia* translated into English means
 - b. Books

B. The Development of Writing

The message of the Bible more than two thousand years ago. It was passed on by means of writing. That's why our study has to begin at the beginning—the history of writing.

2. **Why** must we begin our study by looking at the history of writing?

- a. Because the Bible was written long ago.
- b. Because the message of the Bible was passed on by means of writing.
- c. Both A and B

Background

It is believed that Adam and Eve lived around 4,000 B.C.

Then comes Abraham who lived sometime between 2100 BC to 1800 BC.

Abraham is the founding Father of the special relationship between God and people. He is the father of **Isaac**.

Isaac is the father of **Jacob**.

Jacob who name was changed to Israel, is the father of 12 sons and 1 daughter.

Joseph, Israel's eleventh son landed a job in the King's Court.

Background

Then there is Moses.

Also, during this period, they were called Hebrews—not Jews, not Israelites.

After 400 years, God calls them out of Egypt, which leads us to the first occurrence of biblical writing.

Oops! But first there was God.

1. God was the first writer of the Bible

The first mention of writing in the Bible is when God writes the Ten Commandments on tablets of Stone.

(Ex. 24:12) Now the LORD said to Moses, “Come up to Me on the mountain and remain there, and I will give you the stone tablets with the law and the commandment which I have written for their instruction.”

Exod 31:18) And when He had made an end of speaking with him on Mount Sinai, He gave Moses two tablets of the Testimony, tablets of stone, written with the finger of God

2. Moses

Moses is the second writer recorded in the Bible.

(Ex. 24:27) Then the Lord told Moses, “Write down these words, because I’m making a covenant with you and with Israel according to these words.”

(Deu. 31:19) And Moses wrote this law, and delivered it unto the priests the sons of Levi, which bare the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and unto all the elders of Israel.

([Exodus 34:27](#)). “And the LORD said to Moses, ‘Write these words, for in accordance with these words I have made a covenant with you and with Israel.’”

We know that Moses wrote the Law. The first 5 books of the Bible. It is also called the Pentateuch. It is also called the Torah.

Moses

6. True or False:

Critics believed that it was impossible for Moses to be the author of the first 5 books of the Bible because they believed there was no alphabetic script in use during the time of Moses.

a. True

3. Various Authors

After Moses. Joshua was the next writer ([Joshua 24:26](#)).

Prophets recorded their history and prophecies after Joshua ([Nehemiah 8:18](#)).

In this way over a period of 1500 years approximately, 28 to 40 writers completed the 39 books of the Old Testament. Malachi was the last to record in 516 BC. After Malachi, the next prophet was John the Baptist.

All these books were collected and assembled together into one volume by 400 BC, and the Jews had a complete "Bible" 300 years before Christ.

C. The Advancement of Writing Material

The first known system of writing is from Mesopotamia dated around 3000-4000 BC (6000+ years ago!). In Mesopotamia, the earliest form of writing was done in pictures and was called cuneiform.

4. Picture writing from Mesopotamia is known as

a. Cuneiform

5. Picture writing from Egypt is known as

b. Hieroglyphics

Hieroglyphics is a writing system invented in Egypt around 5000 years ago. It is the second oldest form of writing, originating a few hundred years after [cuneiform](#), which uses wedge-shaped characters and was devised by the Sumarians of Mesopotamia.

Forms of Media

During its history, the books of the Bible were written upon several different surfaces. We know that God and Moses wrote on stone tablets, which is the earliest writing material.

If the Bible had not been recorded upon suitable media that could be preserved and disseminated with relative ease, the revelation of the person and purpose of God would have been available and beneficial only to the people living at the time it was recorded.

However, because God desires that all mankind have access to His Word, the Bible was recorded on the most suitable and durable materials available.

1. Stone

Exod 34:1 And the LORD said unto Moses, Hew thee two tables of stone like unto the first: and I will write upon these tables the words that were in the first tables, which thou brakest.

And also Job.

Job says, Oh that my words were now written! oh that they were printed in a book! (Job 19:23) 24 That they were graven with an iron pen and lead in the rock for ever!

2. Clay

Clay was a writing material that was readily available in the Middle East in the area of the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers.

8. Which writing material was easily found near the Tigris and Euphrates rivers?

b. Clay

3. Wood

Wooden tableaus were used during this time as well; [Isaiah 30:8](#) (750 BC).
(Isaiah 30:8) Now go, write it before them on a table, and note it in a book, that it may be for the time to come for ever and ever:

4. Papyrus

Papyrus is one of the most ancient writing materials known to humans. It was used in Egypt three thousand years before the time of Christ. This surface was made from the papyrus plant which grew in swampy areas in the delta of the Nile River.

Papyrus is referred to in the Bible. We read the following in the Book of Job: “*Can papyrus grow up where there is no swamp? Can rushes grow tall without water?*” ([Job 8:11](#))

It is almost certain that the New Testament was written on papyrus because it was the most common writing material during the time that the New Testament was being written.

10. Which writing material was most commonly used during the time of the writing of the New Testament?

c. Papyrus

11. True or False:

It is most likely that the New Testament books were originally written on clay tablets.

b. False

5. Leather Scrolls

Leather scrolls had the advantage over papyrus in that they did not wear out as quickly. Of all the ancient materials used for writing, only papyrus and leather were capable of being adapted to a scroll format. The maximum length of a scroll was 40 feet.

12. What was the maximum length of a usable scroll? c. 40 feet

The Jewish Talmud specifically required that the Scriptures should be copied on the skins of animals, on leather. It is most certain that the Old Testament was written on leather. Rolls or Scrolls were made by sewing skins together that varied in length. The text was written in columns perpendicular to the roll. The rolls were 18-27 inches high and rolled on one or two sticks.

9. Which writing material is made from animal skins? d. Leather

6. Papyrus Codex

Around the 1st or 2nd century AD papyrus scrolls began to give way to what is known as the papyrus codex. A codex is an early form of what we know today as a book. For early Christians who copied and circulated the New Testament writings, the codex form clearly had great advantages.

No longer would it be necessary to carry around bulky scrolls

13. True or False:

The Bible is, in fact a library of books, and like a library, its books did not come into existence at one time or place.

a. True

7. Vellum Codex

Animal skins:

This development was important because many of New Testament manuscripts from the 4th to the 14th century were written on this type of material.

II. Languages of the Bible

A. Hebrew

Hebrew was the original language of God's chosen people, Abraham was called to leave his home to go and live in the land of Canaan where he acquired a new language, the language of Canaan, which eventually developed into Hebrew.

II. Languages of the Bible

B. Aramaic

Aramaic is a language related to Hebrew. At around 500 BC it was the language of the common man in Palestine. So parts of the OT is in Aramaic. There are about nine chapters in all, mostly from the books of Ezra and Daniel.

II. Languages of the Bible

C. Greek

Although the native language of Jesus was Aramaic, the books of the New Testament were written in Greek. A document written in Jerusalem, using the Greek language, could be understood as far west as Spain and as far south as the northern coast of Africa.

III. A. Structure of the Bible (Jewish

A. Structure of the Jewish Bible (Hebrew Bible)

The Jews has the same Old Testament as we do, but they organized it a little differently. They divided the Old Testament into three main sections:

They organized these in 24 books instead of our usual 39 books:

Pentateuch:

- Genesis to Deuteronomy (**five** books).

Prophets:

- Former (Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings) (**four** books).
- Latter (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, 12 minor) (**four** books)

Writings:

- Poetry/History (**eleven** books - 24 total

III. B. Structure (Protestants)

Pentateuch:

- Genesis to Deuteronomy (**five** books)

History:

- Joshua to Esther (twelve books)

Poetry:

- Job to Song of Solomon (**five** books)

Major Prophets:

- Isaiah to Daniel (five long books)

Minor Prophets:

- Hosea to Malachi (**12** short books)

Total 39 books

14. Which division of the books of the Old Testament is also known as the Pentateuch?

a. Law

15. Which division of the books of the Old Testament contains the book Song of Solomon?

c. Poetry

17. Which division of the books of the Old Testament contains two parts known as the Major and Minor Prophets?

d. Prophecy

B. Work of Early Scribes

The Scribes were officials at all levels of government. Scribes serve the King. But there were also Temple scribes who occupied themselves recording, teaching, and ruling on points of law.

IV. Structure of the New Testament

The New Testament contains 27 books which are also divided according to their contents. They are in a certain chronological sequence.

History: The first are 5 books of history,

Letters: Second are the 21 letters or books of apostolic teaching and third,

Prophecy: 1 book of prophecy.

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20. Which division of the books of the New Testament contains writings to different churches?

b. Letters

21. Why did Paul write letters to congregations in different places?

b. To warn and instruct the Church

22. Why was there a need for a written account of the life of Jesus?

- a. Eyewitnesses were growing fewer as time went by
- b. There was a demand for written narratives
- c. Both A and B

25. What does the book of Acts tell us about?

- c. The establishment of the church and its early progress

19. Which division of the books of the New Testament contains the story about the life of Christ?

- a. History

24. Paul wrote letters to churches in which of the following place(s)?

- a. Galatia
- b. Ephesus
- c. Corinth
- d. All of the above

18. Which division of the books of the New Testament contains only one book?

- c. Prophecy

The Work of New Testament Scribes

Before even starting to copy the scrolls or codices, the scribe was required by the Masoretes to go through an elaborate ceremony. In order to preserve the integrity of the text, the Masorete scribes counted all the letters in the Old Testament. They kept track of such arcane (mysterious) details as the middle verse of the Pentateuch (Leviticus 8:7). They also found the middle verse of the entire Hebrew Bible (Jeremiah 6:7). They were aware of the middle word of the whole Old Testament, as well as the middle word of each book. They also kept record of the middle letter and verse of each book. Taking it to the extreme, they also counted the number of times each Hebrew letter appeared in each book and counted the number of verses which contained all the letters of the Hebrew alphabet.

The Work of New Testament Scribes

All this was intended to produce exact copies of the Scriptures. Imagine doing all this letter and word counting, and using it to check every copy of the entire Old Testament. And they did not have word processors!

23. True or False: The first Christians had Bibles just like we have today.

b. False

V. Oral Tradition

In our study of writing and ancient writing materials we need to realize that when it comes to the Bible, God did not always communicate with man through the written word. In other words, God's communication with man pre-dates writing. In the beginning God communicated with man orally (Adam, Genesis 1:28; Noah, Genesis 6:13; Abraham, Genesis 17:1). Only later did God instruct Moses to begin recording His instructions.

V. Canonization

Canonization is man's recognition that what was written down and recorded by God-inspired men was in fact God's own speaking.

The word *canon* has two basic meanings in relation to the Scripture: (1) the list of books accepted as being the Holy Scripture, and (2) a rule or standard. The Bible is the rule or standard against which all Christian beliefs and practices are measured.

**Thank you for participating in our class.
We hope you learned a lot and hope to see
you in two weeks –**

VERSIONS AND TRANSLATIONS

October 2nd at 7:00 p.m.