



## **Living the Christian Life Bible Study**

### **Lesson 4a (NIV)**

## **Understanding the Bible as God's Word (Part 1 of 2)**

**Student's Name** \_\_\_\_\_ **Unit** \_\_\_\_\_

**Instructor** \_\_\_\_\_

**Comments** \_\_\_\_\_

## 1.0 Introduction

The Bible is our source of knowledge and understanding as we grow in our Christian faith. It tells us about God, ourselves, and our relationship to God; it defines sin and describes its cure; it tells us about heaven and hell, and eternal life; about God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; and it provides wisdom for living all aspects of our life. It is the most important book in the world. Rightly understanding the Bible is not only a matter of life and death on this earth, but of eternal life and death. If it is really this important to us, then we should understand its source, how we received it, and how to make the best use of it in our lives.

## 2.0 The Authorship of the Bible

2 Peter 1:20-21 - *Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. 21For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.*

Hebrews 1:1-2 - *In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, 2but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son,*

2 Timothy 3:16-17 - *All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, 17so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.*

**Inspiration** is the process God used to communicate His truth to mankind in the Bible. God so inspired men to write that they recorded exactly the words He wanted to say, while still maintaining their personalities and writing styles.

Using the above three scriptures, answer the following questions.

1. Who is the ultimate author of the Bible?

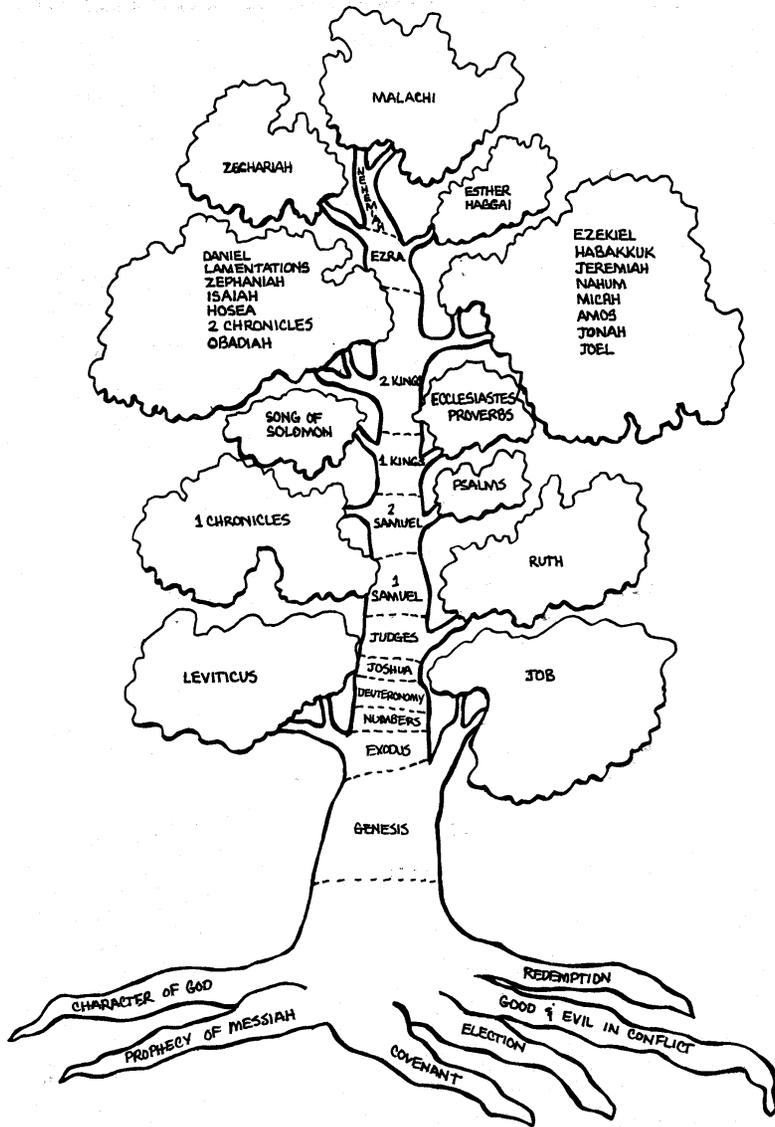
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2. What kind of men did He use to write the Bible?

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3. Who moved the prophets in their writing?

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## 2.0 The Authorship of the Bible (cont'd)

4. In addition to the prophets, how has God spoken to us?

\_\_\_\_\_

5. What will the Bible do for me?

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\_\_\_\_\_

## 3.0 The Characteristics of the Bible

Because the Bible comes from God, we would expect it to reflect His character. In Psalm 19, David writes of the nature of the scriptures. Read Psalm 19:7-10 and fill in the blanks below.

7 The law of the LORD is \_\_\_\_\_, reviving the soul.

The statutes of the LORD are \_\_\_\_\_, making wise the simple.

8 The precepts of the LORD are \_\_\_\_\_, giving joy to the heart.

The commands of the LORD are \_\_\_\_\_, giving light to the eyes.

9 The fear of the LORD is \_\_\_\_\_, enduring forever.

The ordinances of the LORD are \_\_\_\_\_, and altogether \_\_\_\_\_

10 They are more \_\_\_\_\_ than gold, than much pure gold;

they are \_\_\_\_\_, than honey, than honey from the comb.

**Inerrant** - the Bible, as originally written, is completely true. This means there are no contradictions within the Bible, that it is accurate regarding history, human nature, theology, science (given the limitations of scientific expression when it was written), and its own origins.

**Authoritative** - The Bible is of ultimate and final authority in our understanding of God, ourselves, the world around us, and our relationship to God. It also defines all matters of sin and ethical living. No other source is to be considered of equal authority.

#### 4.0 The Structure of the Bible

Additional evidence of the divine authorship of the Bible comes from the following facts. The first five books of the Bible were written by Moses about 1400 years before the birth of Jesus Christ. The oldest book of the Bible, Job, may have been written a few hundred years earlier. The last book of the Bible, Revelation, was written by the apostle John, nearly 100 years after the birth of Jesus. In between, 60 more books were written by about 40 other men. Yet in all these books, written over a period of 1500 years, there is a total harmony of thought, a complete absence of contradiction, and a divine progress of revelation. This could not have been achieved by any effort of mere men acting on their own.

The books of the Bible are divided into two major groups: the Old Testament and the New Testament. The Old Testament begins with the creation of the universe by God and ends about 400 years before the birth of Jesus Christ. The New Testament begins with the birth of Jesus Christ and ends with a prophetic look into the future - to the end of the world.

Within each Testament, the books are grouped by type, as shown in the illustration on page 4, which portrays all the books of the Bible in the order they appear in the Bible. In the Old Testament, within each group, the books are generally in chronological order. Putting the entire Old Testament into chronological order is a little more difficult, but is illustrated on page 5. The following is a description of the books on each shelf.

The Books of the Law, written by Moses, begin with creation and tell the history of the Jewish people from God's covenant with Abraham through the giving of the Law, and up to the time they are ready to enter the promise land.

The historical books of Israel tell of their entry into the promised land, their growth into a powerful nation, their defeat, exile, and restoration.

The books in the Poetry section are written in poetical format and include epic poetry, wisdom literature, and prayers. They were written at various times from Genesis to Nehemiah.

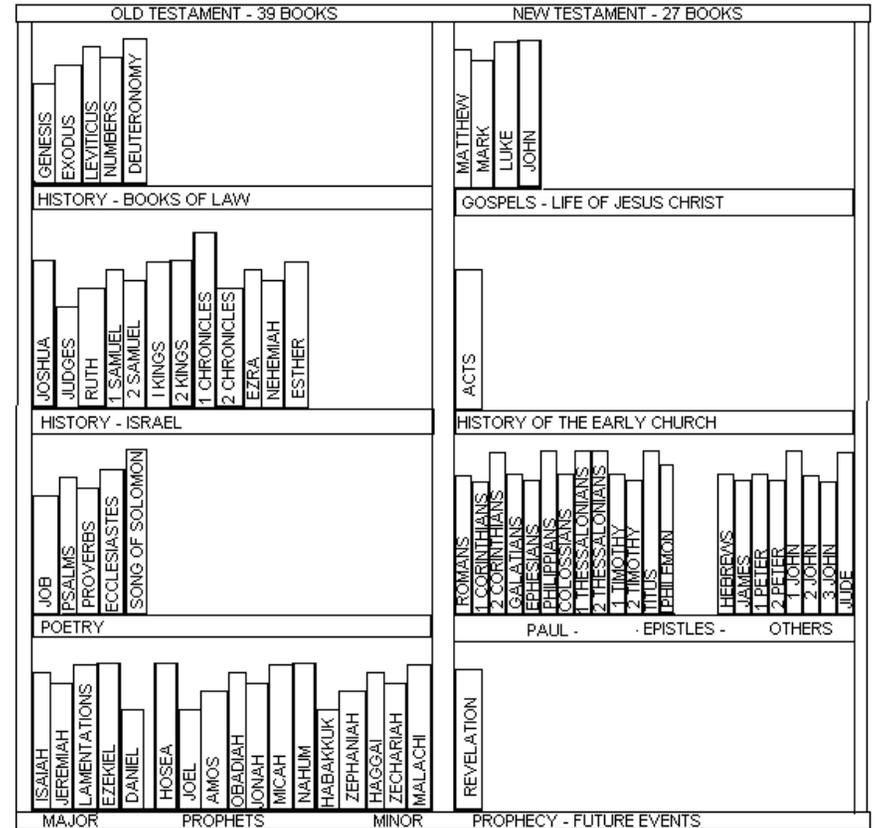
The prophets recorded God's messages to the people to return to Him, warnings to other nations, and prophecies of the future. They were written at various times from 1 Samuel through Nehemiah.

The Gospels are the records of Jesus Christ, including His birth, ministry, teaching, death, burial, and resurrection.

Acts records the first thirty years of the history of the Christian church.

Epistles are letters generally written by Apostles to churches and individuals, each dealing with specific church issues.

Revelation records a vision of the risen Christ given to the Apostle John, seven letters to churches from Christ, followed by a series of apocalyptic visions of the future.



#### 5.0 For Additional Study

1. For a description of how one writer of the Bible got his information, read Luke 1:1-4
2. For an interesting story about how one part of the Bible was written, destroyed, and preserved, read Jeremiah 36.