Lesson 1: The Bible Overview

---

2 Tim 3:16 *All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us* ***what is true*** *and* ***to make us realize what is wrong in our lives****. It* ***corrects us*** *when we are wrong and* ***teaches us to do what is right.***

Rev 22:18-19 *And I solemnly declare to everyone who reads this book: If anyone adds anything to what is written here, God shall add to him the plagues described in this book.* ***19*** *And if anyone subtracts any part of these prophecies, God shall take away his share in the Tree of Life, and in the Holy City just described.*

(See also Deuteronomy 4:1-2, and Proverbs 30:5-6)

The Bible

Divided into two testaments – **Old and New. Testament means "statement of belief."**

Each of these two testaments are divided into what are called books – the **Old has 39 books** and the **New has 27** making 66 in total. Each book has a name and is divided into chapters and then into verses.

The OT begins approximately just over 6000 years ago – 4000 years before the birth of Christ, which begins the NT.

The OT is essentially a story about God's love towards the nation of Israel and their cycle of rebellion against himself that He continually needed to forgive them for and rescue them from, as it led them into periods of capture or domination by neighbouring nations. God's relationship with the nation of Israel is a picture of the relationship that God desires to have with us today as individuals. He still desires that we place him as the first priority in our life, with the promise being then that we will experience the blessing of peace, health and prosperity in our inner soul. It is important to note that following Jesus is not like having a personal genie who will make our practical lives easy. In fact, scripture says in Psalm 34: 19 that the good man does not escape trouble BUT that the Lord helps him in each and every one.

The bible begins with the Pentateuch (the first five books) – Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy – all written by Moses. These books cover the stories of Creation, of Adam and Eve, of Noah and the flood, of Abraham and his wife Sarah, their son Isaac and his wife Rebekah, their twin sons Jacob and Esau – Jacob and his 2 wives (the sisters Leah and Rachel) and his 2 concubines, the 12 sons they had between the four of them, the betrayal of Jacob's second youngest son Joseph by his 10 older brothers – who sold him as a slave to Egypt, Joseph's rise to power in Egypt, Joseph's forgiveness towards his brothers and his family's eventual move to join him there.

Over 400 years later this same family has greatly multiplied but has now become slaves to the Egyptians, so God calls Moses to lead them to freedom to the land of Canaan, taking them through the Red Sea, giving them the Ten Commandments and other practical laws to live by.

This original group of Israelites, comprised of twelve tribes who were descendants of the twelve brothers, fail to believe that God is able to take them into Canaan however, and end up dying in the desert, being replaced by their children.

From here, the OT details stories of how God journeys with the now grown children to the beautiful land of Canaan, led by Joshua, as Moses has since died, and gradually settling them there, displacing the previous nations. God blesses the nation of Israel greatly and only asks that they worship him first, but they continually fail – choosing instead to worship the man-made gods of the neighbouring countries around them, as well as trusting in their own strength rather than in God. God gives them multiple warnings though**,** and multiple experiences of the consequences of choosing other gods, by allowing them to be captured or overpowered by neighbouring countries until they cry out in repentance. In those times He would forgive them, rescue them through the help of **judges**, and set them free again. The individual story of Ruth happens within this period.

Then his people decide that instead of having God as their Chief in Command they want a King like other nations and so God gives them King Saul, then King David (who wrote Psalms) and then King Solomon (who wrote Proverbs, Song of Solomon and Ecclesiastes). After that Israel divides into two kingdoms – Israel (capital Samaria) and Judah (capital Jerusalem). A long period of predominantly evil kings rule both kingdoms (detailed in 1 & 2 Kings and 1 & 2 Chronicles) with many **prophets** again sent by God to warn the people to repent – but with mostly all warnings ignored.

So finally, around 721 BC, Israel firstly is conquered by Assyria and taken into captivity, and then Judah, around 587 BC is conquered by Babylon and taken into captivity. The stories of Daniel and Esther occur during these times of exile. Then, after 70 years God allows those who are still alive in captivity to return to Israel and help rebuild both the city and His temple of worship and so ends the OT.

---

400 years pass of silence pass between the OT ending and the NT beginning.

So far as we know, no Scripture was written.

About 430 B.C., the Jews had returned to Israel from Babylonian captivity and the temple had been rebuilt. It wasn't long however before the Jewish people were mistreating their wives, marrying pagans and not tithing, and the priests were neglecting the temple and not teaching the people the ways of God. In short, the Jews were not honouring God.
So in 333 B.C., Israel fell to the Greeks, and in 323 B.C. it fell to the Egyptians and it was in Egypt that the Old Testament was translated into Greek. That translation, the Septuagint, came into widespread use (and is quoted frequently in the New Testament).
The Romans gained control of Israel in 63 B.C.

As the New Testament opens, Herod the Great, a descendant of Esau, was king.

NT begins

<u>The first 5 books are the **History books:**</u>

The life of Jesus is documented in the first 4 books by Matthew (a tax collector, a disciple of Jesus), Mark (a disciple of Peter), Luke (a doctor and an associate of Paul), and John (brother of James and a disciple of Jesus).

Acts (written by Luke): The arrival of the Holy Spirit and the spread of the Church and Christianity.

<u>The following books are the **Letters:**</u>

The remaining books, apart from Hebrews whose author is unknown, are all letters written by Paul, James, Peter or John, and teach principles and truths of Christian living.

<u>The final book is a book of **Prophecy:**</u>

The last book, Revelation, is a very complicated and poetically obscure book foretelling the end of times, including the day of judgement.
There is much obscurity around the predicted time of Jesus' return. There appears to be 7 years of tribulation and there is much debate as to whether Jesus will return to collect those who believe in him before the tribulation begins, halfway through, or at the end. The only certainty we need to have as believers though is to be ready!
In response to this very question from his disciples as to when the end of the age would be, Jesus replied in ***Matt 24:36,*** "*But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son,[f] but only the Father.* ***42*** *Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come."*

Some notes about heaven and hell:

Note that in heaven there is the principle of being awarded different levels of responsibility according to the responsibility with the things of God that we demonstrated here on earth:

Matthew 25: 14- 30 **14** *"Again, it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his wealth to them.* **15** *To one he gave five bags of gold, to another two bags, and to another one bag,*[a] *each according to his ability. Then he went on his journey.* **16** *The man who had received five bags of gold went at once and put his money to work and gained five bags more.* **17** *So also, the one with two bags of gold gained two more.* **18** *But the man who had received one bag went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money.* **19** *"After a long time the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them.* **20** *The man who had received five bags of gold brought the other five. 'Master,' he said, 'you entrusted me with five bags of gold. See, I have gained five more.'* **21** *"His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!'* **22** *The man with two bags of gold also came, bringing along two extra bags and His master replied with the same words as to the man with five bags.* **24** *"Then the man who had received one bag of gold came. 'Master,' he said, 'I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed.* **25** *So I was afraid and went out and hid your gold in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you.'* **26** *"His master replied, 'You wicked, lazy servant! So you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed?* **27** *Well then, you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned I would have received it back with interest.* **28** *"'So take the bag of gold from him and give it to the one who has ten bags.* **29** *For whoever has will be given more, and they will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken from them.* **30** *And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'*

1 Cor. 3:10-*14 warns us therefore to take care how we lead our lives: Each one should build with care.* **11** *For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ.* **12** *If anyone builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw,* **13** *their work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each person's work.* **14** *If what has been built survives, the builder will receive a reward.* **15** *If it is burned up, the builder will suffer loss but yet will be saved—even though only as one escaping through the flames.*

Finally, there also appear to be different degrees or levels of punishment in hell:

Matt 11:21-22 **21** *"Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.* **22** *But I tell you, it will be more bearable for Tyre and Sidon on the day of judgment than for you.*

Luke 12: **47** *"The servant who knows the master's will and does not get ready or does not do what the master wants will be beaten with many blows.* **48** *But the one who does not know and does things deserving punishment will be beaten with few blows. From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked.*

Lesson 1: Bible Overview - Table 1

GENESIS:
-Creation
-Noah
-Abraham & Sarah
-Isaac & Rebekah
- Jacob & Esau
-Jacob (now called Israel), Leah & Rachel, 2 concubines and their 12 sons
- Joseph in Egypt
- The whole family in Egypt

400 years Later – The Israelites have become slaves in Egypt.

E**XODUS, LEVITICUS, NUMBERS, DEUTORONOMY, JOSHUA**
-Enter Moses and Aaron executing miraculous plagues with God's strength b4 Pharaoh
-Israelites escape through the Red Sea
-Moses receives the 10 commandments
-Israel disobeys God and spends 40 years in desert
- Moses dies
- Joshua leads the grown children of Israel into Canaan

A period of **JUDGES** ruling and rescuing Israel as they repeatedly rebel against God, are invaded by neighbouring countries, repent and then repeat the cycle.

…. Israel then demands to have a King to be like their neighbouring countries – an affront to God – yet he grants them their request. The story of **RUTH** is within this period.

1&2 SAMUEL, 1&2 KINGS, 1&2 CHRONICLES
Period of KINGS ruling Israel
1. Saul
2. David
3. Solomon
-Country divides into 2 kingdoms – Israel (capital Samaria) and Judah (the royal tribe through which Jesus descended – it's capital Jerusalem).
Many kings follow of both kingdoms – predominantly evil.

ISAIAH, JEREMIAH, EZEKIEL, HOSEA, JOEL, AMOS
A period of years passes where Israel's and Judah's kings are warned by many prophets that their evil behaviours – predominantly their worship of gods other than the one true God, will lead them into exile out of Israel.

DANIEL, ESTHER, LAMENTATIONS
Exile finally happens – 722 BC Assyria firstly claims Israel and then in 586 BC Babylon claims Judah.

EZRA, NEHEMIAH
70 years pass and then in 516 BC some are allowed to return to Israel to rebuild the temple and the walls of Jerusalem.

OT ends.

400 yrs pass…

Lesson 1: Table 2 – Bible Overview

Old Testament: Code: Red = Pre-Exile Blue = Post-Exile

Genesis	Pentateuch – Written by Moses
Exodus	Details of Creation, Adam and Eve, Noah and the flood, Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah, the brothers Jacob and Esau – Jacob and his 2 wives, the sisters Leah and Rachel, and the 12 sons they had between them, the betrayal of Jacob's second youngest son Joseph by his 10 older brothers – who sold him as a slave to Egypt, Joseph's rise to power in Egypt, Joseph's forgiveness towards his brothers and his family's eventual move to join him there. The family's multiplication in Egypt over a period of 400 years and their eventual enslavement, the birth and deliverance of the Israelites by God through Moses through the Red Sea, the Ten Commandments, the failure to enter Canaan.
Leviticus	
Numbers	
Deuteronomy	
Joshua	Entry into Canaan led by Joshua.
Judges	Period of Judges who would rescue Israelites as they sinned against God.
Ruth	Personal story of Ruth
1 Samuel	Birth of the prophet Samuel who anoints the first King of Israel – Saul, and then David.
2 Samuel	Samuel and Saul die – David becomes King.
1 Kings	Solomon becomes King and then dies. The Kingdom divides. Following is a period where details of the Kings of each kingdom are listed and described. Chronicles gives extra details of what is detailed in 1st and 2nd Kings.
2 Kings	
1 Chronicles	
2 Chronicles	
Ezra	Led a group of exiles back to Jerusalem in Judah to rebuild the temple.
Nehemiah	Led a group of exiles back to Jerusalem in Judah to rebuild the city walls.
Esther	A personal story of Esther who saved the Jews while they were living in exile.
Job	A personal story of Job set probably back around the time of Abraham.
Psalms	A book of sacred poems, songs, many written by King David.
Proverbs	A book of wise sayings, most of which were attributed to King Solomon.
Ecclesiastes	A book on the meaning of life written by King Solomon
Song of Solomon	A book on love written by King Solomon.
Isaiah	A major prophet used by God to warn the Israelites, particularly Judah, of their upcoming exile (pre –Israel's exile).
Jeremiah	A major prophet used by God to warn Judah of their upcoming exile (pre-Israel's exile).
Lamentations	Documents sadness over the exile.
Ezekiel	A major prophet warning Judah of their upcoming exile (post Israel's exile).
Daniel	The personal story of a captive who honoured God.
Hosea	Minor prophets who amongst them warned either, or both, Israel and Judah of their upcoming exiles if they didn't repent, apart from Jonah, who spoke specifically to Nineveh in Assyria, Obadiah who warned Edom of their punishment for their gloating over Israel's exile, Nahum who predicted the destruction of Assyria, and Haggai, who together with Ezra, confirmed that it was time for the exiles to rebuild God's temple.
Joel	
Amos	
Obadiah	
Jonah	
Micah	
Nahum	
Habakkuk	
Zephaniah	
Haggai	
Zechariah	
Malachi	A discourse on not robbing God, on faithful worship and on moral responsibility.