

# Church of God Sunday School

## THE BIBLE — WHAT IS IT?



### DAILY READINGS:

- ❑ **Monday:** The Bible is God's Word (1 Thessalonians 2:13; 2 Timothy 3:16).
- ❑ **Tuesday:** The Bible contains God's promises to us (2 Corinthians 1:19-20; 2 Peter 1:4).
- ❑ **Wednesday:** The Bible is true (Psalm 119:160; John 17:17).
- ❑ **Thursday:** The Bible gives guidance (Psalm 32:8; 119:9-11, 105).
- ❑ **Friday:** God's Word is forever (Psalm 119:89; Isaiah 40:8).
- ❑ **Saturday:** Jesus is the Word in the flesh (John 1:1; John 1:14).

**MEMORY VERSE:** *"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

### God's Words to Man

On day six of Creation, "God created man in his own image" (Genesis 1:27). Since the beginning, it has been God's desire to talk to men and women. God walked and talked with Adam "in the cool of the day" (Genesis 3:8). He told Noah exactly how to build the ark, and He called Abraham out of the land of Ur. Not only did God talk to people, but He also wanted His words written down and preserved for future generations to read. When Amalek fought against Israel, God told Moses to "Write this for a memorial in a book" (Exodus 17:14). Why? So the people would not forget. God knew the importance of the written Word: "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope" (Romans 15:4).

It is in the Scriptures that we find hope, for they "testify of" Jesus (John 5:39). Without Jesus we would not have the Bible. Jesus is the heart and soul of this precious Book. He is the link between the Old Testament and the New Testament. He is the theme of the whole Bible. All of the Old Testament, in some way, proclaims, "Jesus is coming." The first 4 books in the New Testament tell us, "Jesus has come," and the last 23 books proclaim, "Jesus will come again."

## Old Testament



The New Testament is also called the "second" (Hebrews 8:7) and "better" (Hebrews 7:22) testament.

The Old Testament is a foundation for the New Testament. The New Testament builds on that foundation. We could not completely understand either Testament without the other. Prophecies in the Old Testament came true in Jesus; they could not be completely understood until Jesus came, lived, died, and rose from the dead. There are at least 250 Scriptures from the Old Testament quoted in the New

### Two Testaments

When you read your Bible, you will find that it is not a single book, but it is a library of 66 books. The word *Bible* is from the Greek word *biblia*, which means "library" or "books." This Book is separated into two sections, called the Old Testament and the New Testament. Another word for "testament" is *covenant*. The word *covenant* describes the close relationship God entered into with man. It is God's promise to man.

## New Testament



Testament. The Book of Revelation alludes (makes an indirect reference) to the Old Testament more than 500 times. Both Testaments are needed! "In the Old Testament the New is concealed, in the New Testament the Old is revealed" (Tertullian, 2<sup>nd</sup> century Christian writer).

### God's Word Is Settled

The Bible was written in 3 different languages (Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek), over a time period of more than 1500 years, by at least 40 different authors. Many people say that the Bible is just the words of men, but God let us know "All scripture is given by inspiration of God" (2 Timothy 3:16). In other words, Scriptures were not written "by the will of man," but were written by men who were "moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Peter 1:21). These men came from many different stations of life (some were kings, prophets, shepherds, priests, and fishermen). None of them wrote with all the other books at hand. Yet, there are no contradictions or errors. All the books together have a unified message and purpose: the story of redemption through Jesus Christ. This could only happen because God is the true Author!

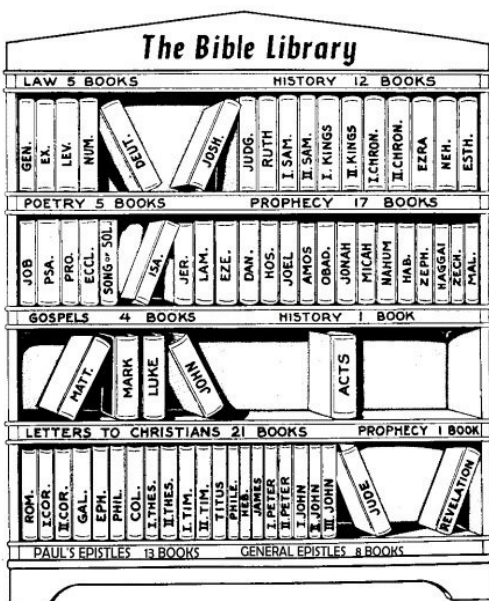
Although the Bible was written a long, long time ago, it still fits every age, need, and problem. Hebrews 4:12 says the Word is "quick," or alive. It is often called the "Living Word" because it still speaks to us today. Have you ever experienced a problem or trial and found a Scripture that helped you? That is how the Bible speaks to you!

No book has ever been as hated as this Book. Caesars, kings, and other rulers have tried to stamp it out and burn it. Nations have set rules and laws against it, trying to utterly banish it. Yet, it has been the best-selling and most widely distributed book of all ages! Regardless of what man has tried to do, God's "word is settled in heaven" (Psalm 119:89); it "shall not pass away," or perish (Matthew 24:35).

### Arrangement of the Bible

The books of the Bible are not arranged in chronological order (order of occurrence) but are arranged by categories. Many scholars believe Job is the oldest book in the Bible. Job lived in early Bible times, but because of the style of this book (poetry or literature), this book is grouped together with Psalms and Proverbs. The first 5 books of the Bible are called the Law, and the next 12 books are considered Old Testament History. Then there are 5 books of Poetry, and the last 17 books of the Old Testament are called Prophecy. (The first 5 books are considered major prophets, and the last 12 books are classified as minor prophets.)

The first 4 books of the New Testament are called the Gospels. The Book of Acts is often considered New Testament History. The next 21 books are called Epistles (or Letters). Of these 21 Epistles, 13 are believed to have been written by the Apostle Paul and are called the Pauline Epistles. The last book of the Bible is the Book of Revelation. This book of prophecy tells of past, current, and future events concerning God's Church. It is also called "The Apocalypse of John" (a prophetic revealing).



### Jesus Is the Word

Most important of all, what is the Bible to you? If you never read this amazing love letter from God, it will be meaningless. If you read it, but never let it make you what God intended, it is a waste. Jesus came down from Heaven in the form of a man so that we could understand what God had been trying to tell us all along. Jesus is called "the Word" (John 1:1). He became the living example of God's words. He became the Bridge between God and mankind. Without His Sacrifice, the Bible would just be words on paper. Jesus brought life to those words!

Do you hear God's Spirit speaking to your heart when you read your Bible? Is reading the Bible boring, or is it a Living Word to you? The difference is Jesus. You need Him in your heart to help you understand and appreciate this awesome Book!

# Bible Quiz



1. Another word for "testament" is covenant. Circle the Scriptures in the box that describe covenants between God and His people.

Genesis 9:13	Genesis 41:43	Joshua 2:1	Exodus 2:24
Esther 5:1	Judges 2:1	2 Chronicles 34:31	

2. Moses was told to write down God's words in a book. Using a concordance, look up the word "write" to find other men who were told to write God's words. \_\_\_\_\_

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3. Why are both the Old Testament and the New Testament important? Can we use one without the other?

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4. What is the longest book in the Bible? \_\_\_\_\_

5. What is the shortest verse in the Bible? \_\_\_\_\_

6. In Jeremiah 36:20-32 who tried to destroy God's Word? \_\_\_\_\_

7. How many books of prophecy are in the Old Testament? \_\_\_\_\_ in the New Testament? \_\_\_\_\_

8. Why does John 1:1 call Jesus "the Word"? \_\_\_\_\_

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9. How is the Bible unique from other books? \_\_\_\_\_

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10. Describe what the Bible means to you personally: \_\_\_\_\_

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## The Man and the Birds



This is a story about a man who worked hard and treated his family well. To all outward appearances, he was a good man. There was one thing he could not do—he could not believe the story of how God came to earth as a Man. So, he stayed at home when his family went to church.

One winter evening, after the man's family had left to attend the worship service, it began to snow heavily. After a while the man heard several strange thuds outside his window. When he looked outside, he could see a flock of birds who were trying to find shelter in the storm. The man thought of his barn. It would provide a warm, safe place for the birds until the storm was over.

The man put on his coat and boots and hurried to his barn. He opened the doors and even turned on a light inside so the birds could see where to go. But the birds would not go in. The man brought bread crumbs from his kitchen, trying to entice the birds into the safety of the barn, but they only ignored the crumbs.



Finally, the man realized the birds were afraid of him. "How could I get them to trust me?" he wondered. His every move only frightened the birds more. The man thought to himself: "If only I could become a bird and speak to them in their language, they would understand. They would come into my barn and be safe from the storm."

At that moment, the man could hear the bells of the local church begin to ring. At last he understood. That is what God had done. God sent His Son Jesus to earth as a man so that people would finally understand that God wanted to save them. Jesus showed people the way, just as the man had wanted to show the birds the way. The man knelt in the snow and gave his heart to God.

*"And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us . . ." (John 1:14).*

