

KNOW YOUR BIBLE

(A Systematic & Strategic Grasp of the Bible for Everyone)

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KNOW YOUR BIBLE

PART 1: OLD TESTAMENT

INTRODUCTION

The lessons presented here are designed as a basic course to help the student for a systematic and strategic grasp of the most important book in the world - the Holy Bible. Christianity is a faith anchored on the truths in the Bible, which is God's only inspired written revelation. This material can be used by young and old, and new and mature believers to have a firm grasp of the Bible. These lessons combine both course material and a workbook.

Our class time will be used to expand and explain the lessons, with discussion and Q & A as and when needed. I hope each one of you will be committed to attending the classes and be willing to do the assignments and quizzes to enhance our learning experience. You will need your Bible handy (not a paraphrase Bible - The Message, Living Bible, Amplified Bible, NLT, Good news For Modern Man etc.; but a translation - KJV, NKJV, NASB, ESV, NIV, HCSB etc.) while you attend the classes and a notebook for additional notes.

Hope you will grow to have a great appreciation for the Word of God. Remember, it is the greatest treasure, apart from God Himself, that we have. Let us prayerfully study the Bible with diligence and discipline. "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth" (2 Tim.2:15). We are required to correctly handle the Word of God to impart God's truth as completely, as clearly, and as unambiguously as possible. This can only be achieved through diligent and careful study. As you read and study the Bible, always bear in mind **the three-step-process** - *what it says, what it means, and what it means for you*. In technical terms this process is known as:

Observation - *seeing what it says*

Interpretation - *understanding what it means*

Application - *embracing what it means for me*

I pray that this basic study of the Bible will kindle afresh a passion in your life, to dig it deeper, so that it may permanently transform your life.

For Reflection:

“He who has once got fairly into the Scriptures can never leave them. The book holds you as a magnet holds a needle, or as a flower holds a bee. If you want great thoughts, read your Bible. If you want something simple, read your Bible. If you want the deepest and highest truth that ever was, read your Bible. The book talks to us in our own mother tongue. Why should I have to ask another what my Father says? ... The Bible to many is a dull book, as dry as an old will. But when you hear your own name read out in a will, you prick up your ears. What if there should be something in the Testament of our Lord Jesus for *you*. When I found my own name there my heart danced for joy. It was in these lines: ‘God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.’...Get your legacy at once!” (C.H. Spurgeon).

Let God’s Word do its work in you. The Word of God is living and powerful, and what God wants to do is show the power of His Word in transforming your life.

Come, let us study and know the Bible.

Alexander Kurian

LESSON 1: AN OVERVIEW

Memory Verse: “Sanctify them in the truth. Thy word is truth” (John 17:17 NASB)

The Bible is the Word of God: It claims to be the truth, the message from God to man (“God’s Book”). Second Peter 1:21 says that “men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.”

The word “Bible” is derived from the Greek word *biblia*, which means “the scrolls” or “the books.” The word derives from the ancient Phoenician city of Byblos (in modern Lebanon), which was known for its export of paper made from papyrus plants in ancient times. The Bible is actually a collection of 66 books compiled together into one majestic volume.

- The Scriptures were written by approximately 40 different men over a period of nearly 1500 years. The authors were a diverse bunch and include shepherds, kings, statesmen, kings, priests, poets, prophets, physicians, and fishermen. They wrote from three different continents (Africa, Asia, and Europe). But we find perfect harmony in the message they convey.
- These men lived in several different countries and cultures.
- They lived in different eras (1400 B.C. through A.D. 90).
- They wrote in three languages: Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek.

Despite these differences, God moved the writers to focus on His glory in man’s redemption through one central figure - Jesus Christ, the Son of God. The thread of redemption or the red cord of redemption runs through the Bible. It is *the unfolding drama of redemption*. This is the unifying theme of the Bible.

The Bible History from Genesis to Revelation can be described as:

- Creation to the Cross
- Creation to Consummation
- Creation to the Kingdom
- Paradise Lost & Paradise Found
- First Adam to the Last Adam
- Curse to Blessing
- Dust to Glory

A Great Poem About the Bible

This is the greatest book on earth
Unparalleled it stands
Its author God, its truth Divine,
Inspired in every Word and line
Tho writ by human hands.

This is the living rock of truth
Which all assaults defies.
O'er every stormy blast of time
It towers with majesty sublime;
It lives, and never dies.

This is the volume of the cross;
Its saving truth is sure;
Its doctrine pure, its history true,
Its Gospel old, yet ever new,
Shall evermore endure.

(Quoted by J. Sidlow Baxter, *Explore The Book*)

For Reflection:

“When it comes to godly living and godly service, to growing in “the discipline and instruction of the Lord” (Eph.6:4), God-breathed Scripture provides for us the comprehensive and complete body of divine truth necessary to live as our heavenly Father desires us to live. The wisdom and guidance for fulfilling everything He commanded us to believe, think, say and do is found in His inerrant, authoritative, comprehensive, and complete Word.

It goes without saying that it is impossible to believe, understand and follow what you do not even know. It is completely futile, as well as foolish, to expect to live a spiritual life without knowing spiritual truth...Throughout most of redemptive history, God could have said what He said in Hosea’s day; “MY people are destroyed for lack of knowledge” (Hos.4:6). It is for that reason, as well as for the even greater reason for honoring the Lord, that regular, systematic, and thorough study of the doctrine in God’s Word is imperative to God’s people” (John MacArthur, *Commentary on 2 Timothy*).

THE OLD TESTAMENT (39 books)

Testament means a “covenant,” a “will” or a “pact” - A covenant between the only true and the living God and His people. Hence the Bible is a book of “Relationship”, not “Religion.”

A. THE PENTATEUCH (5 books)

The first five books of the Old Testament were written by Moses around 1400 B.C. They often are referred to as the “Five Books of Moses,” “The Law of Moses” or the “Pentateuch” (*pente* means “five” and *teuchos* means “volumes”).

List the books of the Pentateuch in the order you find them in your Bible.

1. _____ The book of origins/beginnings: Creation, man, sin, redemption, God’s nation (Israel). Author: Moses. Date: 1450-1400 B.C.
2. _____ God delivers His people from Egypt.
3. _____ Atonement, holiness, and worship through sacrifice and purification
4. _____ God’s people continually disobey and wander in the wilderness for 40 years
5. _____ Moses’ great discourses to prepare Israel to enter the Promised Land

Overview of the Pentateuch From the Human Side:

- Genesis - Ruin through sin
- Exodus - Redemption by blood
- Leviticus - Fellowship on the ground of atonement
- Numbers - Direction & guidance
- Deuteronomy - Destination

From the Divine Side:

- Genesis - Divine Sovereignty (in creation & election)
- Exodus - Divine Power (in redemption and emancipation)
- Leviticus - Divine Holiness (in separation & sanctification)
- Numbers - Divine goodness & severity (in caring & judging)
- Deuteronomy - Divine faithfulness (in discipline & destination)

B. HISTORY (12 books) Joshua - Esther

The historical books were written between 1400 and 450 B.C. and describe God's dealings with His chosen people, Israel, the Hebrew nation.

List these books in the order you find them in your Bible.

- | | | |
|----------|----------|-----------|
| 1. _____ | 5. _____ | 9. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 6. _____ | 10. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 7. _____ | 11. _____ |
| 4. _____ | 8. _____ | 12. _____ |

Thematic Overview of the Historical Books

1. _____: Entering the land, overcoming the land & occupying the land (Victory of faith). Author: Joshua. Date: 1370 B.C.
2. _____: Apostasy, servitude, deliverance (backsliding & declension). Author: Anonymous (may be Samuel). Date: 1050 - 1000B.C.
3. _____: Demonstration of God's grace, love, providence & redemption (Love's resolve & reward). Author: Uncertain (Samuel?). Date: 1000 B.C.
4. _____: Life of Samuel, Saul & David (Transition from Theocracy to Monarchy). Author: Samuel & others. Date: 930 B.C. and later.
5. _____: David's 40 years reign (Triumphs turned to troubles through sin).

6. _____: Solomon's great 40 years reign & the first 80 years of the divided kingdom (The book of disruption). Author: Jeremiah. Date: 550 B.C.
7. _____: Alternating annals of the northern & Southern Kingdoms - Israel & Judah, ends up with Assyrian & Babylonian Captivities (willful sin, woeful end, & dispersion). Author: Jeremiah. Date: 550 B.C.
8. _____: Israel's main genealogies from Adam to the period of the Jewish nation's return from exile & David's reign at Jerusalem (Obedience to God's revelation is the determining factor). Author: Ezra. Date: 450-425 B.C.
9. _____: Solomon's 40 years reign, building of the Temple, & Judah's history to the Exile (The temple versus the throne - response to God is the decisive factor).
10. _____: The return of the remnant & the rebuilding of the temple (Restoration). Author: Ezra. Date: 456-444 B.C.
11. _____: Reconstruction of the wall & the re-instructing of the people (Reconstruction). Author: Nehemiah. 445-425 B.C.
12. _____: The providential care of God over His people (providential preservation). Author: Uncertain. Date: 465 B.C.

C. POETRY (5 books)

The following five books are poetic, describing in poetry and song God's greatness and His dealings with men.

List these books in the order you find them in your Bible.

1. _____ The suffering and loyal trust of a man who loved God (The mystery of suffering). Author: Uncertain (Job, Moses, Elihu)?? Date: Uncertain (2000 B.C.) ??
2. _____ Songs of praise and instruction (Worship & prayer for every possible circumstances of life). Authors: Various (73 by David, 2 by Solomon, 12 by Sons of Korah, 12 by Asaph, 1 by Moses, 1 by Heman, 1 by Ethan). Date: Various

3. _____ God's practical wisdom for daily life (Prudence through precept). Author: Solomon & others (Agur-ch.30; Lemuel-ch.31). Date: 950 – 700 B.C.
4. _____ The emptiness of an earthly life without God (What life is all about and the importance of getting God into the picture early in life). Author: Solomon. Date: 935 B.C.
5. _____ A celebration of marital joy (God's love applied to the most intimate human relationship. Some see here an illustration of the love of God for His people, and the relationship between Christ and the Church). Author: Solomon. Date: 965 B.C.

A Backward Look

“Let our eye travel back over the distinctive features of the books which we have studied...we may denote it with a single word or phrase.”

- Genesis - *Destitution* (through the sin of man).
- Exodus - *Deliverance* (through the power of God).
- Leviticus - *Dedication* (accepted through atonement).
- Numbers - *Direction* (by the Divine guidance).
- Deuteronomy - *Destination* (by the Divine faithfulness).
- Joshua - *Possession* (Israel occupies the land).
- Judges, Ruth - *Declension* (Israel betrays her trust).
- 1 Samuel - *Transition* (Theocracy now a monarchy).
- 2 Samuel - *Confirmation* (Davidic throne confirmed).
- 1 Kings - *Disruption* (break-away of ten tribes).
- 2 Kings - *Dispersion* (both kingdoms into exile).
- Chronicles - *Recapitulation* (Adam down to the Exile).
- Ezra - *Restoration* (Remnant returns to Judea).
- Nehemiah - *Reconstruction* (Jerusalem wall rebuilt).
- Esther - *Preservation* (of the non-returned Jews).
- Book of Job - *Blessing through suffering* (self-life dies).
- The Psalms - *Praise through Prayer* (the new life in God).

- The Proverbs - *Prudence through Precept* (in Wisdom's school).
- Ecclesiastes - *Verity through Vanity* (world cannot satisfy).
- Song of Songs - *Bliss through Union* (Christ fully satisfies).

(J. Sidlow Baxter, *Explore The Book*)

D. MAJOR PROPHETS (5 books)

A prophet was a person commissioned by God to deliver His message to men. These books are called "Major Prophets" because they were generally longer than the writings of the "Minor Prophets." The Major Prophets were written approximately between 750 and 550 B.C.

List these books in the order you find them in your Bible.

1. _____ 3. _____ 5. _____
 2. _____ 4. _____

E. MINOR PROPHETS (12 books)

The last 12 books of the Old Testament were written approximately between 840 and 400 B.C.

List these books in the order you find them in your Bible.

1. _____ 5. _____ 9. _____
 2. _____ 6. _____ 10. _____
 3. _____ 7. _____ 11. _____
 4. _____ 8. _____ 12. _____

F. THEMATIC OVERVIEW OF THE PROPHETIC BOOKS


1. **Isaiah** - The "evangelical prophet." The judgment of God & the blessings of God (740-680 B.C.).

2. **Jeremiah** - The “weeping prophet.” The fall of Judah & the rightness of God’s judgment on Judah because of her sin (627-585 B.C.).
3. **Lamentations** - A sad book written by a sad prophet (Jeremiah) during a sad time. A poetic lament over the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple by the Babylonians (586 B.C.).
4. **Ezekiel** - Prophecies against Judah and Jerusalem about their sin which brought the judgment of the Babylonian captivity. The promise of a coming restoration when the departed glory will shine again in the Millennial Temple (592 - 570 B.C.).
5. **Daniel** - A prophetic overview of the Times of the Gentiles and shows how heaven rules on earth even when earth seems to be out of control (537 B.C.).
6. **Hosea** - Sin, judgment, and restoration. How Israel’s sin will be punished by a holy and just God, and how a loving God will restore them (710 B.C.)
7. **Joel** - The Day of the Lord; Desolation and deliverance (835 B.C.).
8. **Amos** - Prophecy against the social evil of the people and their paganized worship (755 B. C.).
9. **Obadiah** - The denunciation & destruction of Edom. (840 or 586 B.C.).
10. **Jonah** - A reluctant and rebellious prophet realizes the love and grace of God for the whole world (760 B.C.).
11. **Micah** - God is displeased with social injustice and declining morality. The approaching judgment on Israel and Judah, and the final renewal & restoration (700 B.C.).
12. **Nahum** - The declaration, power and finality of God’s judgment on the Kingdom of Assyria, specifically on its capital city, Nineveh (663-612 B.C.).
13. **Habakkuk** - The “Perplexed prophet.” A defense of God’s sovereignty, righteousness, goodness and power in view of the existence of evil (theodicy). Why will God use wicked people to punish Judah? Perplexity turns into praise when he realizes that the righteous will always live by faith (607 B.C.).

14. **Zephaniah** - Prophecies of Judgment and blessings on Judah & Gentile Nations (625 B.C.).
15. **Haggai** - A wake up & shake up call for spiritual restoration to the Jewish remnant that had returned to the homeland after the Babylonian captivity (520 B.C.).
16. **Zechariah** - A great eschatological prophecy about the coming King and His glorious Kingdom (520-518 B.C.).
17. **Malachi** - "In-your-face prophet." Take God seriously. Don't play religious games and insult God by sloppy worship (450-400 B.C.).

LESSON 2: THE BIBLE AT A GLANCE

Memory Verse: "All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work" (2 Tim.3:16-17 NASB).

THE BIBLE AT A GLANCE (66 books)						
OLD TESTAMENT (39 books)				NEW TESTAMENT (27 books)		
HISTORY (17 books)	POETRY (5 books)	PROPHECY (17 books)		HISTORY (5 books)	LETTERS (21 books)	PROPHECY (1 books)
The Law		Major Prophets		Gospels	Paul's Letters	Revelation
1 Genesis 2 Exodus 3 Leviticus 4 Numbers 5 Deuteronomy	1 Job 2 Psalms 3 Proverbs 4 Ecclesiastes 5 Song of Solomon	1 Isaiah 2 Jeremiah 3 Lamentations 4 Ezekiel 5 Daniel		1 Matthew 2 Mark 3 Luke 4 John	1 Romans 2 1 Corinthians 3 2 Corinthians 4 Galatians 5 Ephesians 6 Philippians 7 Colossians 8 1 Thessalonians 9 2 Thessalonians 10 1 Timothy 11 2 Timothy 12 Titus 13 Philemon	
History and Governments		Minor Prophets		History of the early church		
1 Joshua 2 Judges 3 Ruth 4 1 Samuel 5 2 Samuel 6 1 Kings 7 2 Kings 8 1 Chronicles 9 2 Chronicles 10 Ezra 11 Nehemiah 12 Esther		1 Hosea 2 Joel 3 Amos 4 Obadiah 5 Jonah 6 Micah 7 Nahum 8 Habakkuk 9 Zephaniah 10 Haggai 11 Zechariah 12 Malachi	About 400 years between Testaments	Acts	General Letters	
					1 Hebrews 2 James 3 1 Peter 4 2 Peter 5 1 John 6 2 John 7 3 John 8 Jude	
The New is in the Old, concealed. The Old is in the New, revealed.						
God used 40 different men over a period of 1,500 years (about 1400 B.C. to A.D. 90) in writing the Bible – 2 Peter 1:20-21						

(Fundamentals of the Faith, Grace Community Church)

A. 4 TYPES OF BOOKS IN THE O.T.

1. Legislative books (5) - Their moral life
2. Historical books (12) - Their national life
3. Instructional books/Poetical (5) - Their spiritual life
4. Prophetical books (17) - Their messianic and future life

Assignment: Memorize the 39 books of the OT and be ready to write it down or recite in the class.

- The origin of the Word _____ (2 Tim.3:16)
- The distinct characteristic of the Word _____ (2 Tim.3:16)
- The Four-fold purpose of the Word (2 Tim.3:16)
 1. _____
 2. _____
 3. _____
 4. _____
- The Ultimate Purpose _____ (2 Tim. 3:17)

B. AN OVERVIEW OF OT HISTORY (all years are approximate)

Flood	2350 B.C.
Abraham	2000 B.C.
Moses	1530 – 1410 B.C.
Exodus from Egypt	14500 B.C.
Conquest of Canaan	1400 B.C.
Period of the Judges	1380 – 1050 B.C.
The United Monarchy under Saul, David & Solomon	1095 – 930 B.C.
Solomon Built the Temple	967 B.C.
Divided Monarchy: Israel (N. Kingdom)	930 – 722 B.C.
Assyrian Conquest of Israel	722 B.C.
Southern Kingdom (Judah)	930 – 586 B.C.
Babylonian Captivity of Judah	586 B.C.

Persian King Cyrus' decree allowing Jews to return to their homeland	538 B.C.
Temple Rebuilt	515 B.C.
Malachi	450 – 400 B.C.
The Intertestamental Period from Malachi to Matthew	400 silent years

C. THE JEWISH BIBLE (The Hebrew Old Testament)

The Hebrew OT has only 24 books. The books are arranged differently than in our English Bible. It is organized into three main sections. Jewish sacred writings are referred to as *Tanakh*, an acronym derived from the names of the three divisions of the Hebrew Bible - *Torah* (instruction or Law), *Neviim* (Prophets), and *Ketuvim* (writings).

1. **The Law** (*Torah* of Moses) - **5 Books**
2. **The Prophets** (*Nebhiim*) - The Former Prophets (Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings) and the Latter Prophets (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, the Book of the Twelve (Hosea - Malachi) - **8 Books**
3. **The Writings** (*Kethubhim*) - Psalms, Job, Proverbs, Ruth, Song of Solomon, Ecclesiastes, Lamentations, Esther, Daniel, Ezra-Nehemiah, Chronicles) - **11 Books** (Read Luke 24:44; Luke 16:29; Matt.5:17; Matt.23:35; Luke 11:51)

D. PRE AND POST-EXILIC PROPHETS

Pre-Exilic (Israel)	Pre-Exilic (Judah)	Exilic	Post-Exilic
Jonah Amos Hosea	Isaiah Micah Nahum Habakkuk Zephaniah Jeremiah	Lamentations Ezekiel Daniel	Haggai Joel Zechariah Malachi

LESSON 3: OT & NT - A CHRISTOLOGICAL OVERVIEW

Memory Verse: “.....But to this one I will look; to him who is humble and contrite of spirit, and who trembles at My word” (Isa.66;2 NASB).

A. SEE CHRIST IN ALL THE SCRIPTURES

Without the knowledge of Christ personally and experientially, there cannot be any true knowledge of the Bible. Love for Christ, the eternal and living Word, is the fuel for our love for the Written Word - The Bible. Christ is the incarnate Word and the Bible is the inscripturated Word.

5 Law	12 History Prophecy	5 Poetry	17 Gospels	1 History Letters	21 Prophecy
<i>Promises of Christ</i>	<i>Anticipation of Christ: Types, Experiences, and Prophecies</i>		<i>Manifestation of Christ</i>	<i>The Church of Christ</i>	

(Fundamentals of the Faith, Grace Community Church)

- **Law** - Foundation for Christ
- **History** - Preparation for Christ
- **Poetry** - Aspiration for Christ
- **Prophecy** - Expectation of Christ
- **Gospels** - Manifestation of Christ
- **Acts** - Propagation of Christ
- **Epistles** (Letters) - Interpretation & Application of Christ
- **Revelation** - Consummation of all things in Christ

OT	NT
Anticipation	Realization
Expectation (Promise)	Fulfillment
Preparation	Completion

Implicit (Revelation)	Explicit
Latent (Truth)	Patent
Ritual	Reality
Types	Truths
Temporary (Shadows)	Permanent (Light)
Pre-incarnational	Incarnational
Prophetic Revelation (Servants)	Son-revelation
Diverse portions & in diverse manners	Perfect, ultimate, complete
Ages past	Last days

NOTES:

“The story of divine revelation is a story of progression up to Christ, but there is no progression beyond Him...God’s previous spokesmen were His servants, but for the proclamation of His last word to man He has chosen His Son” (F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle To The Hebrews*).

“The New is in the Old concealed;
The Old is in the New revealed.
The New is in the Old contained
The Old is in the New explained”
(Augustine)

LESSON 4: NOW IT'S YOUR TURN

Memory Verse: *“For the Word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.”*
(Hebrews 4:12 NASB)

A. POINTS TO PONDER

- What is the most important truth you learned from Hebrews 4:12?
- What did the Savior say about the Scriptures (Matt.5:18)?
- What does Isa.40:8 teach about the Word of God?
- What do you learn from Psalm 119:89?

Remember the old sayings:

“Either this book will keep you from sin, or sin will keep you from this book.”

“All big Christians have been Bible Christians.”

B. A PERSONAL EVALUATION:

- Sincerely and honestly evaluate your own Bible reading habits.

- Do you think you need to make some changes?
- Do you daily/regularly read the Bible?
- Do you follow an effective reading plan?
- Do you really take the time to study the Bible, memorize verses, take notes, and meditate (internalize) its truths, allowing yourself to be absorbed by God's Word?
- Do you know a meaningful and reliable process of searching the Scriptures?
- Have you ever sought help from other mature Christians in improving your Bible reading/ study habits & methods?
- 1 John 2:14: ".....I have written to you, young men, because you are **strong** and the **word of God abides in you**" (highlighted for emphasis). Is this statement true of you? If not, ponder over the reasons.

For Reflection:

"First and foremost, in order for you to do your own work in the Scriptures, it's essential to consider the crucial matters of the heart. In order to understand the Scriptures, you

must know the Lord and be walking the path of daily purity and humility. Integrity and purity go hand in hand. You also need willingness - a personal desire to follow the Lord.

Another thing you need to do is set aside time specifically for studying the things of God. It takes time to pray, meditate, and turn thoughts over in your mind. These aren't things that happen overnight. You'll need to invest time in order to make them happen."

(Chuck Swindoll, *The Swindoll Study Bible*).

Prayer Moment:

Father, I thank you for reminding me of the importance of studying and obeying your Word. Here I am, for a fresh start with the Word of God, to read it, study it, obey, and apply it in my life. Help me to see life from Your perspective as I meditate Your holy Word. Stop me in my tracks, in the pursuit of my own goals, and show me Your way through Your precious Word. Amen.