

Lesson
1

The Bible

The sailors were frightened. There had been a terrible storm and some of their friends had drowned. They were lost and many unanswered questions troubled them. Where were they going? How long would this trip last? Would they ever find their way home?

It was 1492 and the captain of these men, Christopher Columbus, could not answer their questions. He had taken them on an uncharted course across the Atlantic Ocean, looking for India. Instead, he found an island in the Americas. There he and his sailors found fresh water and their lives were saved.

A similar story would not likely be repeated today. With accurate charts and maps to direct their course, ship captains need not lose their way.

Though still on land, many people feel as if they are lost on a storm-tossed ocean. They are asking themselves questions. Where am I going? Am I lost? Will I ever find the right way? God has heard our questions and He has already given us a Book to guide our lives.

Before searching for the answers, let's look together at the great Book. We will see how it was written and how it was given to us.



In this lesson you will study...

The Origin and Structure of the Bible
The Purpose of the Bible

This lesson will help you...

- Describe the origin and structure of the Bible.
- Understand how and why the Bible was given.

THE ORIGIN AND STRUCTURE OF THE BIBLE

Objective 1. *Describe the origin and basic structure of the Bible.*

The Holy Bible, made up of 66 books, is like a small library that God has given us. The first part of the Bible—the Old Testament—contains 39 books. The second part—the New Testament—contains 27 books.

Over a period of 1600 years approximately 40 men were involved in writing these books. The Bible tells us that these men were holy men of God. They were kings and peasants, poets and merchants, military and religious leaders. They were from different backgrounds, different cities, and of different interests.

The books of the Bible cover many different subjects, like history, prophecy, and poetry. It has songs and wise sayings called proverbs. It contains stories to interest the young and the old. Yet it all fits together because it has one central theme—the relationship between God and man.

In each one of these *For You to Do* sections, the questions or exercises will help you review or apply what you have studied.



For You To Do

- 1 Fill in the missing terms in the following sentences.
 - a The Bible consists of books written by men of different backgrounds.
 - b The Bible was written over a period ofyears.
 - c There are books in the first part called the Testament and books in the second part called the Testament.

Check your answers with those at the end of this lesson.

THE PURPOSE OF THE BIBLE

Objective 2. *Recognize aspects of divine inspiration.*

Perhaps you noticed what may seem to be a contradiction in the first part of this lesson. It says that God gave us the Bible, but it also says that men wrote it. How can this be?

The forty men who wrote the Bible were *divinely inspired*. This means that the Holy Spirit put in the authors' minds the thoughts that God wanted them to write. Second Timothy 3:16 says, "All Scripture is inspired by God." This verse also tells why the Bible was given—for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and giving instruction.

God has given us instructions for right living because He desires our highest good. He knows that when we do not live according to His principles we hurt ourselves. Our minds, our bodies, and especially our spirits suffer. The best way to avoid hurting ourselves is to follow His Word closely. Through it we get to know Him personally: we understand that His ways are best for us.

Like a chart or a guide book, His Word was written for us to turn to for help and strength. How wonderful that we can have His personal instructions to us always at our side!



For You To Do

In the next two exercises, circle the letter in front of the words that best complete the sentence.

- 2** When we say that the Bible is *divinely inspired* we emphasize that
- a) it tells us about God.
 - b) God gave the authors the thoughts they should write.
 - c) it contains valuable religious history.
- 3** The authors wrote on the same theme and did not contradict each other because
- a) God was the real author and they wrote the thoughts He gave them.
 - b) each one left instructions for the following writers.
- 4** Circle the letter in front of the TRUE reasons why God has given us the Bible.
- a** He wants our highest good.
 - b** He wanted to give instructions for right living.
 - c** He wanted us to realize that He is too great for us to know Him.
 - d** He wants to establish His relationship with us and tell us what He is like.



Check Your Answers

The answers to your study exercises are not given in the usual order. They have been mixed up so that you will not see the answer to your next question ahead of time. Try not to look ahead.

1 a 66
40

b 1600

c 39

Old

27

New

3 a) God was the real author and they wrote the thoughts He gave them.

2 b) God gave the authors the thoughts they should write.

4 a He wants our highest good.

b He wanted to give instructions for right living.

d He wants to establish His relationship with us and tell us what He is like.