

Weekday Bible School Series

YOUTH AND THE BIBLE

Ninth Grade

UNIT I

A SHORT COURSE IN BIBLE INTRODUCTION



Published by the
Christian Nurture Committee
of Lancaster Mennonite Conference
1957

Weekday Bible School Series

YOUTH AND THE BIBLE

Ninth Grade

UNIT I

A SHORT COURSE IN BIBLE INTRODUCTION

NOAH G. GOOD

Published by the
Christian Nurture Committee
of Lancaster Mennonite Conference

Printed in U.S.A.
By Mennonite Publishing House
Scottsdale, Pa.

General Introduction to Ninth Grade Course

Youth and the Bible is planned for the ninth grade. The unit on Bible Introduction is the first unit. Other units will deal with methods of Bible study.

Some time ago *Youth and the Christian Life* was given to the public. It has enjoyed wide use. It was presented in a single book of thirty lessons. The majority of Bible schools seem to prefer the book that is planned for a quarter or for a six-week Bible school that calls for twelve lessons. That is the reason for printing *Youth and the Bible* in a unit of twelve lessons.

Youth wants to know about the Bible. It is with that in mind that *Youth and the Bible* was written. The present unit deals with the sources and translations of our Bible.

The lesson plans are simple and uniform. This makes it easy to teach and study. The pupil should have a copy of the book and should be encouraged to study the questions.

There is more work provided than some of the classes will have time to do. This will do no harm, but it will be necessary for the teacher to do some selecting. It is much better to teach part of the lesson well than to try to cover all of it when there is not time to do it well. If you have to do the lessons in less time than it takes to cover all of the materials, you should do some careful planning so that the lesson does not seem unfinished at the end of the period. This will probably mean selecting some parts of each division of the lesson. In some instances you may wish to use two class periods for one lesson.

Table of Contents

General Introduction to Ninth Grade Course	3
Lesson I	
The Origin of the Bible	5
Lesson II	
The Content of the Bible	7
Lesson III	
The Inspiration of the Bible	9
Lesson IV	
The Purposes of the Bible	12
Lesson V	
The History of the Bible—Authorship	14
Lesson VI	
The History of the Bible—Translation	17
Lesson VII	
The History of the Bible—Preservation	19
Lesson VIII	
The Writers of the Bible	21
Lesson IX	
Great Doctrines of the Bible	24
Lesson X	
The Literary Importance of the Bible	26
Lesson XI	
The Place of the Bible in Life	28
Lesson XII	
The Superiority of the Bible	30

Lesson I

The Origin of the Bible

Approaching the Lesson

The origin of a thing marks its authority. "Who said so?" is a fair question. We speak of the Bible as the Word of God. We base this belief on two sets of evidence, internal and external. Internal evidence consists of things the Bible says about itself. To many Christians the expressions like, "The Bible tells me so" are satisfactory proof. It does not make good argument to ignore external evidence. External evidence deals with what others say about the Bible. This suggests the writings of historians, the ancient manuscripts of the books of the Bible and contemporary writers, the remains of places and civilizations of Bible times.

In this lesson we think of a very old book. It is by some considered the result of a developing concept that came out of the experiences of a people who needed a God. These people do not take the Bible very seriously. To them the Bible is a social outcome of a religious thinking and experience which could well have been quite different if their historical experiences had been different. What is the origin of the Bible, really?

It is our purpose to notice internal evidence. God speaks in the Bible. It is an inspired book. God spoke in various ways to men who wrote various books of the Bible. Paul, Moses, Isaiah, John, Daniel, and others knew that they were writing what God gave them to write. It is sinful to add to it and claim the addition is a part of God's Word. It is equally sinful to reject any part of it. Its minutest details are correct and God-given. It presents the only plan of redemption. It gives the only explanation of the origin of man, of creation, of the soul of man, of man's destiny in the future. It speaks of the Word as a living thing. Children of God are sure it is the Word of God, a final and full authority, and that it presents a way of living. Naturally, all internal evidence is favorable to the Word of God.

The value of external evidence is important. Josephus writes historically many of the stories given in the Bible. In many instances it would seem as if he had drawn from the Bible as a source. Evidently this is not entirely so, for he gives many other events not Biblically recorded. Other historians give incidental support to the accuracy of the Bible. None answer the question of its origin fully. Archaeology gives silent proof of its accuracy by giving us the ruins of cities described in the Bible, and none of them contradicts the Bible so far as we can learn. The ancient contemporary literature does not all support the Bible any more than modern literature does. Time has strengthened the position of the Bible as the Word of God, and has amply demonstrated the error of those who opposed its authority. God has had, in times past, those who considered God as the only source of authority. Many, today, believe firmly that internal and external evidence support the belief that the Bible is God's Word to us.

Bible Passages for Study and Discussion

John 1:1; 5:39; II Timothy 3:16; Hebrews 1:1, 2; Psalm 119:89; Revelation 1:19; 22:19; Jeremiah 46:1, 2; 36:4; Hebrews 2:1-4; Galatians 1:11, 12.

Questions for Thought and Discussion

1. Give some arguments for the use of internal evidence to determine the origin of the Bible.
2. What is the origin of the following books used by other religious groups: Koran, Book of Mormons, Veda?
3. What will the critics say about the value of internal evidence?
4. Does the claim of origin of the Bible conflict with any good evidence?
5. What is the method used by the higher critics?
6. Is it possible to believe the Biblical statements concerning the origin of the Word of God and be scientific?
7. Which of the men seem most worthy of trust, those who accept the divine origin of the Bible, or those who reinterpret it as an outgrowth of a social need?
8. If God spoke the Word, why did He not give all of it at one time?
9. Why was the Word given almost exclusively to one nation?
10. Why is it essential that the Christian be very certain that the Word of God is the final authority for his life?
11. How can we determine what makes up the complete canon? Should we not include the Apocrypha and keep an open mind for any good book that might still be written?

Questions to Be Answered in Lesson Preparation from the Bible

1. How is Scripture given?
2. What is Scripture useful for?
3. How was Old Testament Scripture given?
4. What is Christ's attitude toward the authority of Scripture?
5. Which of the New Testament writers give evidence that they consider the Old Testament God's Word?
6. How old is the Word?
7. Is the Word of God intellectual or spiritual?
8. Why can the man of the world not understand the Word of God?
9. What reward is to be expected for attempting to destroy the Word of God?
10. How enduring is the Word of God?

Hard Words to Be Defined

- | | |
|----------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Scriptures | 6. manuscript |
| 2. canon | 7. contemporary writings |
| 3. inspiration | 8. higher critics |
| 4. internal evidence | 9. archaeology |
| 5. external evidence | 10. scientific |

Lesson II

The Content of the Bible

Approaching the Lesson

As we learned in the last lesson, the Bible is the book God gave us. In this lesson we want to notice some of the things that are in this book. We shall think of the Bible contents as history, law, prophecy, Gospel, and doctrine. As you grow older and study the Bible more you will learn which parts of the Bible are devoted to these subjects. You will also want to know the reasons for each part of the Bible.

God's book, the Bible, gives the history that we need to know to understand the plan of salvation. It begins by giving the story of creation. It tells plainly what no other record gives about how the world, the sun, moon, and stars were brought to exist. It gives also the only sensible and accurate account of the beginning of man on earth. It tells us of man's work and life on earth, specially to show man's condition in sin and God's plan to save him. In the Bible are many historical records of good and bad men to show us how God deals with men.

In God's great love for man He wanted man to know what is right and wrong. Because man was so sinful it was necessary to give the law. By the law man's sin was to be punished. God spoke very plainly to Moses and gave him a long list of things God's children must do and things they must not do.

From earliest beginning a plan of redemption is in God's program. God repeatedly reveals this plan in prophetic passages of His Word. In the Bible God's people look confidently for a Saviour. Prophetic passages also tell of the coming rise and fall of nations, and of man's eternal destiny. The prophecies concerning specific events are often so exact and complete that only divine knowledge could make it possible.

Much of the Bible is devoted to the life of Jesus who was the complete fulfillment of God's plan for saving sin-lost man. His teachings, experiences, works, and final suffering became the basic thought of the New Testament. The spiritual experiences of men and women who by faith found salvation real are also an important part. This part of the Bible becomes the most important part of the Christian thought and practice.

God gave us in the Bible everything that we need to approach Him in worship, and to find the necessary knowledge to bring about a reconciliation so that we can have assurance of eternal life.

Bible Passages for Study and Discussion

Genesis 1:1, 26-28; 3:1-10, 15, 18; Exodus 20:1-17; I Kings 16:29-33; 21:19-29; 22:38; II Kings 9:36; Matthew 5:1, 2; 7:28, 29; John 7:46; I John 3:1-3; 5:1-3; Hebrews 8:10-13; Philippians 3:10; Acts 1:7-11; Matthew 1:20, 22; 2:5, 23; 27:35.

Questions for Thought and Discussion

1. How does the story of creation compare with that of popular science books?
2. Did scientists copy their story from the Bible record?
3. Why do historians not agree in all points with the Bible?
4. What concerns does the Bible record express that historians do not include?
5. Do Christians generally think of Adam and Eve as real, historical persons, or are they symbols of the beginning of the race?
6. Do we have any historic support of the accuracy of prophetic passages of the Bible?
7. Does history refute any part of the Bible?
8. Why does the Bible have such an important place in literature, music, and art?
9. What knowledge does the Bible supply that can be found in no other place?
10. Do we have to get any essential spiritual information from any source other than the Bible?

Questions to Be Answered in Lesson Preparation from the Bible

1. What books of the Bible record history?
2. Where can you find some prophecies concerning Jesus' birth?
3. What books tell about heaven?
4. Which books tell about the teachings of Jesus?
5. Where could you read about the development of the early church?
6. Upon what part of the Bible do we base our Christian philosophy of thought?
7. Do the New Testament writers ever refer to the Old Testament?
8. In what part of the Bible is the plan of salvation given?
9. What nation is most important in the historical part of the Bible?
10. How many books make up the entire Bible? How many main divisions? How many books in each division?
11. Give illustrations of each of the following: prophecy, history, law, poetry, exhortation, doctrine.

Hard Words to Be Defined

- | | |
|------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Pentateuch | 6. creation |
| 2. Old Testament | 7. spiritual |
| 3. philosophy | 8. doctrine |
| 4. prophecy | 9. salvation |
| 5. Gospel | 10. reconciliation |

Lesson III

The Inspiration of the Bible

Approaching the Lesson

In Lesson I we referred to the inspiration of the Bible. It was necessary to refer to its authority because it came from God. In this lesson we want to learn the meaning of inspiration and what that means to us in studying the Word of God.

The Bible is not just another book. There are many good books, but we Christians do not believe there is any book as holy or as good as the Bible. In Lesson I there was a question which referred to the holy books of other religious groups. Some of these people hold their books in very high respect, almost higher than we do at times. But we believe that the Holy Bible is inspired of God and that it is a living thing with all the authority and power of God Himself.

It is, of course, evident that the paper and ink that make up the printed part of the Bible, and the leather cover and the silk thread and glue that hold it together and protect it are not living things. The Word of God means the message the Bible contains. It is the spoken Word of God. It is given by God's authority, it is in fact God speaking to us. There is only one Word of God. We do have many copies of the Bible; we have many translations of it in many different languages. But it is one Word of God. It is this Word of God that is a living, inspired thing. We should count it sacred and holy.

There are various ideas about inspiration. Some person may speak of the time when he had a sudden inspiration to do something. It is a correct way to use the word inspiration, but it is not what we mean by the inspiration of the Bible. Some other persons say that it means that the writers of the Bible had more wisdom and experience than other persons and so could write more helpful things. This would not make the Bible any better than other good books. It is not what Christians believe is meant by Biblical inspiration. In the Bible it is evident that in some way God transmits His own Word to man through the instrumentality of man. In this Word is the authority and force of God Himself, even though it is carried in the language and manner of the human writer. This still permits some persons to doubt about parts of the Word of God. They give expression to fears that not all of the Bible is God's inspired Word, and that some of it is merely man's expression. The writers of the Bible who put down the words God gave them are careful to make it clear that they consider all of the Scriptures inspired.

Bible students speak of plenary and verbal inspiration. Some hold that the exact expressions are sacred and inspired. To be fully consistent with this view one would have to use the Bible in the original language; for no translation can transmit these expressions fully. Others maintain that only the ideas are inspired and that the way of saying them is not important. Christians are sure that all of the Bible is inspired of God, that man when obedient to the guidance of the Holy Spirit can transmit it in the words of other languages

and ages to new people and ages without losing any of the original value or power. This is possible because it is a living, inspired Word, and not a dead piece of art or literature.

Bible Passages for Study and Discussion

Galatians 1:11, 12; II Timothy 3:16; II Peter 1:19-21; Hebrews 1:1, 2; Acts 2:4; Deuteronomy 4:2; Jeremiah 1:7-9; Micah 3:8; John 1:1.

Questions for Thought and Discussion

1. Why do we need to be concerned about inspiration?
2. How should the knowledge of the inspiration of the Bible affect our treatment of copies of the printed Bible in our homes?
3. How could it be possible for portions of the Word of God that are given more than four thousand years apart to be equally inspired?
4. Is there any external evidence to support the belief in the plenary and verbal inspiration of the Bible?
5. How do the claims for inspiration compare with the similar claims of other religious books?
6. Compare a sermon that has Holy Spirit power behind it with the inspiration of the Word of God.
7. Is it likely that there will be additions to the inspired Word?
8. How are the origin of the Word and the inspiration of the Word related? How are they different?
9. How is inspiration of the Word related to its applicability to the needs and conditions of all mankind?
10. Why does rationalization not fit well with the belief in inspiration of the Word of God?

Questions to Be Answered in Lesson Preparation from the Bible

1. Do any of the writers of the Bible claim that their writings are divinely inspired?
2. Did the prophets make predictions on the basis of facts they observed or on the basis of a message from God?
3. What historic events gave proof of the supernatural knowledge of the writer or speaker of Scriptural utterances?
4. What are some of the methods used to transmit God's words to man?
5. Quote one or more passages that claim that the Bible is inspired.
6. Quote one or more passages that make claim to be the Word spoken by God.
7. Find and quote passages in Matthew and Hebrews to show that New Testament writers considered the Old Testament inspired and authoritative.

8. What happens when wicked men destroy the only copy of a portion of God's inspired Word? (See Jeremiah 36)
9. Is there any danger of false teaching from men being offered as the Word of God?
10. Why can there be no conflict between portions of the inspired Word of God?

Hard Words to Be Defined

1. author
2. inspiration
3. translation
4. verbal inspiration
5. plenary inspiration
6. original language
7. supernatural
8. profane writings
9. rationalization
10. consistent

Lesson IV

The Purposes of the Bible

Approaching the Lesson

The one central purpose of the Bible is to reveal to man the will of God. As we have discussed in former lessons the Bible is the Word of God to men.

It will be possible to discuss several things that stand out in the Bible so prominently that they immediately appear more important than some other things that are a part of the Bible more or less incidentally. It would, however, be very wrong to think of any part of the Bible as unimportant or incidental, just because it does not have a prominently large place in the Bible. Some of the purposes of the Bible that are prominent are: to show the relation of God to man, to show that man in his natural state is lost in sin, to show the plan of salvation, to give a guide for man's conduct, first the law of the Old Testament, then the way of love and grace in the New Testament, and to show the future destiny of man. In the following paragraphs we shall note briefly what the Bible teaches on each of these subjects.

Creation

The creation story is important in the Bible. It is properly placed at the beginning, although the arrangement of the books is a man-made order. The word Genesis means beginning. One of the things God wants His creatures to know is that they were made by Him and belong to Him. His purpose in creation was to have honor and glory. Although the creation story is given only once in several short chapters, it is often referred to in the Bible.

The Fall of Man

This subject is given more space in the Bible than most topics. For any part of the Bible to have meaning and significance it is important to understand that man was created perfect and pure and fell into sin through deception by the enemy of God. Some persons teach that Adam and Eve were not real persons, and that the serpent is just a type of an evil force or tendency. When one reads the Bible sincerely it is hard to see anything but that God intends for us to believe that Adam and Eve were two special individuals who were created by God, and that the devil was a real person who appeared to our first ancestors in the form of a serpent.

The Plan of Redemption

From the very earliest part of the Bible to the last chapter the plan of redemption holds a prominent place. The verse that tells of the gift of God's only Son describes the most important thing in the Bible. The foremost purpose of the Bible is to make known this plan of salvation to man for whom the gift was given.

The Great Commission

Usually this expression refers to the charge Jesus gave to His followers to carry the message of the finished work of salvation to all the world. The whole mission and evangelization program of the Bible relates to this. It is

God's special will that all men everywhere shall be told about the plan of salvation through Christ.

The Reconciled Life

Some of the most beautiful emphases in the Bible have to do with the life of joy and usefulness that the saint lives here on the earth after accepting the plan of salvation. Much of the New Testament is devoted to this theme. It appears to be God's purpose to permit the child of God to identify himself with the rich experiences of Paul and other saints who experienced the fullness of joy in salvation.

The Future State of Man

The Bible clearly makes it understood that man's life does not end with natural death. This adds a great deal of importance to the life that we live on this earth. No other source gives us so clear a picture of the life after this life. It is one of the purposes of God in His book to help man to find the way to eternal happiness with Him.

Bible Passages for Study and Discussion

Psalms 119; Genesis 1, 2, and 3; John 3:16-21; Matthew 28:19, 20; Acts 1:8; Hebrews 2; I John 3:5-9; Revelation 21:1-7.

Questions for Thought and Discussion

1. Does the Bible seem to have definite purpose?
2. What is man's opinion of God if he does not get his ideas from the Bible?
3. What can nature teach us about the right way to live?
4. Do standards of right and wrong change from time to time?
5. Has man developed from a prehistoric animal form?
6. Would science or nature suggest life after this world?
7. Does creation by chance seem possible?
8. Why does man seek another explanation than that given in the Bible for creation, sin, life after death?

Questions to Be Answered in Lesson Preparation from the Bible

1. By whom was creation performed?
2. What was man's original condition?
3. Who brought sin into the world?
4. How early was the plan of salvation in the mind of God?
5. What was the purpose of Christ's coming to the earth?
6. What is the responsibility of each saved person to his fellow man?
7. What preparation has God made for man in the future?
8. Has God revealed anything about the future?
9. Does God hate or love mankind?
10. Can sinful man be made a friend of God?

Hard Words to Be Defined

- | | | |
|---------------------|--------------------------|-----------------|
| 1. Great Commission | 5. future destiny of man | 9. reconcile |
| 2. fall of man | 6. creation by chance | 10. identify |
| 3. eternity | 7. original condition | 11. prehistoric |
| 4. saint | 8. responsibility | |

Lesson V

The History of the Bible— Authorship

Approaching the Lesson

For this lesson it would be very interesting if we could visit the British Museum to see some of the ancient manuscripts which are believed to be first copies of the originals of some of the books of the Bible. But that will not be possible. In many Bibles and Bible dictionaries there are good pictures of scrolls and ancient manuscripts. In this lesson we want to learn a few things about the circumstances in which the books of the Bible were written.

Moses is believed to have written most of the first five books of the Bible. They are often spoken of as the books of Moses. In the German we do not use the names we have but call them first, second, third, fourth, and fifth book of Moses. God told Moses to write the law and the plans for the tabernacle. It is not clearly known if Moses wrote most of the five books. He surely did not write the portion that tells about his death and burial. What seems much more likely is that Moses did not do most of the writing himself. He was the leader of a fairly large nation and his responsibility was great. He probably had some person do the writing for him. It would be just natural that such a person would continue this office after Moses died till a new leader was appointed and took office. Moses would still be considered the writer, even if a servant or a secretary did the actual work for him. It is also interesting to note that God wrote the first copy of the law, and that Moses was commanded to come into God's presence alone. Moses must have written or dictated some of those portions personally. These records are very old and it is not likely that we shall ever know any more definitely just how they were written than we do now.

Most of the Old Testament was first written in the Hebrew language. Some few portions were written during the captivity and are in the language of those nations.

The authorship of many of the Old Testament books is very obscure. David wrote many of the Psalms, but not all of them, apparently. The books of Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles were seemingly written by official scribes whose duty it was to keep a record of the life of the nation. The Proverbs are ascribed to Solomon. Ecclesiastes and the Song of Solomon have the same author. Most of the prophetic books were written by the men for whom they are named, or by their servants as was certainly the case with Jeremiah.

The authors of the New Testament books are better known. In many cases their style of writing and their biographies are fairly well defined. Many of the New Testament books were written for a very specific purpose first, and it was not that of making a contribution to the holy canon. Luke writes the book named after him and the Acts of the Apostles and sends it to a nobleman

by the name of Theophilus. We can only guess who Theophilus was, and many guesses have been made. John writes his books late and reflects a personality and experience that we do not find in the other writings. Matthew writes for the Jews and among other things shows that Jesus was the promised Messiah. Paul writes many letters to the churches that were established on his missionary trips. Several are written to individuals like Timothy and Philemon.

All of the books of the Bible were written by hand with pen and ink. Writing a book was an arduous task in those days. A book was a really precious thing and could be owned only by a rich person, or a church, or the government. For paper they used papyrus or parchment. These materials were so hard to get and so valuable that they were very carefully preserved. One of the ancient manuscripts of the Book of Isaiah was recently found in an old monastery sealed in an air-tight clay tube with wax and pitch. Sometimes the parchment on which a record was made was used a second time to record something that was considered more valuable. In such cases the first writing was scraped off and the new writing written on the parchment. It was often possible to tell what was written first because they could not erase it fully. Several manuscripts of the Bible or of portions are known to have been so changed. The original is still sufficiently readable to be valuable.

The history of the authorship of the Bible is a long and interesting one. It is wonderful how God preserved what He wrote through His servants for His children.

Bible Passages for Study and Discussion

Exodus 31:12-18; 32:19; 34:1-9; Leviticus 1:1, 2; Deuteronomy 1:1; 34:1-8; II Chronicles 33:18; Nehemiah 1:1; Proverbs 1:1; Isaiah 1:1; Jeremiah 1:1; 36:1-8; Daniel 12:4; Malachi 1:1; 4:4; John 21:23-25; Luke 1:1-4; Acts 1:1, 2; 16:6-13; Ephesians 1:1; Hebrews 1:1, 2; Galatians 6:11; Revelation 1:1-3, 19; 22:18, 19.

Questions for Thought and Discussion

1. Why is not more known about the human writers of the Bible?
2. Discuss the statement that Isaiah and Daniel may have been written in the third century after Christ.
3. In what sense do we consider God the author of all of the Bible?
4. How do manuscripts help to support authorship?
5. Is there any reason for doubting divine authorship of any part of the Bible?

Questions to Be Answered in Lesson Preparation from the Bible

1. Which books of the Bible furnish no clue to the human author?
2. How are the Pauline epistles identified by the author?
3. Make a list of the authors of the books of the Bible.
4. What Scripture makes it clear that God is the author of the Bible?
5. Give some references to show how the message was given to the human writers.

6. Was any part of the Bible written by ungodly men?
7. What passages show that God is the author of the Bible by such expressions as: "God said" or the equivalent?

Hard Words to Be Defined

1. manuscript
2. epistles
3. papyrus
4. parchment
5. monastery
6. Hebrew language
7. Aramaic language
8. dictate
9. obscure
10. biography

Lesson VI

The History of the Bible— Translation

Approaching the Lesson

Many persons think of the Bible only in their own language. You may have heard the story of the man who was sure that God was German because in his Bible at home God said to Adam, "Where art thou?" in the German language. It had not occurred to him that his Bible at home was a translation of the original.

The task of translating the Bible into many different languages has been a big one. Most of us could not read the Bible in any of the original languages. Often portions of the Bible are translated because the task of translating the entire Bible is too great.

Before the time of Christ many Jews were driven by persecution into other lands. They learned to speak the language of the lands in which they lived. Many scholars wanted the Bible in languages that were better known than the Hebrew. As a result a very famous translation was made. It is called the Septuagint version because it is supposed to be the work of seventy scholars. It is supposed to be a very accurate translation and was the source of New Testament quotations. Naturally it does not include any of the New Testament because the New Testament was not written at that time. Thousands of copies of this version were made by hand, and a large number of the manuscript copies are still extant.

For many years it was not thought good to have the Bible in the hands of the common people. For the same reason it was not considered desirable to translate the Bible into the vernacular. So very few of the common people could read the Bible for themselves. Beginning in the fourteenth century there have come to us a long list of translations for English-speaking people. Many of the older ones would be difficult for us to read now. The English language has made so many changes since 1380 that you would not easily recognize it. Many of these translations did not include the entire Bible. In 1611 the best known of these translations was made. It is called the Authorized Version. It has found a very important place among English-speaking Christians. In 1881 to 1885 the Revised Version was produced. It is useful for study and comparison, but the Authorized Version is still the standard translation.

Other translations have been issued since. Some attempt to hold to the literal meaning of the original languages, others attempt to express the thought of the Bible in the popular language of the people.

The English Authorized Version, like the German translation by Martin Luther, has done a great deal to give the language of the people a common form. Without this the people of various areas would talk still more differently. They all read the same Bible and hear sermons based on the same Bible language. It helps the people to talk more nearly the same language.

The Bible is being translated into more languages every year by those who love its message and want to bring it to others who do not know about its truth. In early Colonial times the Christian settlers translated it into the language of the American Indians. Now missionaries are translating it into new languages.

Bible Passages for Study and Discussion

Genesis 11:1-7; 42:21-24; II Kings 18:26-28; Judges 12:5, 6; Ezra 4:7; Nehemiah 13:23-25; Esther 1:22; Psalm 19:1-3; Daniel 1:4-7; 5:24-28; Deuteronomy 28:49; John 1:38; Acts 21:40; 21:37; John 19:20; Revelation 7:9; Acts 8:27-35.

Questions for Thought and Discussion

1. What makes translation of the Bible very important?
2. Why is it important to have the Bible in the language of the people?
3. For what reasons would the church desire to have the Bible only in the Latin or Greek?
4. What value can you see in knowing several languages for Bible study?
5. Why must missionaries have good use of languages?
6. What are some of the essentials of a good translation of the Bible?
7. What influence did the invention of printing have upon the work of translating the Bible?
8. What were the reasons for translating the Bible?
9. Would it not be easier to have just one language? Could this be accomplished?
10. Name some of the languages that have been very important.

Questions to Be Answered in Lesson Preparation from the Bible

1. Did men of the Bible ever have to learn foreign languages?
2. What accounts for the difference in spelling of names in the New and Old Testaments? (Jeremy, Noe, Elias, etc.)
3. How many languages could Paul use in his preaching?
4. Give some illustrations of men speaking through interpreters.
5. What men of the Bible were handicapped because of language?
6. Did different nationalities intermarry in Bible times?
7. What unusual language demonstration took place in the beginning of Acts?
8. How did the difference in language get started?
9. Why did Nehemiah object to foreign languages?
10. Why did Pilate want the superscription in three languages?

Hard Words to Be Defined

- | | |
|----------------------|------------------------|
| 1. version | 7. Authorized Version |
| 2. original language | 8. Revised Version |
| 3. vernacular | 9. Literal translation |
| 4. scholar | 10. dialect |
| 5. arduous task | 11. Septuagint |
| 6. extant | |

Lesson VII

The History of the Bible— Preservation

Approaching the Lesson

The story of how the Bible was preserved is so full of miracles and thrills that one cannot help but think that the Word of God is very precious. The devotion of the people of God and the concern that the Bible be preserved for future generations is a real challenge.

There are so many possibilities for a book or a message to get lost or forgotten. The fact that the Bible has been kept for these thousands of years is surely evidence that it was highly prized and that divine power protected it.

In early Bible times there were attempts to destroy the Word of God. One time Jeremiah's servant read some of Jeremiah's prophecy before the king. The king did not appreciate the message and cut it up with his penknife and threw it in the fire. But the Lord gave the message to the prophet again. Moses had had a similar experience with the tablets of law.

Often the people of God became careless and the Word of God was lost for a time. This happened more than once. It is so very evident by the way it was found again that God had not forgotten to preserve the Bible. After many years it was found in the ruins of the Temple.

There are other ways that the Word of God could be destroyed. At times men try to change the Word of God to suit their own ways of thinking. God warned against this when the Jews came to the promised land. Jesus made it very plain that the Word of God does not change by so little as a jot or a tittle. The jot is a little mark in the Greek that looks like a small letter "i" at the end of a word. It does not change the meaning very much and men who copied the manuscript sometimes missed these little marks. The tittle is a little mark in the Hebrew language that changes the pronunciation slightly. It, also, was sometimes missed by persons who were making copies of the manuscripts. Jesus wants to show that the Word of God does not change at all.

In the many translations, and the old manuscripts there are many little differences. But there are almost none that have any important effect on the meaning. The serious differences are easily ruled out because they are so few and so evident.

Many stories can be told of how the Bible was kept from destruction. Copies of Tyndale's translation were publicly burned, but in spite of this more translations were made and distributed. Adoniram Judson was able to preserve the manuscript of a translation in his pillow in jail and later it was printed and distributed. The early Christians memorized portions of the Bible in order to be sure that if every copy of the Bible were destroyed they could reproduce it from memory. The Lord has been preserving His Word in many ways.

Bible Passages for Study and Discussion

Isaiah 40:8; I Samuel 5:1-7; 6:1-12; II Samuel 6:1-18; II Chronicles 34:14-21; Nehemiah 8:1-8, 11; I Peter 1:25; Psalm 119:89; Matthew 24:35; 5:17, 18; Luke 16:17; II Peter 3:16-18.

Questions for Thought and Discussion

1. Does the preservation of the Bible seem different from the preservation of other ancient writings?
2. Was it necessary to preserve the Word of God only against the effects of weather, insects, and time?
3. Why should any person or nation want to destroy valuable, old manuscripts?
4. What do we learn from the fact that there are about 2000 manuscripts and almost no important differences in any of them.
5. Discuss the importance of monasteries in the preservation of the Bible.
6. How did the invention of printing help or hinder the preservation of the Bible?
7. Would it be good or bad to have some person find the very first copies of some of the manuscripts of the books of the Bible?
8. What is meant by spurious writings?
9. Find the meaning of the words, uncial, cursive.
10. What did the writings of the Church Fathers do to preserve the Bible?

Questions to Be Answered in Lesson Preparation from the Bible

1. Name some Bible passages that show that the Lord will not permit His Word to be changed.
2. What evidence is there to show that the Lord was displeased that the Ark of the Covenant left the Tabernacle?
3. How enduring is the Word of God?
4. Did Christ in any way change the Old Testament law and prophets?
5. How did Nehemiah seek to preserve the Law?
6. What promise is made to those who add to or change the Bible?
7. How does Romans 1:25 relate to preserving the Word of God?
8. What relation does Jude 3, 4 have to preserving the Word?
9. According to Acts 6:14, is there a difference between preserving customs and traditions, and preserving the Word?
10. Explain Psalm 119:160. What other passages express similar ideas?

Hard Words to Be Defined

- | | |
|---------------|--------------|
| 1. traditions | 6. title |
| 2. uncial | 7. covenant |
| 3. cursive | 8. testament |
| 4. spurious | 9. enduring |
| 5. jot | 10. wrest |

Lesson VIII

The Writers of the Bible

Approaching the Lesson

In a previous lesson it was suggested that we do not know very much about some of the writers of the books of the Bible. We call the first five books the books of Moses. Some others were written by unknown writers, maybe by groups of writers or compilers, like scribes or chroniclers. To the Jews it was very important to have complete genealogical records.

But we do know a lot about a few of the writers of the books of the Bible. We shall study a few of these and see what kind of men God used to make the record of His Word.

Moses was a great man. The circumstances under which he was born and reared must have made him think that God had a special task for him. He received very special training in the educational program of the land of Egypt. Early in life he rejected his royal privileges for the sake of God's people. In the wilderness he learned to know God in a special way. He was for some years a shepherd. Later, as leader of God's people he was known as God's spokesman to the people. It was very fitting that he should be the recognized author of the five books that give the history and the law as God gave it to them.

David was a man after God's own heart. No one is quite sure what is meant by that Biblical expression; for we know that he was not a perfect man. It seems likely that it means that David tried to do God's will. His life as a young shepherd and soldier and later as the king of God's chosen people gave him special qualification for writing the Psalms. His interest in music and poetry also enabled him to write in a style that is so well suited to the thoughts he expresses. Many of these passages are used almost as much as the New Testament portions. They are useful for many occasions and are such rich food for the soul. The Bible tells us many things about David's life, and how the Lord used him.

The writer of Proverbs, Song of Solomon, and Ecclesiastes was the gifted son of David. He learned a lot from his father, David. He pleased the Lord by his humility when he became king, so the Lord promised him special wisdom. His great wisdom was highly praised by great men and women of his time. As a king and a writer and scholar in all the sciences he was a very superior man. In his relationship with God he started out well, but he was seduced by worldly and evil influences. We do not know how he ended, but it is evident that men of God were disappointed in him for a time, and he himself writes some things that make it seem that he saw his serious mistake. God used him wonderfully to give through him a very interesting and useful portion of His Word.

Of most of the prophets who wrote each a book in the Bible we know just enough to understand them a little. Some of them are mentioned in the historical books; but some of the important prophets did not write any book.

Daniel was a captive who lived true to God in the land of captivity when it would have been easier to gain fame in another way. Isaiah had a special call of God in the Temple. He went often to the wicked rulers of the time to urge them to obey God. Jeremiah testified to the kings also and his sad words did not please the men of his time. Amos often spoke hard words against the rulers who made social crimes legal. About each of these writers we know little more than the time in which they lived, their father's name, and sometimes their trade or home town.

John, who wrote five of the New Testament books, is a very appealing man. But we do not know very much about him. It is hard to write a good biography of him.

The Apostle Paul is the best known writer of the books of the Bible. This is because it is such an unusual experience, and also because his teaching is so practical for all Christians. God used this young man who intended to oppose Christianity to spread this new way of life to all the then civilized world. His life becomes the major part of the Book of Acts, and his letters to the churches give us an understanding of many of the practical aspects of Christianity that no other part of the Bible supplies.

Bible Passages for Study and Discussion

Exodus 2:1-15; 3:1-3, 8; I Samuel 16:1-13; 17:12-20, 28-30; 26:5-9; II Samuel 11:26, 27; 16:5-8; II Chronicles 1:7--2:2; 8:1-12; 9:1-6; I Kings 4:29-34; 11:1-8; Isaiah 1:1; 6:1-9; 36:22--37:7; Jeremiah 1:1-10; Amos 1:1, 7, 14; Acts 26:4-22; Philippians 3:3-7; Acts 22:3-15; I Corinthians 1:1; Galatians 1:1; Ephesians 1:1; Philemon 1:1.

Questions for Thought and Discussion

1. What value is there in knowing the authors of books of the Bible?
2. Why do we not know the authors of some?
3. Who wrote the following: Ruth, Job, Hebrews?
4. Does human authorship interfere with divine authorship?
5. What should be our attitude toward the human authors of books of the Bible?

Questions to Be Answered in Lesson Preparation from the Bible

1. What special training did each of the following men have that fitted them to write part of God's book: Moses, David, Solomon, John, Paul?
2. Which came first in Paul's life, his education and training or his experience with God?
3. According to Hebrews 1:1, who is speaking to us in these books?
4. Who are the writers who recorded the teachings of Jesus?
5. Which writer recorded the Acts of the Apostles?
6. Did the writers have in mind at the time that they were writing a part of the Bible?

7. Which books were written by kings? In jail? To individuals? To churches? By Gentiles? In foreign captivity? **About** women?
8. Do any New Testament authors recognize Old Testament writers?

Hard Words to Be Defined

1. human authorship
2. divine authorship
3. qualification
4. land of captivity
5. God's chosen people
6. compilers
7. scribes
8. chroniclers
9. genealogical records
10. royal privileges

Lesson IX

Great Doctrines of the Bible

Approaching the Lesson

This subject is much too large to cover in one lesson. You will look at several of the great doctrines, or teachings, of the Bible. But you will later want to study them more fully and also learn of many that you do not consider in this lesson.

The Doctrine of God

The Bible does not say that God exists, it just assumes that this is a fact and tells us about God. Many of the acts of God and traits of personality are given in His Word. God is infinite. He is eternal, omnipotent, omnipresent, omniscient. He is a God of love and justice. As one reads the Bible there is a statement here and there that gives another glimpse into the personal nature of God. It is evident that the Author of the Bible wants the reader to know God. The doctrine of God is one of the great doctrines of the Bible.

The Doctrine of the Trinity

Closely related to the former doctrine is the teaching that God exists as a triune person, Father, Son and Spirit. This teaching is not so clear in the Old Testament as in the New, but can be found in both.

The Doctrine of Sin

Much of the Bible is directed toward making man realize that he is from nature not right with God and needs a Saviour. The source of sin and the nature of the devil, the results of sin in this life and in eternity are all important parts of this doctrine.

The Doctrine of Salvation

With sin there is always a curse; but the love of God immediately provides a plan of salvation by giving the free gift of the Son of God. The revelation of this doctrine runs through the law, the history of God's dealings with man in Old Testament times and in most of the New Testament writings. It is the most wonderful story of the Bible, the good news for all mankind.

Other Doctrines

Related to the above doctrines, or teachings, are others that serve to complete the body of truth of the Bible. The Bible teaches faith. It is essential that man accept God's Word and the plan of salvation in faith. There is the doctrine of the church, which constitutes the bride of Christ, the group of called out believers. One can go through the Bible and find what God has to say on love, marriage, baptism, repentance, communion, heaven, hell, Satan, angels, the second coming of Christ, stewardship, dress, speech, nonconformity, separation of church and state, nonresistance to violence, prayer, missions, and so the list could be continued. The teaching on each of these subjects could properly be called the doctrine of the Bible on that particular point.

Christians who believe that God should rule in our lives are very eager to learn what the Bible teaches on every point of life. So then Bible doctrine, or

Bible teaching, becomes very important. All this relates very closely to the thoughts we considered in the lessons on the origin and inspiration of the Bible.

Bible Passages for Study and Discussion

John 5:24; Matthew 5:43-46; John 3:16; 3:7; Acts 8:36, 37; John 13:34, 35; Acts 1:8; Matthew 28:19, 20; 19:4-9; II Corinthians 6:17; Matthew 6:24; I Thessalonians 5:26; 4:14-17; Hebrews 6:1-3; I John 4:16; Hebrews 13:8; Exodus 3:13-15; Revelation 1:7, 8.

Questions for Thought and Discussion

1. Does it seem likely or possible that the world came into existence by accident or chance?
2. What determines the right and wrong of our conduct?
3. Why do the heathen often have extremely wicked practices as part of their worship service in their idol temples?
4. What is the fundamental basis for most of our laws in today's civilized countries?
5. Does man by culture and civilization rise to high levels?
6. Do man-made customs change?
7. How can we determine which religion has the correct concept of God?
8. Can science and literature replace satisfactorily the Biblical teachings of God, sin, salvation, eternity, the soul of man, and creation?
9. What differences do you observe between God as we know Him in the Bible and the gods of other religions?

Questions to Be Answered in Lesson Preparation from the Bible

1. What are some of the adjectives that describe the nature of God?
2. In what ways is God like a human being? In what ways different?
3. What are some of the Bible standards for marriage?
4. How are angels described in the Bible?
5. What does the Bible say about the future state of man?
6. What important doctrine is stated in Genesis 1?
7. Where in the Bible do you find teaching on footwashing and the devotional covering?
8. Quote several important passages to show the Biblical teaching on participation in war.
9. How important is a Bible doctrine if it is stated only once in the Bible?
10. Quote a Bible passage to show why Christians are careful to know and do what God teaches in His Word.

Hard Words to Be Defined

- | | |
|---------------|-----------------------|
| 1. doctrine | 7. body of truth |
| 2. eternal | 8. justice |
| 3. infinite | 9. trinity, triune |
| 4. omnipotent | 10. fundamental basis |
| 5. omniscient | 11. concept |
| 6. revelation | 12. immutable |

Lesson X

The Literary Importance of the Bible

Approaching the Lesson

This is an age of literature. We have books, newspapers, magazines, and many other forms of literature. Literature forms an important part of our life. Literature is devoted to many areas of thought. Some of the things that are written do not merit fully the honor of being called literature. They usually land in the wastebasket or the fire soon after they are issued. In this discussion we shall think of literature as that part of the written and printed material that has what it takes to make it last.

For many centuries the Bible has had a prominent place in the literature of the part of the world we know, called the western world. This includes the Americas and Europe.

Unfortunately much of the material that was written and printed did not very much resemble the Bible truth from which it was drawn. But it is still important for the consideration of this lesson, for it helps to give us an idea of the great influence the Bible has had on the thought life of the people in the past centuries.

Much of the poetry of England and America has for its basis some Biblical theme. Many of the hymns of our churches are made up of Bible truths. Many of the great books that have been read by millions have their background in some important Bible teaching.

"Rock of Ages," "Jesus, Saviour, Pilot Me," and "My Faith Looks Up to Thee:" are songs that have touched hearts. They have their basis of thought in the Bible.

Pilgrim's Progress, and *Imitation of Christ* have been read by many millions and the readers have been drawn nearer to the Lord by the reading of these Bible based books. Fox's *Martyrs* and the *Martyrs' Mirror* have strengthened the faith of the readers. At the time when these books were written there were not so many books of any kind. Thousands of other good books have been made available on the various themes of the Bible. There have been Bible stories, expositions, commentaries. There has been Bible fiction. The Bible has had a tremendous influence on the writing of books.

Many of the books that do not try to support the Bible have frequent reference or quotation from the Bible. Dickens, Scott, and Shakespeare make frequent use of ideas or expressions that must have come straight from the Bible. Even books that are not very good and are not appreciated by Christians who are careful to obey the teachings of the Bible often quote from or refer to the Bible. Longfellow, Whittier, and Bryant use many Bible themes in their widely read poetry.

Modern writings are so many that no person can be familiar with all of what is written. But it can still be said that the Bible lends a tremendous amount of color to the prose and poetry that is produced today. The language and thought of the Bible has done more than any other book to form the speech and thought of the present English-speaking world.

Bible Passages for Study and Discussion

Luke 1:1-4; Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16; Ecclesiastes 12:12; Judges 5:14; Acts 17:28; Psalm 1:2; Acts 19:19; John 21:25; I Kings 4:29-34; II Chronicles 9:29; Luke 2; Hebrews 11; Revelation 21:1-7.

Questions for Thought and Discussion

1. Do you think it is right to read any other book than the Bible?
2. Name some kinds of reading matter the Christian will not read.
3. Make a list of familiar hymns and give the Scripture verse that expresses the theme of the song.
4. Give some illustrations of good reading that is not related to the Bible. What makes it good reading?
5. How much time should one spend on reading the newspaper?
6. Make a list of books you would expect to find in the home of a Christian.
7. How much need has the Christian for books on world history?
8. Make some comment on the use of Bible commentaries and books of sermons.
9. Is the present trend in literature toward more or less use of the Bible?
10. Make a list of books you have read and show what influence the Bible had on them.

Questions to Be Answered in Lesson Preparation from the Bible

1. Select from the Bible a number of passages that you know have been used in books.
2. After conversion what did Christians do with evil books?
3. Did any Bible preachers ever refer to writings other than the Bible?
4. What books should occupy the Christian's time?
5. Does the Bible refer to any writings not included in the Bible?
6. What kind of writings did Paul encourage the Ephesians to use?
7. Does the Bible give any teaching on nature study, political science, law, history, health? Is it right to read anything more than what the Bible gives on such subjects?
8. Can you name some topics of importance on which the Bible is silent?
9. Who are some of the men of the Bible who were well informed on the Bible and other things also?
10. How shall we test the spiritual soundness of books that have to do with spiritual or social matters?

Hard Words to Be Defined

- | | |
|-----------------|------------------------|
| 1. commentaries | 6. quote |
| 2. fiction | 7. theme |
| 3. prose | 8. political science |
| 4. poetry | 9. spiritual soundness |
| 5. literature | 10. hymn |

Lesson XI

The Place of the Bible in Life

Approaching the Lesson

Much has been said in the former lessons that might be said again in this lesson. We want to see what the Bible has to do with our everyday living. It can be said in short by this that for the Christian the Bible is the most important source of information. Naturally, he gets information from other books, from his friends and from his experience; but there is no source of information quite so important as the Bible.

Many persons live as if the time on earth were all they had to live for. To them it does not matter much what the Bible has to say. Even some persons who call themselves Christians have little concern for what God says to us in the Bible. In past years the Mennonite Church has emphasized the importance of obeying all of God's Word. We believe that every doctrine and every command is important. The Bible is inspired, it is God's message to us, it tells us what God wants us to know so that we can live in a way that makes us happy and brings Him glory.

There is in man something that requires worship and communion with God. It is possible to substitute other things for this true worship that we learn in the Word of God. When man does not know or take into account the way of life as given in the Bible other forms of worship take the place of the true worship; and it is always evident that those persons or nations lack something that is important for real happiness. Among us in a Christian land it is not likely that we will so soon become literal idol worshipers, although that has been happening too, but so often persons who become careless in their Bible study and prayer life become interested in money and pleasure. Very soon they feel that they would rather forget about God, the Church, and the Bible. In a surprisingly short time they do and say things, and even believe things, that they know are not right according to God's Word.

In a society where most people read and obey the Bible it will make the person who does not do it feel out of place. But on the earth we have never had such a society, except within a very limited group, such as a congregation in a church where there was much teaching and Bible study. Usually we live in a group where it is quite easy to get farther and farther away from the Bible way. It is also easy because the enemy of God, Satan, is constantly tempting us and making sin look attractive. This relationship with God and the Bible is more than just a social relationship. It is a spiritual relationship between man and God.

Man is different from all other living things on the earth. This difference lies in the fact that man is a natural and spiritual being at the same time; man has a soul that lives on after man dies his natural death. The state of happiness of the soul after the end of the natural life depends upon man having accepted God's plan of salvation. This plan is plainly told in God's Word. Man also differs from other living things in having the power to reason. This enables man

to make choices, and makes him responsible to God for making correct choices. It is therefore very important that we have knowledge of the standards of right and wrong as given in the Bible. The Bible is the most important book man has.

Bible Passages for Study and Discussion

John 6:35; Acts 17:11; Psalm 119:11, 18, 24, 32, 93, 105; Hebrews 4:12; 8:8-13; II Timothy 3:16, 17; Romans 12:1, 2; Hebrews 3:1, 12-14; Galatians 5:16-26; Philippians 3:3-10; I Peter 2:1-10; 5:10; I John 3:1-10.

Questions for Thought and Discussion

1. Discuss the appropriateness of using highway signs for publishing the Word of God.
2. Should we encourage the use of Bible passages in debates on nonreligious topics?
3. Do we, as some would suppose, consist of a double personality with differing responsibility? Do we at times have to argue that our duty to society conflicts with our duty to God?
4. Discuss conditions that arise in those areas where the churches are closed and the Bible is forgotten.
5. Is America Christian?
6. What part of our law comes directly or indirectly from the Bible?
7. Do we have any laws that conflict with the Bible?
8. Did families in Colonial days let the Bible have a more important place in their lives than we do now?
9. In what ways should we give the Bible an opportunity to influence our lives?
10. Is there danger that the Bible will hold too important a place in our lives?

Questions to Be Answered in Lesson Preparation from the Bible

1. What must every person do to be at peace with God?
2. What evidence have we that David read and followed the Bible?
3. Does the Bible give us guidance in spiritual or natural things, or both?
4. How old was Timothy when he began to study the Bible?
5. How much education must one have to understand the Bible?
6. Is the Bible able to contribute anything to the man or woman who already has a good education?
7. Name some ways the Bible is to be used.
8. What is meant by casting pearls before swine?
9. Explain Psalm 1:2.
10. According to Proverbs 3:6, how big a place should the Bible have in our life?

Hard Words to Be Defined

- | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------|
| 1. acknowledge | 6. assured |
| 2. spiritual things | 7. appropriateness |
| 3. natural things | 8. responsibility |
| 4. meditate | 9. swine |
| 5. double personality | 10. pearls |

Lesson XII

The Superiority of the Bible

Approaching the Lesson

You have learned many things about the Bible. It is a very good book. It is also an unusual book. Its author is God. All other books are men's books. In many cases men wrote books because they were sure that God wanted them to write what they did, but it would not be right to say that those books are God's Word. The Bible is inspired, it comes from God, it has a wonderful history and its teachings have to do with the most important things of our lives. The Bible should have first place in our lives.

In this lesson we shall notice some things about the Word of God that makes it superior to any other book. You must have felt that this is the case in some of the former lessons; we do not consider any other book the Word of God; no other book is inspired and sacred like the Bible. No other book has the plan of salvation.

It Is Superior in Authority

Many other books speak with apparent authority. Often they do not last very long. Either the force of the authority changes or the facts change. Many books on science had to be changed. At one time they said light did not require any time to travel through space. Now they know that it does. At one time they thought nothing heavier than air could fly through the air. They had balloons then, but apparently they forgot about birds and no airplanes were invented then. Many of man's ideas had to be changed often. Because of God's infinite wisdom He can speak in His Word with authority that no other writing can equal.

It Is Superior in Importance

No other book deals with such important matters as those of the Bible. There are other important things, but they are important for this life only. It may be important to read about good farming methods, and good cooking. But it is so very much more important to read about things that have to do with the eternal life of the soul. The Bible is superior to any book because it deals with the most important things of life.

It Is Superior in Source

You have enjoyed reading a good book sometime. What made you want to read the book? It may be that it was because some great person wrote the book. That is just why the Bible is so much better than any other good book you will ever read. There are many books I am going to read sometime if I can find time for it. One of the reasons I want to read most of them is that I know something about the persons who wrote the books and I believe they will be good books. Because God, the Creator, the One who loves us so much, is the author of the Bible it is the best book of all.

It Is Superior in Effect

Most books will give you some kind of information. Most of them have some good point. But you will say after reading many books that you are specially glad that you read a certain book because you got so much help from it. It may have made life easier for you. Well, for the same reason you should read the Bible often. No other book can do for you what the Bible will if you read it sincerely. It tells you how sinful you are. It tells you how sin came into the world. It tells you how to get free from sin. It tells about being born again, and how we are changed from hating God to loving God. In this book we learn about Jesus, the Son of God, who came to make possible our salvation. We also read of the meaning of real spiritual life. The life in heaven after this life is made as clear as we can understand it in this life. Surely, no other book has ever done so much for us.

Praise God for such a wonderful book, the Bible.

Bible Passages for Study and Discussion

John 1:1; Psalm 119:97, 103, 140; Ezekiel 3:3; Romans 1:15-20; Ephesians 6:10-18.

Questions for Thought and Discussion

1. Make a list of ten good books. What makes you think they are good books?
2. How many good books can you name that are older than the Bible?
3. What are some great topics for good books that are not covered in the Bible?
4. What kind of books are translated into many languages? Why?
5. Why was the Bible translated into many languages?
6. Do you expect some other better book to take the place of the Bible sometime?
7. Name some other book from which one frequently reads quotations.
8. Make a list of tests to be able to know a good book. Do you use these tests when you select a book to read?
9. What kind of books do you like to read? Why?
10. Do you think the Bible is an interesting book? Are the best books the most interesting and easy to read?

Questions to Be Answered in Lesson Preparation from the Bible

1. What Bible reference tells that the Scriptures are inspired?
2. Can you explain John 1:1, "the Word was God"?
3. Give a passage to show what Jesus thought of the Bible.
4. Does Paul ever quote from the Bible?
5. Make a list of things the Word of God can do.
6. What is meant by saying the Word of God is quick and powerful?
7. Can you quote any passage that shows that the Word of God does not change?

8. For whom is the message of the Bible?
9. How shall we use the Word of God—Psalm 1?
10. Is there any danger in rejecting the Word of God?

Hard Words to Be Defined

- | | |
|------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. superiority | 6. fiery darts of the wicked |
| 2. quotations | 7. sincerely |
| 3. quick and powerful | 8. salvation |
| 4. whole armor of God | 9. wiles of the devil |
| 5. sword of the Spirit | 10. revealed |

