

**CHRISTADELPHIAN BIBLE POSTAL COURSE**Tutor's Name: Date: Student's Name: Ref No.: **LESSON 1 • The Bible our Guide**WEEKLY READINGS  
READING FOR STUDY PAPERGenesis 1-3, Luke 1-3  
Psalm 1, 19, 119v 81-112**The need for a guide**

When we are visiting a place we have never been to before, we need some sort of a guide. It may be we buy a map, or a guidebook. It may be we ask a friend who has first-hand knowledge of the way - but we must have a guide.

So, as we travel through life, we need a guide. We need to know what is the purpose of life, and how we should live day by day. The Bible claims to have the answer to these questions.

When we consider the wonders of the world around us, and the marvellous way in which our own bodies are made, we feel sure that a great Creator must have been at work. But how can we know more about Him, and find out what He wants us to do?

The answer, of course, is in the Bible. God, the great maker of all things, has given us the guide-book that we need. If we would please Him, we must take that guide-book, and read it, and study it, and think about it day by day.

**The Bible's claims**

The Bible makes great claims. It speaks with authority, claiming to be the Word of God. Many times the prophets of the Old Testament begin their message with the words, "Thus saith the Lord". The apostle Paul tells us that "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God" (2 Tim.3:16).

If these claims were not true, and the Bible were not the Word of God, we could put it on the shelf and forget it. However beautiful its teachings, they would have no claim upon us.

Since the Bible is true, we dare not ignore it - unless we want to ignore God, and cut ourselves off from the offer of life which He has made!

**How do we know that the Bible is true?**

What reasons are there for believing the Bible to be true? There are so many reasons that we cannot give them all here, but will mention a few of them.

In the first place, we have the Lord Jesus Christ's word for it. In His days, only the Old Testament had been written - and Jesus believed every word of it. Whenever He was challenged over anything that He has said or done, He would support His words and deeds by referring to the Old Testament.

When the Sadducees came to Him, arguing that there was no such thing as resurrection from the dead, He said to them, "Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God" (Matt.22:29).

Then He went on to prove to them, from the Old Testament, that the hope of resurrection from the dead was part of the revelation of God.

Jesus speaks of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; of David and Solomon, and of many other people about whom we read in the Old Testament; and from the way in which He speaks of them, we know that He believes the Old Testament stories about them.

Then there is the fact that no one has ever proved the Bible false. Many enemies of the Bible, including some very clever men, have tried to do this, but they have all failed. If we stop to think about this, we have to admit that it is a remarkable thing

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Then again, there is the wonderful fulfilment of prophecies. The Bible speaks, from time to time, of events that are to come to pass hundreds of years later. In Matt.2 for example, we read that the wise men came to Herod to ask "Where is He that is born King of the Jews?". Now Herod asked the chief priests this question, and they at once replied, "In Bethlehem of Judea". How did they know? Because, hundreds of years before, it had been prophesied in one of the books of the Old Testament - Mic.5:2.

The history of the Bible, written so long ago, has been proved true again and again by modern discoveries. So we could go on finding more proofs, but the best way is to read the Bible for ourselves. Then, gradually we come to see how each part fits in with the others, like the pieces of a jig-saw puzzle. We gradually come to see what a perfect picture it makes when complete showing to us the whole purpose of God.

The contents of the Bible

The Bible is not really one book, but a collection of books - 39 in the Old Testament and 27 in the New, making 66 in all. They were written "by many different authors, over a period of several thousand years, yet all combine to give us one complete story - the story of the working of God's purpose with man, from its very beginnings recorded in Genesis, right up to the time when "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever" (Rev.11:15).

The Old Testament

The first five books of the Old Testament were written by Moses, who is called in the Bible, the "servant of God". The first book is called Genesis, which means "beginnings". It tells us about God's dealings with the first men on this earth

Then follow Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. These four books tell us how God brought the Jews, whom He had chosen to be His people, out of Egypt, and gave them the land of Canaan (Israel). Then follow a number of books telling the history of this people, and God's dealings with them

When we come to the book of Psalms, we find some of the finest poetry that has ever been written. You don't like poetry? But the poetry of the Bible is different. It speaks of feelings we all have at times, yet cannot put into words. For instance, take these verses from Psa.8:3 & 4.

"When I consider Thy heavens, the word of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which Thou hast ordained; What is man, that Thou art mindful of him? and the son of man that Thou visitest him?"

Haven't you ever felt like that when you looked up at the stars at night?

Then we have the books of the prophets - the long prophetic works of Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel, followed by many shorter prophecies.

You will find a complete list of books at the front of your Bible - this is just to give you some idea of their order and content.

The New Testament

This begins with four separate stories of the life of Christ, written by Matthew, Mark, Luke and John - each one telling the story in his own way

Then follows the story of what happened after Jesus Christ was risen from the dead. Here we read about the first churches that were formed, in a book called "The Acts of the Apostles".

We have then a number of letters written by various apostles to help these young churches and, finally, the Book of Revelation. Again, if you want a complete list, you will find it in the front of your Bible.

Note

If you would like fuller proof of the reliability of the Bible, write and tell us, and ask for a copy of the leaflet Is the Bible true? of course It is!