

# The Bible: God's Truth

## Unit 1, Lesson 2a

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### Memory Work:

This week, continue memorizing the books of the Bible.  
If you already know the books, memorize Psalm 119:105.

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**The Bible is the record of God's truth** given through written historical accounts, poetry, prophecy, letters, and proverbs. Sixty-six books cover time from God's creation of all that exists through the age of Jesus' ministry on earth to the time of the early church. Then there are prophecies that are still future to our day, most notably the return of Jesus and the establishment of God's kingdom on earth. These books have been compiled into a single volume, known as the Bible.

The Bible is organized in two major divisions:

- I. Old Testament
- II. New Testament

The Old Testament, found first in the Bible, describes the sequence of events leading to and following the initial agreement God made with the nation of Israel. The historical events recorded in the Old Testament occurred from Creation to about 400 BC.

The New Testament describes the life and ministry of Jesus and the actions of the early church, along with letters written by early church leaders for the instruction of the believer. The new agreement God made with mankind, Jew and Gentile, is worked out and explained in the New Testament. The New Testament books were written from shortly after Jesus' ascension to heaven to about AD 90.

Both testaments describe events leading up to the future establishment of God's eternal Kingdom.

### Bible Divisions:

- Testaments
- Books
- Chapters
- Verses

### Testament:

- a covenant between God and man

### Covenant:

- a binding agreement between two or more parties
- a contract
- a promise

### Gentile:

- anyone who is not a Jew

## The Old Testament

The Old Testament is made up of 39 books and is typically broken down into these categories:

LAW:	Genesis through Deuteronomy
HISTORY:	Joshua through Esther
POETRY:	Job through Song of Songs
MAJOR PROPHETS:	Isaiah through Daniel
MINOR PROPHETS:	Hosea through Malachi

The Jewish Scriptures are the same as the Old Testament (without the apocrypha accepted by the Roman Catholic Church). The Jewish Bible is also called the Hebrew Bible, since it is mostly written in the Hebrew language.

The Jewish Bible is known as the Tanakh or the Masoretic Text.

The Jewish Scriptures are traditionally divided into three categories:

- The Torah (Teaching)
- The Prophets
- The Writings

Here is a brief description of these divisions and the books in them:

### LAW:

The five books of the Law are also known as the Pentateuch. The Hebrew name for these five books is Torah. Although in brief definitions, Torah is described as the Law, the Torah actually entails more than lists of rules. It describes a way of life.

Pentateuch is Greek for "five scrolls"

Law = Pentateuch = Torah

1. According to Deuteronomy 31:9, who wrote the Pentateuch?
2. Who were the keepers of the law?
3. Why was the law to be read to all the people every seven years (Deuteronomy 31:10-13)?

### Alien:

➤ foreigners living with Israel.

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GENESIS (Gen, Ge, Gn): the book of beginnings and firsts, from creation to the first sin to the beginnings of God's chosen people, Israel

EXODUS (Ex, Exod, Exo): the exodus of God's people, the Israelites, from slavery in Egypt

LEVITICUS (Lev, Le, Lv): the establishment and details of the priesthood of the tribe of Levi

NUMBERS (Num, Nu, Nm, Nb): the wanderings of the Israelites in the desert for 40 years

DEUTERONOMY (Deut, Dt): Moses speaks to the Israelites prior to his death, instructing and reminding them of their covenant with the Lord

The parentheses after each book title on the left gives some common abbreviations used for writing Scripture references. Bible book abbreviations are often written without periods. The abbreviation used in these Bible studies is listed first.

"Deuteronomy" is from the Latin and Greek, meaning "second law." It is a restatement of the law Israel had already received through Moses from God.

### HISTORY:

The books of history record the events surrounding God's actions through and for the people of Israel from their entry into and possession of Canaan until they are exiled from, and then returned to, the land.

JOSHUA (Josh, Jos, Jsh): describes the conquering of the land of Canaan under Joshua's leadership

JUDGES (Judg, Jdg, Jg, Jdgs): the time when Israel is led by various "judges" through periods of oppression and deliverance

RUTH (Rth, Ru): a woman of Moab, Ruth, moves to Israel with her mother-in-law and ultimately becomes a part of Jesus' family line

1 and 2 SAMUEL (1 Sam, 1 Sa, 1<sup>st</sup> Sam, First Sam, 2 Sam, 2 Sa, 2<sup>nd</sup> Sam, Second Sam): Samuel is the last judge to lead the people of Israel, and is followed by King Saul and King David

Canaan is a Biblical name for the land known as Palestine, where the ancient and present-day nation of Israel is located

The "judges" were individuals God raised up to be leaders who saved Israel from the enemies of their day. See Judges 2:16.

Moab was an ancient nation located on the southeastern edge of the Dead Sea

1 and 2 KINGS (1 Kgs, 1<sup>st</sup> Kings, First Kings, 2 Kgs, 2<sup>nd</sup> Kings, Second Kings): Israel divides into a northern kingdom, Israel, and a southern kingdom, Judah; the history of the kings of each nation, until conquered by foreign powers as a result of disobedience toward God

1 and 2 CHRONICLES (1 Chron, 1 Ch, 2 Chron, 2 Ch): a record of the kings of Judah from King David until the exile to Babylon

EZRA (Ez): Jews return to Jerusalem from exile in Babylon and rebuild the Temple

NEHEMIAH (Neh, Ne): the wall is rebuilt around the city of Jerusalem and the people return to faithful living

ESTHER (Esth, Es): A Jewish woman is chosen as wife of a Persian king and is able to save the Jews through her courage

### POETRY:

In these books, various poetic forms are used to present truths about God and life.

JOB (Job, Jb): an exploration of the suffering of the righteous and God's oversight and sovereignty

PSALMS (Psa, Ps, Pss): songs and poetry for worship

PROVERBS (Prov, Pr): wise sayings and observations about life

ECCLESIASTES (Eccl, Eccles): an examination of the purpose of life

SONG OF SONGS, also Song of Solomon (SS, SOS): a celebration of marital love

### PROPHECY:

The prophets were men to whom God gave messages to share with the people of their world, messages of condemnation of sin, of the need for repentance, of the longsuffering mercy of God, and of hope for the future. The prophets did not write their own words down. This was usually done by another individual.

### MAJOR PROPHETS:

The major prophets are known as "major" due to the quantity of material attributed to their ministries and does not indicate their messages were more important than that of the minor prophets. This category contains descriptions of the ministries of four prophets along with the poetry considered to have been written by one of those prophets.

ISAIAH (Isa, Is): a prophet to the southern kingdom of Judah during the days of the Assyrian threat when the northern kingdom of Israel was exiled

Isaiah is sometimes called the "gospel" of the Old Testament

JEREMIAH (Jer, Je, Jr): a prophet to the southern kingdom of Judah during the siege and exile of Jerusalem by the Babylonians

LAMENTATIONS (Lam, La): poems of sorrow for the destruction of Jerusalem and the exile of the nation of Judah due to their rejection of God's ways

EZEKIEL (Ezk, Ezk, Eze): a priest who prophecies while in captivity in Babylon

DANIEL (Dan, Da, Dn): descriptions of faithful living by some of the Israelites exiled to Babylon as well as prophecies of events yet in our future

### MINOR PROPHETS:

The messages given by God to twelve men are recorded in the books of the minor prophets.

HOSEA (Hos, Ho): brought a message to the people regarding their unfaithfulness to God

JOEL (Joe, Jl): the judgment of God brought on the people through a locust plague

AMOS (Am): messages of judgment on the nations around Israel, as well as Israel and Judah

OBADIAH (Obad, Ob): a message for the nation of Edom and of the Day of the Lord

Obadiah is the shortest book of the Bible

JONAH (Jnh, Jon): God sends a message through Jonah to the people of Nineveh in Assyria that they must repent or will be destroyed

MICAH (Mic): a message regarding social injustices

NAHUM (Nah, Na): prophecy of destruction of Nineveh, capital city of the Assyrian empire

HABAKKUK (Hab): God reveals His plan to deal with the sin of Judah

ZEPHANIAH (Zeph, Zep, Zp): God's judgment and punishment of sin

HAGGAI (Hag, Hg): encouragement to rebuild the Temple and return to right living before the Lord

ZECHARIAH (Zech, Zec): a message regarding the Messiah

MALACHI (Mal): God's love for His chosen people is not recognized by His people, Israel

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A question often asked is "why bother studying the Old Testament?" Not only does 2 Timothy 3:16 specifically state that "all Scripture" is inspired and profitable, but, for the New Testament church, the *only* Scriptures they had *were* the Jewish Bible, the Old Testament. In addition to this, read **1 Corinthians 10:6, 11** and consider the following questions:

4. First Corinthians 10 begins with a discussion about the nation of Israel being brought out of slavery in Egypt under Moses' leadership. What does verse six give as the reason for these Old Testament events?

The events involving Moses and the Israelites are recorded in Exodus through Deuteronomy

5. According to this verse, what caused God to be displeased with those earlier people?
  
6. What reason does verse 11 give for why these things were written down?
  
7. How can knowing about the experiences of the Israelites long ago affect your choices and life today?
  
8. How can you be careful not to fall into sin, as verse 12 instructs? What will you begin doing today to set your heart on things of God to prevent a fall?

**PROPHECY: Read Deuteronomy 18:17-22**

Where do the words a true prophet speaks come from?

How can a prophet's message be verified as coming from God?