

LESSON 2: THE BIBLE

“And the Lord said unto Moses, ‘Write thou these words. . . .’” Exodus 34:27

We began our study with the lesson about God. We ended that discussion with our reason for being here. In continuing, we need to understand how God reveals His plan for Israel through the Bible.

You might not have a Bible. We suggest that you complete these studies with a Bible at hand. If you don't know where to get one, Email us at info@isaiah53.com and we would be happy to direct you.

What is the Bible?

The Bible is “the sacred scriptures of Judaism and Christianity.” The Bible is comprised of 66 books written over a span of approximately 1500 years. There are 39 books in the Jewish Bible – the Hebrew Scriptures, often known as the Old Testament. There are 27 books in the New Testament. Christians consider the Jewish Bible as their holy writings as well. (For a more detailed explanation of what this means, read Chapter 2 of *Isaiah 53 Explained*.) When we say we believe the Bible is holy, we are claiming that these writings are “God-inspired” which means God told the Jewish authors what to write.

Why is it important that you understand that the Bible is God-inspired? For years, the Bible has been perceived as intimidating, outdated, difficult, or unnecessary for many individuals. We would like the opportunity to show you otherwise, especially since the Jewish people are the primary audience for whom this book is written. The Bible describes our history, ethics, and religion. The Bible provides the basis for our chosenness. It is only through reading the Bible that we can grasp the truth of our “chosenness.” When we understand our being chosen, we can then begin to fathom our purpose and reason for living.

Questions to consider:

1. Do you own a Bible?
2. Have you read the Bible?
3. Can you believe that God wrote the Bible?
If not, why?

Thoughts for you to consider:

Why did God write the Bible?

Jewish people often refer to the Bible with the acronym, TNK, from which we get Tanakh. The Tanakh is divided into three parts: the Torah (the Law; the five books of Moses); the Nevi'im (the Prophets including Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel, and Micah); and the Ketuvim (the other writings including Psalms, Proverbs, and the historical books).

The Hebrew Scriptures relay the history of the children of Israel. The choosing of the Jewish people began with the call of Abraham and Sarah. Genesis 12:1-3 says, *“Now the LORD said unto Abram: ‘Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father’s house, unto the land that I will show thee. And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and be thou a blessing. And I will bless them that bless thee, and him that curses thee will I curse; and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed.’”*

Based on this passage, God chose us to be His people, to live in a land, and to prepare the world for the blessing of the Messiah.

Questions to consider:

1. Do you believe that the Jewish people will always be in existence?
2. Do you believe that God gave the land of Israel to the Jewish people?
3. Can you believe that the blessing to the world would be the promise of the Messiah?

Thoughts for you to consider:

How did we get the Bible?

The Bible came to us through revelation which is God's means of revealing Himself to His people. God revealed Himself in a variety of ways to His chosen authors that they might record a permanent testimony concerning God. What the authors wrote were not their own ideas - but rather God's ideas.

God used various methods and instruments to reveal His words to His chosen authors: (Please take a few minutes and read these verses for yourself in your own Bible)

Direct Voice - God spoke in an audible voice to some of them, telling them what to write down (Read Exodus 33:1).

Direct Writing - God visibly wrote certain truths about Himself (Read Exodus 31:18).

Dreams - God used the dreams of men as a channel through which He revealed truths (Read Daniel 2:1-49).

Men - The personal experiences and spiritual lives of individuals were used by God (Read Psalm 51).

Natural World - The universe, which God created, declares Him (Read Psalm 19:1).

Events - God used the events of men to reveal His will. The best example of this is in Exodus where we read the Passover story.

Questions to consider:

1. Do you believe that God can speak directly to someone?
Has God ever spoken to you?
2. Do you believe that God wrote the 10 commandments or that Moses wrote the 10 commandments?
3. Does it matter to you whether the Bible has been written by God or man?

Thoughts for you to consider:

Why Should I Read the Bible?

Within the Jewish Bible, we read about the history of Israel and its future based on the promises that God gave to Israel. The modern nation of Israel is a fulfillment of prophecy which speaks to God's faithfulness to the Jewish people. The existence of Israel today is evidence of the proof of the Bible. The Bible is the source for truth. It gives us a glimpse at the past, instructs us for the present, and fills us with hope for the future. The story of the Bible is ever moving forward, leading towards a point of culmination. According to the Bible, the future event towards which history is headed is the

coming of the Messiah and the establishment of the Messianic kingdom which God promised to Israel. The future is known by God, it is designed by God, and He has revealed it to us in the Bible.

One of the best pictures of this Messianic kingdom is found in Ezekiel 37:24-26, *“And My servant David shall be king over them, and they all shall have one shepherd; they shall also walk in My ordinances, and observe My statutes, and do them. And they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob My servant, wherein your fathers dwelt; and they shall dwell therein, they, and their children, and their children’s children, for ever; and David My servant shall be their prince for ever. Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them – it shall be an everlasting covenant with them; and I will establish them, and multiply them, and will set My sanctuary in the midst of them for ever.”*

Questions to consider:

1. What do you know of the future of Israel as revealed in the Bible?
2. From reading Ezekiel 37:24-26 above, who do you think the servant of David is who will live forever?
3. In your own words, describe what this covenant of peace might look like.

Final questions to consider:

1. How does God choose who lives during this time of peace?
2. Does world peace extend to all people?

Final thoughts for you to consider:

Jewish people have always searched for truth in many different ways and have even looked outside Judaism for their answers. This reflects that we are a people searching for a deeper meaning of life. Many see the Bible as somewhat irrelevant. It is our desire, however, that you would see the Bible as the source to deepen your spirituality and to find out how you can have a true relationship with God. We hope that if you have never spent much time in the Bible, you might take time to read the different books and sense the deep history that we have as Jews with our God.

We will examine in our next study how God decides who lives in this world of peace.

E-mail this lesson to studies@isaiah53.com to receive feedback and correspond with someone in person.