

## Di223 We Believe

### *Lesson Di223-3 A Book Like No Other*

The Bible may **look** like all other books. It has black letters on white paper. It is sold in bookstores and online. It is translated into hundreds of languages and is read or listened to by people all over the world. In fact, the Bible is a best seller and the most important book in all the world. And yet, the Bible is **unlike** all other books. The Bible has the power to produce spiritual life. It is God's Word to all who will believe its message. The apostle Paul wrote to the Romans, "Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God" (Rom 10:17, KJV).

Every book in the Bible has a story behind it, an occasion or purpose for writing. At least two of the books in the New Testament were written by a Gentile—a non-Jew. The author was Paul's dear friend Luke, the physician. He traveled with Paul on several missionary journeys. He addressed his two manuscripts—the Gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles—to a person named Theophilus. The man may have been a Roman official or a person of high position and wealth.

The purpose of Luke's writing was to strengthen the faith of his friend. He wrote, "Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eyewitnesses and servants of the word. With this in mind, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, I too decided to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught" (Luke 1:1-4).

His writing also answered the attacks of unbelievers who were spreading false reports about Jesus. Luke interviewed many eyewitnesses—people who had seen Jesus' miracles and heard his words. He quoted Christ's teachings to show that Gentile Christians are welcome in God's kingdom. He also included the oral accounts and preaching of the Apostles, whom he had heard. If his books had not been truthful, many witnesses who were still alive could have refuted them.

The Bible was written in Hebrew and Greek with small portions in the Aramaic language. It was written by 40 different human writers over a period of 1,600 years in 66 books. And yet, the Bible is not two stories, 40 stories or even 66 stories. It is one great story—the story of God's love. It is an amazing book. No other book has been written by so many writers, resulting in just one basic message. Only God could have caused that to happen.

Fulfilled prophecies of the Bible are an important proof of divine inspiration. Prophecy is history written in advance. Only God can do this. In careful detail the Bible predicts events, sometimes as much as 1500 years before they are fulfilled exactly. Twenty-five specific prophecies concerning the betrayal, trial, death, and burial of the Lord Jesus Christ are powerful examples of fulfilled prophecy. These were given by various prophets during a time period from 1000 B.C. to 500 B.C. They were all fulfilled in one 24-hour period of time in one person!

What are some of these prophecies about Christ's betrayal, trial, death and burial?

- Jonah 1:17 predicts that the Messiah would be three days and nights in the grave
- Zechariah 11:12-13 predicts 30 pieces of silver would be paid for a potter's field

- Isaiah 65:2 predicts Israel would reject the Messiah
- Zechariah 12:10 predicts the Messiah would be pierced
- Isaiah 53:9 predicts the Messiah would be buried in a rich man's grave

More than 25 per cent of scripture passages were prophetic at the time they were written. That is why we can say that fulfilled prophecies prove the Bible is the Word of God.

The unique unity of the Bible testifies to its divine inspiration. The writers lived in different places, various environments, and distinct periods of time. Without being aware of it, each writer contributed an essential part to make the entire, completed Bible. Each added to and made clear what others had written, but never contradicted them. Such a miracle can be explained only by recognizing there was but one 'master author' in control of all these human writers...God himself!

There are two main divisions of the Bible. These divisions are the Old Testament with 39 books and the New Testament with 27 books. The word "testament" means a covenant or agreement between two parties. The Old and New Testaments are covenants or agreements between God and man. The Old Testament is the covenant describing God's dealing with people before Jesus came. The New Testament is the agreement by which God provided salvation through the death of Jesus Christ. This one continuous story reveals one plan of salvation and has one great theme: the person and work of Christ.

Let's review our first *Statement of Faith*: "We believe the Scriptures, both the Old and New Testaments, are verbally inspired of God. They are the revelation of God to man, the unchanging rule of faith and conduct." The first verse to remember is Second Timothy 3:16: "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness."

The Bible has the authority to clearly tell us how we must live in order to please God and receive eternal life. God's Word is our authority for life and conduct—the way we are to live. In fact, the apostle John refers to Jesus Christ as 'the Word' or the 'living Word' of God (John 1:1-4). The Old and New Testaments of the Bible are the "written Word" of God. The Bible has been passed from generation to generation and now we study the Bible and discover its meaning for our lives. Paul refers to Christians as 'living letters,' known and read by everybody, to show the world how God's Word changes lives (2Cor 3:2-3).

This lesson is **important** because it explains why the Bible is a book like no other. It was written over a long span of time by many unique human authors, yet the Holy Spirit used them to weave together God's great plan to provide salvation.

The **main truth** of this lesson is the unique unity of the Bible in which one plan of salvation is revealed through the person and work of Christ.

Let's **review** this lesson—

1. How many human writers did God use to write the 66 books of the Bible? [Pause.]
  - A. If you answered, "Forty human writers," you are correct.
2. What does the word 'testament' mean? [Pause.]
  - A. If you said, "A covenant or agreement between two parties," you are right.

3. Why is the unity of the Bible so important to our faith in the inspired Word of God? [Pause.]  
A. If you answered that the unity of the Bible is important because it shows God as the master Author and salvation through Jesus Christ as God's plan for all mankind, you answered correctly.

Your **assignment** is to listen to this lesson as many times as necessary to make sure you have memorized our first *Statement of Faith* and the memory verse (2 Timothy 3:16).

“We believe the Scriptures, both the Old and New Testaments, are verbally inspired of God. They are the revelation of God to man, the unchanging rule of faith and conduct.” And, “All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness” (Second Timothy 3:16).

Memorize a second verse to show the way we use the God-breathed Scriptures. Paul explained to the Christians in Rome, “Faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ” (Romans 10:17). The unity of the Bible presents God's plan of salvation through Jesus Christ.

Show that you understand the importance and power of God's Word by sharing this lesson with several of your friends and family.