**THE DOCTRINE OF THE BIBLE** Session 1

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What is the Bible about?

The Bible is more than a book you might have on your bookshelf that you read once or twice. The Bible is God’s revelation to mankind. Every time we read God’s word, we learn something new about His character, His plan, and His will for our lives. The Bible is the authoritative standard for what we believe and how we live. It tells us where we came from, where we are, and where we are going. The Bible, from cover to cover unveils the mind of God, the will of God, the work of God, and displays the glory of God.

*The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands.* Psalm 19:1



**Talking it Over – Group Study:**

1. Each one share when you first remember being exposed to the Bible? What was your first impression of it?

As we study the Doctrine of the Bible, we are going to divide it up into 5 major sections:

1. What is the Bible about?
2. Revelation
3. Inspiration
4. Illumination
5. Observation, Interpretation, and Application

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**WHAT IS THE BIBLE ABOUT?**

(Bibliology) Bible is derived from the Greek word biblos which means: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ . The Bible consists of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_books. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in the Old Testament and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in the New Testament.

**Who wrote the Bible?**

**How is the Bible structured?**

The Bible is divided into the Old and New Testament, each having four sections.

**Old Testament**: The books of the Old Testament were written over a period of about 1000 years and are divided into four sections

Section 1 – The \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (Genesis through Deuteronomy) These first five books are known as the Pentateuch.

Section 2 – \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (Joshua through Esther) These books record the experiences in Canaan.

Section 3 – \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (Job through Song of Solomon) Poetry and wisdom literature.

Section 4 – \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (Isaiah through Malachi) The last 17 books of the Old Testament are the Prophets: major and minor.

**Question: What is the difference between a major and minor prophet?**

**New Testament**: The books of the New Testament were written over a period of approximately 100 years. The New Testament is divided into the following sections:

Section 1 - The \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (Matthew through John)

Section 2 – \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (Acts)

Section 3 – \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (Romans through Jude)

Section 4 – \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_(Revelation)

**How did these 66 books come to be included in the Bible?**



**Helpful Notes:**

The books of the Bible were canonized (or recognized as the inspired Word of God) by early church fathers and church councils. This was done to distinguish biblical writings from other religious writings.

The criteria used for acceptance or inclusion in the **Old Testament** was: Is it authoritative? Is it prophetic? Is it authentic? Is it dynamic? Was it received? Were there two or three witnesses?

The criteria used for acceptance or inclusion in the **New Testament** was: Does it have Apostolic authority? Is it Apostolic approved? Does it have Apostolic authorship? Agreed upon by two to three witnesses (2 Corinthians 13:1)

The early church council did not accept the Apocrypha as part of the scriptures. They were rejected or excluded from the Bible because they were heretical, or historically, geographically, and theologically inaccurate.



**REVELATION:**

The Bible was revealed to man by God. Information regarding God’s plan, character, activities, will, etc., for man which was not known by man through his natural life came to man through divine revelation. Revelation literally means to take a covering off so that what was covered and unknown may now be seen and understood. There are several ways which God revealed and communicated Himself to humanity. This is known as general and special revelation.

**General Revelation**: Refers to the general truths that can be known about God through nature, history, and the human conscience. (See Psalm 19:1-4; Romans 2:14-15)

*“For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities—His eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.”* Romans 1:20



**Talking it Over – Group study**

Take time in your group to read all of Psalm 119. Take turns reading it out loud and then stop from time to time to have people share from these verses what the Word of God can do and the impact it can have on our lives.

**Special Revelation** refers to the more specific truths that can be known about God through the supernatural.

1. In the past through dreams, visions, angels, personal appearances of the pre-incarnate Christ. (Genesis 18:1; 28:10-17; Exodus 3:1-4; 33:18-20; 1 Kings 3:5; Daniel 7)
2. God spoke directly to and through men called prophets and apostles. (Deuteronomy 18:18-19; 2 Chronicles 24:19; Hosea 12:10; Acts 2:14-41)
3. Through the written Word of God. God miraculously guided the authors of Scripture to correctly record His message to mankind, while still using their own styles and personalities (see 2 Peter 1:20-21). God determined to have the truth regarding Him recorded in written form because He knew the inaccuracy and unreliability of oral tradition. He also understood that the dreams and visions of man can be misinterpreted. God decided to reveal everything that humanity needs to know about Him, what He expects, and what He has done for us in the Bible.
4. Through His Son Jesus Christ. God became a human being, in the Person of Jesus Christ, to identify with us, to set an example for us, to teach us, to reveal Himself to us, and, most importantly, to provide salvation for us by humbling Himself in death on the cross (Philippians 2:6-8). Jesus Christ is the ultimate “special revelation” from God.

*In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom also he made the universe. The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of His being sustaining all things by his powerful word.”* Hebrews 1:1-3

**Application:**

How has the Word of God personally ministered to you and to your church?

Take some time and pray together, thanking the Lord for something specific in His Word that you love.



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