

Unit Three

I Believe! Help Me to Believe More

Lesson 2

Using the Manual: The Bible

heart to Heart

Lord, the whole Bible was given to us by your inspiration. We know it is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong with our lives; it straightens us out and helps us do what is right. It is your way of making us prepared at every point, fully equipped to do good to everyone.

2 Timothy 3:16-17



The Bestseller of All Time

From Timothy's description, it's no wonder that the Bible has sold more copies than any other book ever. Any book that claims – and correctly – to do all that Timothy says it does would be on anyone's "must read" list. So what is this book we call the Bible?

The word Bible comes from the Greek word for "books." And it is just that, not one book, but a collection of books written by different people over several centuries.

The Bible is divided into _____ major sections. These are called the _____ and the _____.

Christians consider the Old Testament the first part of our story. But for Jews, this is their Scripture, simply referred to as the Hebrew Bible. When Jesus quoted from Scripture in his time, it was this collection of writings to which he referred.

Christians divide the writings of the Old Testament into four sections:

First, the Law or Torah which are the first five books of the Old Testament.

Write the name of one of the books of the Torah here _____.

This is followed by history, wisdom literature, and the prophets.

A history book: _____ An example of wisdom literature is _____.

Three prophets: _____, _____, _____.



Verse Master

“The word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword..it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.”

Hebrews 4:12



These writings weren't assembled at one time, but were used in worship settings where people gathered. As the community migrated over a larger geographic area, it was felt necessary to put a final stamp on what was considered an approved book of the Bible. This was done in approximately the 1st century B.C. at which time the 39 books of the Old Testament were compiled and considered the Biblical "canon." (Canon means "rule.")

The Armenian Church, as do all Orthodox Churches and the Roman Catholic Church, accepts what are called the "deutero-canonical" or "second canon" books, those that had been included in the famous Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures known as the Septuagint. (In the 16th century, Protestant reformers rejected these extra books.)

These include, for example, 1st and 2nd Maccabees – two very influential books for Armenians. These books recount the uprising of the Jews against the Romans in the 1st century B.C. Yeghishé, the Armenian priest and the historian of the Vartanantz War, used much of its imagery in describing the Battle of Avarayr, when the Armenians fought to defend their Christian faith.

The New Testament consists of four distinct accounts of Jesus' life story (the Gospels), history (Acts), the letters of Paul and other apostles to the early Christian communities (the Epistles) and an apocalyptic ("uh-pock-uh-líp-tick) book of encouragement to persecuted Christians that describes a hopeful future (Revelation).

The four gospels are _____, _____, _____, _____.
Name three epistles: _____, _____, _____

There were many gospels and letters circulating and read in the early church, but gradually the ones that seemed most authentic grew in importance and a canon of 27 books as we have today appeared in the Easter letter of the bishop of Alexandria, St. Athanasius, in 367 A.D.

The process of writing and editing and compiling was guided and nourished by the Holy Spirit.

Do the following just to hone your Bible reading skills.

Read each of the passages listed below. Write the message in these verses as simply as you can.

- Jeremiah 17:7-8 _____
- Romans 12:13 _____
- Galatians 5:22-23 _____
- Philippians 4:6-7 _____
- James 4:7 _____

Choose one of the passages above.

How does it apply to your life right now?

What change in your life can you make based on the advice in this passage?





Remember

The most important resource for our faith is the Holy Bible as it came to be in the Holy Church.

New International Version (NIV)

- 9 To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everyone else, Jesus told this parable:
- 10 “Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector.
- 11 The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other people—robbers, evildoers, adulterers—or even like this tax collector.
- 12 I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.’
- 13 “But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, ‘God, have mercy on me, a sinner.’
- 14 “I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.”

King James Version

- 9 And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others:
- 10 Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican.
- 11 The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican.
- 12 I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.
- 13 And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.
- 14 I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

The Message

- 9-12 He told his next story to some who were complacently pleased with themselves over their moral performance and looked down their noses at the common people: “Two men went up to the Temple to pray, one a Pharisee, the other a tax man. The Pharisee posed and prayed like this: ‘Oh, God, I thank you that I am not like other people—robbers, crooks, adulterers, or, heaven forbid, like this tax man. I fast twice a week and tithe on all my income.’
- 13 “Meanwhile the tax man, slumped in the shadows, his face in his hands, not daring to look up, said, ‘God, give mercy. Forgive me, a sinner.’”
- 14 Jesus commented, “This tax man, not the other, went home made right with God. If you walk around with your nose in the air, you’re going to end up flat on your face, but if you’re content to be simply yourself, you will become more than yourself.”



Scenic Overlook

Aramaic, which is closely related to Hebrew, was the language that Jesus spoke. It all but died out in the centuries following Jesus' day. The language still survives today, but only in isolated villages in Syria, Turkey, Iraq and Iran. Assyrian Christians from northern Iraq still speak it today as well, and it is the language used in the worship of the Syrian Orthodox Church.

