

Gift of a Promise: His Word and His Body

Lesson 1

Unit Two

The Holy Bible: A Map for Our Life Journey

Here I Am, Lord

All-knowing and loving God, the more we prayerfully read and reflect on the Scriptures, the more your Word is able to penetrate our hearts. Open our eyes, our ears, our minds, and our hearts so that we can receive you as you come to us through the words of the Bible with the wisdom, truth and love that only you can bestow. Amen.



Where's the Map?

Imagine that your family is planning a three-week road trip through the United States. After a great deal of discussion you finally decide that you will depart from home, let's say San Diego, CA, and travel across the United States to, let's say, Bar Harbor, Maine, a distance of 3,156 miles. Undoubtedly, everyone is excited about this great adventure and has begun to list the tourist attractions that they hope to visit along the way. However, dad reminds the family that pains-taking plans are necessary to make the best use of the time you have as well as to ensure that every family member will enjoy the trip. In addition to planning the best route, there is also limited space, so you will have to wisely select what you will take with you on the trip. The first item of business is to prepare a list of essentials that will benefit everyone on the trip. List the top 5 items that everyone in the family will agree are essential tools for planning the trip:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Undoubtedly, maps would be essential tools in the planning process. Most travelers planning such an extensive trip would go online, consult AAA (Automobile Association of America) or shop at the Rand McNally Store where you can purchase road atlases, city and state maps and perhaps even hire a personal travel



planner to design the best route for you. If you are going to do some camping or hiking along the way, in addition to packing water and basic supplies, you would wisely pack a compass or your GPS to make sure that you don't get lost in the back country. It is safe to say that these useful travel guides would be consulted continually throughout your trip. Three weeks on the road without proper planning could be a disaster—just imagine being confined to a car for three weeks with your younger brother and sister, and you are lost...sounds like a nightmare!

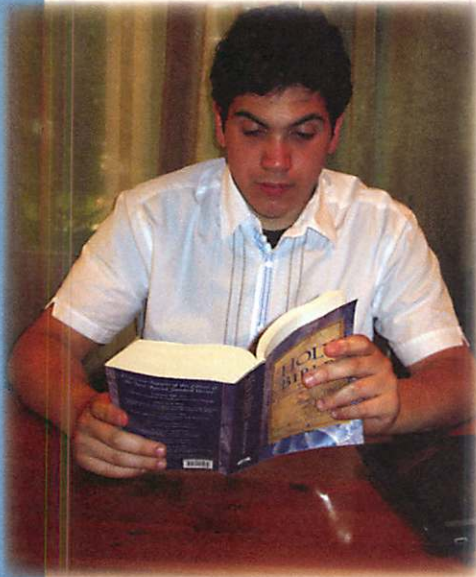
Life, too, is an exciting journey, but there are also dangerous pitfalls and sometimes wrecks along the way. Seems to make good sense that you would want a personal guide to help you navigate the detours and

decide what would be the best life path to take. Don't look too far...you have just the guide book...the Holy Bible can also be considered a true and reliable guide to how we should live. It is both a map and a blueprint for right living, and it clearly highlights the path we should take to arrive safely at our final destination.

Why do so many people try to navigate life without the Church or the Bible as tools especially designed by God for his people?

The Bible and The Church

The Story and A Witness



Some of our Christian brothers and sisters believe the Bible is the final authority on questions of faith, and this misconception leads them to believe that the Church received power and authority from the Bible. It is important to remember that this holy book did not fall from heaven.

God did not give us a Bible to define our faith. God gave us something much more valuable than the printed word. God gave us his most sacred gift, his Son, Jesus Christ the "Living Word" who personally witnessed how he wanted us to live our lives, and gave us his precious Body, the Holy Church. In the early church it was said that scripture was "written on the heart of the church, not parchment."

It was the Church, after centuries of thought and development, that gave us the book we call the Bible... truly, time-tested... it was lived before it was written!

There are two very helpful ways of looking at the "big picture" of what the Bible is all about:

- Seeing it as a story
- Hearing it as a witness

Have you ever thought what part the Bible plays in Christian life? In II Timothy 3:16 -17 we can find the answer to that question. St Paul says that we can use Scripture as our life-guide because...*"All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.* Truly, the Bible is both a book of promise and purpose! There is one big story unfolding in all the individual stories.

The story below gives us clues about the Promise...

Fill in the blanks with words in the list below:

At the center of the big story is _____ and what he is doing with the _____. The Bible begins with God creating the heavens and earth, and tells the story of his _____ with humankind through the days yet to _____ when he will keep the _____ he made to his people. At that time war, disease, death and pain will be no more. This will be the day in which _____ is removed from the earth and the _____ will be renewed and restored to God's _____ plan for _____.

This is God's purpose; this is the story of _____ history. This is when those who _____ in God will see him face to face.



dealings	evil	God	come
human race	trusted	promise	original
universe	creation	salvation	



Adam & Eve's story of disobedience is often called the "fall" of humankind and is vital for understanding much of the Bible, for it explains that the human race is out of relationship with God—and the whole of creation has been affected by that break of relationship.



Line It Up

Let's make a Bible time-line—a map for us to use as we journey through this fantastic adventure.

The story has 6 basic parts. Order them 1-6.

The fall of humankind ____

The time of Israel ____

Jesus ____

The End Times ____

Creation ____

Christ's followers ____

Now identify three (a,b,c) significant events and themes appropriate to each part of the story and mark them (1a, etc.)

God brought the universe into being out of nothing, simply by speaking. ____

God established a covenant with Abraham. ____

The Son of God is born in a humble stable. ____

God placed people in his world to care for it and bring it to its full potential. ____

Humankind had responsibility for the animals, birds, trees and plants. ____

The ultimate victory of God over the forces of evil. ____

Communities of believers (churches) form and gather regularly. ____

They are given the power of the Holy Spirit at the Jewish festival of Pentecost. ____

He lives a human life, full of love and without sin, as God intended it. ____

God gave his people freedom to explore the garden in which he had placed them, but told them not to eat the fruit from one particular tree. ____

Tempted by the serpent, they chose not to do as God wished. ____

Explained in the last book of the Bible, Revelation. ____

God responded by banishing them from the Garden—this is considered the fall of humankind and the universe is out of relationship with God. ____

Israel established itself in the Promised Land. ____

Generations led by Isaac, Jacob and Joseph followed Abraham. ____

Jesus dies and rises from the tomb, granting eternal life to all. ____

They are appointed and given authority to carry the Good News throughout the world. ____

When those who trust God will see him face to face. ____





Our Armenian Way

The Armenian translation of the Bible, completed in the 5th century AD (known as the Golden Age of Armenian literary activity), has been referred to as the “Queen of Translations” because of its accuracy and beauty.

Christians view the Old Testament through the lens of the New Testament. That is, for Christians the New Testament is the fulfillment of God’s promise as made in the Old Testament.

The New Testament or New Covenant is the testimony about our Lord Jesus Christ. When he sent his 2nd letter to Timothy, St. Paul encouraged the young man to stand firm in the truths taught to him from the Scriptures... “For in them lie wisdom and the way to salvation in Christ.” They are ‘God-breathed.’ Armenians refer to this as **‘Asdvadzashoonch’** the breath of life for all who seek to walk in God’s ways.

The Bible Speaking as a Witness... Are You Ready to RSVP?

The Bible does not simply tell this story in a detached way, as a historian might. It is written to invite those who hear its message to respond to Jesus too. It is a testimony to what God has done in history as well as what God will do in the future. It is written to encourage its readers to become followers of Jesus, and to help them understand how to follow him in the company of others. Reading the Bible is like receiving an invitation to a party—it seeks our response. Are you ready to RSVP for the journey of a lifetime?

