

Gift of a Promise: His Word and His Body

Unit Two

Lesson 2

A Quick Glance

Here I Am, Lord

The Psalms express the whole range of human feeling and experience, from dark depression to exuberant joy. They are rooted in the experiences of the Hebrew people a long time ago...but they are timeless, and among the best loved, most-read parts of the Bible. The Psalms are poetic, dramatic, comforting and inspirational. Both Jewish and Christian musicians continue to write music for the Psalms. The Psalms are included in many Armenian prayers, services, and liturgies. One of the most popular of these wonderful prayers is Psalm 23. Let's pray it together.

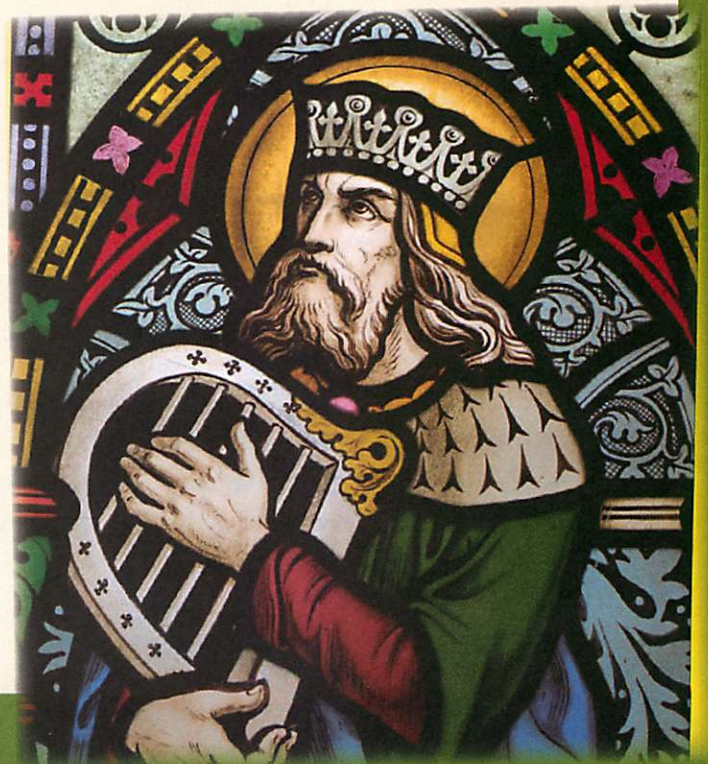
Psalm 23

¹The LORD is my shepherd, I lack nothing.
²He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me
beside quiet waters,
³he refreshes my soul.
He guides me along the right paths
for his name's sake.
⁴Even though I walk
through the darkest valley,
I will fear no evil,
for you are with me;
your rod and your staff,
they comfort me.
⁵You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies.
You anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.
⁶Surely your goodness and mercy will follow me all
the days of my life,
and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

When you read about God as a "shepherd," what images and feelings come to mind?

Key facts about the Psalms

- ✓ Many authors, called psalmists, contributed to the collection of Psalms; King David wrote many of them.
- ✓ There are 150 Psalms which makes it the longest book in the Bible.
- ✓ Psalms was written as a hymnbook and prayer book for God's people.
- ✓ Jesus quoted Psalms; some of his last words are from the Psalms (Psalm 22).

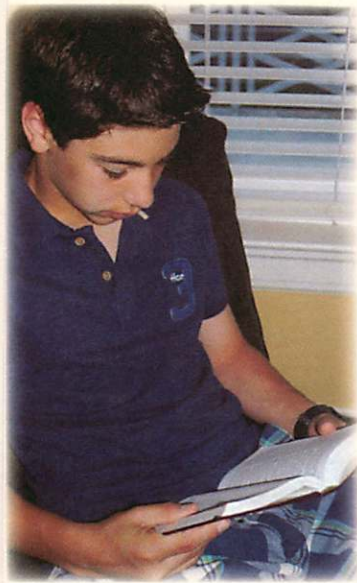


What do you know about the Bible?

True or False: Circle the correct answer.

1. The Bible is the world's most widely distributed and widely read book.	T	F
2. The "Bible" is not one book, but many. It was compiled from writings that had religious, cultural, and historical significance over many centuries.	T	F
3. The 10 Commandments are recorded in the book of Genesis.	T	F
4. The Bible tells us that God's people often deserted him for other gods.	T	F
5. In the beginning, the whole earth had one language.	T	F
6. For the Armenian people the Bible has always been alive and full of God's power.	T	F
7. Scholars consider the Armenian translation of the Bible the "King of Translations"	T	F
8. The Old Testament is simply the history of the Jewish people, the New Testament is more important because it is the story of Jesus Christ.	T	F
9. Throughout the Bible God speaks through people.	T	F

God Speaks to Us in Many Ways



The Bible is not what most of us would expect a religious book or a sacred text to be. First of all, it is more like a library than a single volume. Inside its covers are histories, stories, laws, prayers, poems, letters, visions, prophecies and other kinds of writings. It is not the work of a single author, but a range of human authors writing over

more than a millennium, and speaking more than one language!

There are also many different literary forms in the Bible. A literary form is a style of writing, such as a legend, narrative, short story, autobiography, genealogy, riddle or letter. To understand the message of a particular book in the Bible, one must understand the literary form in which it

was written. Confusion and misinterpretation can result from failure to recognize the literary form.

To show the importance of understanding literary forms, find the following from a daily newspaper:

- An editorial
- A recipe in the food section
- An advertisement for a store (i.e. Macy's, Home Depot, etc.)
- A classified for a car or house
- A sports headline*

What does a reader need to know in each of the above, to truly understand its contents?

*We'll do this one for you:

"Cowboys Pluck Falcons on Thanksgiving Day"

- Taken literally (that is, word for word), what could this headline mean?
- Consider your audience—what if this headline were written in the Yerevan Daily News, where the people do not know who or what the Dallas Cowboys and the Atlanta Falcons are?

What Are You Trying To Say?

Just like a newspaper, the Bible has many different forms of literary composition. No literary form is truer than others...all convey God's truth in different ways. It is up to us to learn how.

Let's see how many you can identify by writing in the correct literary form next to its definition.

Literary Form

Myth	Prophecy	List	Law	Psalm	Sermon
Parable	History	Letter	Saga	Proverb	

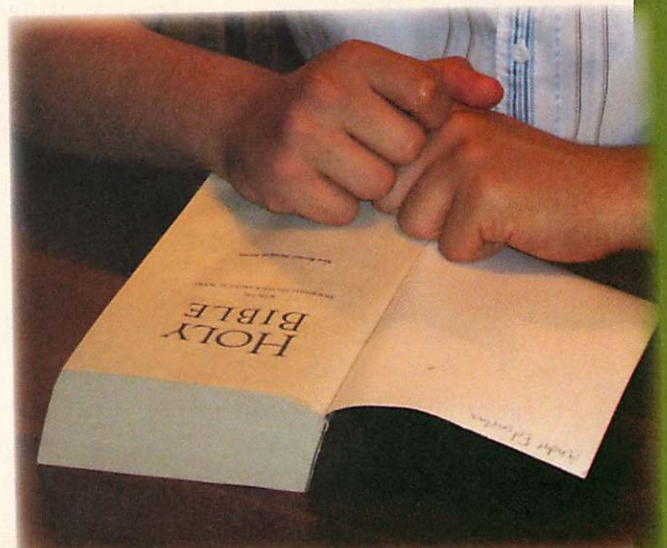
Definition

1. A short statement expressing some truth in a striking and memorable way. _____
2. A record or account usually written in chronological order of past events, especially those concerning a particular nation or people. _____
3. A traditional story focusing on the deeds of gods or heroes, often in explanation of some natural phenomenon. _____
4. A speech with an important spiritual message. _____
5. A sacred song or poem. _____
6. A written or printed message, usually of a personal nature or concerning a specific subject. _____
7. A long and complicated story with many details. _____
8. A prediction made under divine influence and direction. _____
9. An itemized series of names, words, etc., usually recorded in a set order. _____
10. A rule of conduct, moral principle, etc., derived from a generally recognized concept of universal justice. _____
11. Short allegorical story told to bring out a moral or religious truth. _____

What's Your Style?

Now let's explore the scriptural passages below and see if we can identify which literary form they follow.

1. Genesis 11:1-10 _____
2. Jeremiah 1:1-10 _____
3. Matthew 8:23-27 _____
4. I Thessalonians 1: 1-3 _____
5. Revelation 21:1-4 _____



Our Armenian Way

The Armenian Bible includes Deuterocanonical ("second canon") Books or Apocrypha ("things that are hidden"). Among these you will find the Books of Maccabees. The stories give an account of the struggle of Jewish patriots to overthrow the oppression of the Syrian ruler Antiochus who tried to suppress Jewish religious practices and the temple rituals. The resistance was led first by Mattathias and then his son Judas Maccabaeus and his four brothers liberated the Jews from foreign rule.



The Maccabees won the Jews a brief period of independence from occupying forces. It was a movement to restore not only freedom of worship but personal devotion to God's law.

The 5th century Armenian historian Yeghisheh records how the Armenians faced their greatest struggle for religious freedom in the middle of the fifth century, when the Persian King attempted to forcibly convert them to Zoroastrianism. But the Armenians were steadfast in their faith, citing the covenant which they established between the people, the Church, and their leaders. The Armenian word for "covenant" is "ookht;" the same word means "testament" as in Old and New Testaments.



The two books of Maccabees greatly inspired Yeghisheh Vartabed.

According to Yeghisheh, Vartan the Brave, "holding the Holy Bible in hand read aloud for everyone to hear about the valiant character of the Maccabees, and with eloquent words he explained to them the nature of their struggle and the valor with which they had fought for their God-given laws..."

Words You Can Trust... Words You Can Live By

If someone gave you the answer key to your geometry exam would you read it? If you were lost in the mountains would you read the map? The simple fact is that the Bible has stood the test of time because it is an invaluable guide for life.

Written by over 30 people over a period of 1500 years it is as relevant to us today as it was to the people of Jesus' time. The Bible has been translated into many languages over the last 2,000 years since the Christian faith began.

It is a marvelous gift to humankind. God's written revelation is light in a darkened world, a refreshing life-giving oasis in a parched desert. To the hungry soul, it is bread from heaven, and to those who feel lost, it is a life-saving compass.

God's word is effective. When God speaks things happen. When people read the Bible things happen too!

