
Forward

This book contains lessons about the Bible. It is the 10,000-foot overview of the Word of God. By the time you have completed this lesson series, your students will have learned basic Bible skills such as:

- What the names of the books are
- How to find any book, chapter, or verse in the Bible
- What the basic themes are of the books and groups of books

The lessons and activities in this curriculum will teach your students that the Bible is really one story, God's story (His story) about His plan of salvation. Your students will learn that God's Word helps us learn about the greatness and goodness of God and the Lord Jesus. Your students will respond by demonstrating their love for God through kindness, helpfulness and thankfulness and by talking to God in prayer.

I have designed these lessons to enable you to teach the Bible expositionally. The idea is to have the kids read the passages in their own Bibles and the teacher explain the scriptures and give good practical applications that are age-appropriate. My goal is to ensure that children learn that God's Word is exciting and meaningful and that teachers teach sound doctrine!

Even though I've scripted the lessons, I don't expect teachers to read my lesson materials verbatim to the children as they teach. My lessons are meant to provide the details you need to get background information and some suggestions for child-oriented personal application. Once you know and understand the Bible lessons for yourself, you'll be ready to teach your class.

The two-column layout of this book is designed so that you can copy and cut the pages in half to fit into your Bible. When the children observe that you are teaching right out of the Bible, rather than from a

curriculum book, it validates God's Word and gives your teaching more authority.

You will discover that there is not always a Craft or Game idea suggested in each lesson. When I've had a good idea that really seems to support the lesson objectives, I've included it. But I have another handbook called *Tips and Tricks — Making Children's Bible Lessons Come to Life* that gives lots of suggestions for activities that will help reinforce your lesson and teach the memory verse. (This is available from my website: <https://www.freechildrensministrylessons.com/>)

Use the Teaching Schedule to help you organize your teaching rotation.

I pray that you will use these lessons for God's glory by teaching the Bible as an entire plan by a systematic and connected study of the Word.

Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of God. (Mark 10:14)

Sheila Scroggins

Sheila has had over 35 years' experience in teaching children and has several other lesson series available. You may contact her by eMail at: ccuv-ChildrensMinistry@usa.net for more information.

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Teaching Schedule

Date	Teacher	Lesson	Memory Verse
		Introduction to the Bible	<i>Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path. (Psalm 119:105)</i>
		Books of Moses or the Law	<i>Books: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy Open my eyes, that I may see wondrous things from Your law. (Psalm 119:18)</i>
		The Books of History	<i>Books: Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 Samuel, 2 Samuel, 1 Kings, 2 Kings, 1 Chronicles, 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away. (Matthew 24:35)</i>
		The Books of Poetry	<i>Books: Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword,... and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. (Hebrews 4:12)</i>
		The Major Prophets	<i>Books: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel For prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. (2 Peter 1:21)</i>
		The Minor Prophets	<i>Books: Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word. (Psalm 119:9)</i>
		The Gospels	<i>Books: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name. (John 20:31)</i>

Date	Teacher	Lesson	Memory Verse
		Acts – the History of the Church	The entirety of Your word is truth, and every one of Your righteous judgments endure forever. (Psalm 119:160)
		Paul's Letters	Books: Romans, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians, 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon. Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against you. (Psalm 119:11)
		General Letters	Books: Hebrews, James, 1 Peter, 2 Peter, 1 John, 2 John, 3 John, Jude For the word of the Lord is right. (Psalm 33:4a)
		Revelation of Jesus Christ	All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable (2 Timothy 3:16)

Introduction to The Bible

(God's True Story)

Introduction

How many of you have gone camping? Did you take a flashlight with you? Was it handy? Why? [Teacher, help the children discover that a flashlight can help you find your way in the dark. It can keep you from bumping into trees or tripping over rocks or even getting off on the wrong path.] In what ways do you think that the Bible is like a flashlight? [Teacher, help the children discover that the Bible shows us the way to live our lives so that we stay on the path of righteousness that leads to heaven.]

Opening Prayer

Father, thank You for giving us Your Word, the holy Bible! How else would we know You or understand Your marvelous plan of salvation if You hadn't? Your Word is like a flashlight on a dark path at night; it helps us see the right way to go in life. Give us a hunger and a thirst to read and understand Your Word so that we might fall more in love with You. In Jesus name, we pray. Amen.

Memory Verse:

Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path. (Psalm 119:105)

Lesson

I have in my hand a very special book. It is actually 66 separate books combined into one. We call all 66 books "the Bible". *Bible* means "book." Even though God used men to write the Bible, the words they wrote were not simply their own. They were the thoughts and ideas of God. The inspiration for this book was given to men from God; they wrote down what the Holy Spirit inspired them to write. That's why we call it the *Word of God*.

2 Peter 1:20-21

Above all, you must realize that no prophecy in Scripture ever came from the prophet's own understanding, (21) or from human initiative. No, those prophets were moved by the Holy Spirit, and they spoke from God.

God gave us the Bible to teach us how to live our lives in a way that pleases Him.

2 Timothy 3:16-17

All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right. (17) God uses it to prepare and equip his people to do every good work.

You can trust God's Word, the Holy Bible. None of this book was made up by men. Everything in it is true. And everything in it will always be true. God's Word will never change, and it will last forever.

Psalm 119:160

The very essence of your words is truth; all your just regulations will stand forever.

You can always trust God's Word. Jesus said...

Matthew 24:35

Heaven and earth will disappear, but my words will never disappear.

God used as many as 40 different men to write the 66 books of the Bible. These 40 men didn't all live at the same time. It took over 1,600 years for these men to write the whole Bible. But because the Holy Spirit guided each writer, the things that were written the first year agree perfectly with those written the last.

The Bible is one book, one history, one story — His story. The author of it is God. From the beginnings described in Genesis to the ending described in Revelation, God is working things out. Right down to the minutest detail there is one great purpose moving through the ages: the eternal design of the Almighty God to redeem a wrecked and ruined world. The Bible tells the story of God's plan and purpose for our lives — His wonderful plan to save us from Satan's clutches.

Reading the Bible is like putting together a puzzle. All the stories we read in the Bible help us to see a true picture of what God is like, so we can know and love Him.

That's why it is important to understand that the 66 books of the Bible are really one book, telling one story. The Bible is God's true story and reading it helps us know and love Him.

Old and New Testaments

The 66 books in the Bible are divided into two sections. The first section is called the Old Testament. It contains all the books that were written before the Lord Jesus came to earth. You'll find the Old Testament in the front part of your Bible; it has 39 of the 66 books in it. The first book in the Old Testament is called Genesis. The last book is Malachi. [Teacher, show the students how much of the Bible is the Old Testament by showing the thickness of Genesis through Malachi in your Bible.]

The last 27 books are called the New Testament. The New Testament begins with the book of Matthew and goes all the way through the book of Revelation. [Teacher, show this section.] These books tell about the time when Jesus came to earth and about what happened afterward. Revelation tells us what will happen at the end of time.

Finding a Book

You can find any book in the Bible easily if you know how to use the Table of Contents. So, I want you to open your Bibles to a page at the front of your Bible called *Table of Contents* that lists all the books in the Bible. [Teacher, help the children find the page. Then help them locate several Old and New Testament books, using their Table of Contents.]

Finding a Verse

Each book of the Bible is divided into chapters and verses. Each chapter and verse are numbered. Let's look at the Book of Genesis, the first book in the Bible. Now turn to the second page of Genesis. Do you see some big numbers? Those are the chapter numbers. The little numbers are the verse numbers. How many verses are in Genesis chapter 1? (31). How many verses are in Genesis chapter 2? (25).

You can find any verse in the Bible if you know the name of the book, the chapter number, and the verse number. The exact place in the Bible where a verse is found is called its reference. Here's how you write it out. [Teacher, write Psalm 119:160, then have the children find that verse and read it.]

All the books in the Bible make the whole picture — it's the whole puzzle put together. They tell one complete story — God's plan of redemption.

Your Bible is God's very special message to you. In it you will find everything you need to learn: how you can know God and please Him, how to get along with other people, how to be happy and find success in life. Since all that is in your Bible, you need to learn to use it. No other book in the world can do all this for you!

Closing Prayer

Father, thank You so much for giving us your Word! We'd be lost without it. It's like a flashlight in the darkness showing us the way to live. Help us to always love and cherish our Bibles and give us a desire to read them every day. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Learning Activities

The Bible Song:

The B I B L E

Now that's the book for me

I stand alone on the Word of God

The B I B L E

Game Center

Sword Drills

Practice finding verses in the Old and New Testaments. [Teacher, print references on flashcards. Hold up one flashcard at a time, and see who can find the book first. But be sure to congratulate each child as he finds it, and then have someone read the verse.]

- Psalm 119:18 *Open my eyes to see the wonderful truths in your instructions.*
- Matthew 24:35 *Heaven and earth will disappear, but my words will never disappear.*
- Hebrews 4:12 *For the word of God is alive and powerful. It is sharper than the sharpest two-edged sword, cutting between soul and spirit, between joint and marrow. It exposes our innermost thoughts and desires.*
- 2 Peter 1:20-21 *Above all, you must realize that no prophecy in Scripture ever came from the prophet's own understanding, or from human initiative. No, those prophets were moved by the Holy Spirit, and they spoke from God.*

- John 20:31 *But these are written so that you may continue to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing in him you will have life by the power of his name.*
- Psalm 119:160 *The very essence of your words is truth; all your just regulations will stand forever.*
- 2 Timothy 3:16-17 *All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right. (17) God uses it to prepare and equip his people to do every good work.*

Or, use the following review questions in a game of your choice:

1. How many books are in the Bible? (66)
2. How many men wrote the 66 books of the Bible? (40)
3. Over how many years did it take to write the Bible? (1,600 years)
4. Whose ideas are written in the Bible and how did the authors get them? (The thoughts and ideas are God's. The men were inspired by the Holy Spirit to write them down.)
5. Why can you trust that what is written in the Bible is true? (God inspired it and He never changes His mind.)
6. What is the main theme of the Bible? (God's message of salvation; His plan of redemption.)
7. Why is it important for us to read and understand the Bible? (What pleased God in those stories will please Him today.)

[For more expositional lessons for children, visit <https://www.freechildrensministrylessons.com>.]

The Books of Moses

(The “Law”)

Introduction

If you started to read a chapter book, would you read only the middle chapter and then close the book? No! You would want to read the whole book so that you know what happens.

It's the same thing with the Bible. Many people know some of the Bible characters and some of the main stories in the Bible, but they can't see how the stories connect. The Bible is one book. It's the story of God's wonderful plan to save us from our sins and prepare us to live for all eternity with Him in heaven. You cannot read the Bible in bits and pieces and expect to understand the wonder of God's plan. You would never read any other book in such a way.

Today we're going to learn more about this very special book, called the Bible.

Opening Prayer

Father, I pray that You would open the eyes of our hearts this morning so that we might see wonderful things in Your word. Give us understanding so that we will keep and obey your word with all our hearts. In Jesus name, we pray. Amen.

Memory Verse:

Open my eyes, that I may see wondrous things from Your law. (Psalm 119:18)

Lesson

Last week we began a new series of lessons about the Bible. Let's do a little review:

1. Who remembers another name for the Bible? (*The Word* or *God's Word*, because the thoughts and ideas are God's. The men who

wrote the words were inspired by the Holy Spirit to write them down.)

2. How many books are there in the Bible? (66)
3. How many men wrote the 66 books of the Bible? (40)
4. Over how many years did it take to write the Bible? (1,600 years)
5. What is the main theme of the Bible? (God's message of salvation; His plan of redemption.)

The Books of Moses

We divide the books of the Bible into groups. The first five books in our Bible were written by Moses so we call these five books, "*The Books of Moses*". Because these books tell of God's Ten Commandments and other instructions, these five books are also called *The Books of the Law* or sometimes just *The Law*. Turn to your Table of Contents and read the names of the Books of Moses with me. (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy.)

Genesis

Find the book of Genesis in your Bible. Genesis is the first book in the Bible. The word *Genesis* means "*Beginnings*." It tells us about the creation of the world. Look at Genesis 1:1 [Teacher, review how to find Bible references, if necessary.] Who does the Bible say created the heavens and the earth? (God.) Genesis is a book of firsts. It tells us about the first man and woman (1:27) and the first sin (3:6). Genesis is also the first place where we can read God's promise to send a Savior so we can have our sin forgiven (3:15). In this book we also learn about the first murder (4:8) and the first and only worldwide flood (chapters 7 and 8).

After God made everything we see around us, He made people, so He could love them and be loved by them. In the beginning God created everything perfect. But over time, people forgot about God and became so wicked that God had to destroy it with a great flood. He saved Noah and his family and started over with the human race.

Then God chose a special man and made a promise to him that even though he and his wife were very old, out of them would grow a great nation of people that would be known as "*God's Chosen People*." And out of that family would be born, Jesus, the Savior of the whole human race.

That man's name was Abraham and his wife was Sarah. They had a boy named Isaac and Isaac had a son named Jacob. Jacob had 12 sons. Then Jacob's name was changed to Israel. That is why we say that out of Abraham and Sarah came the nation of Israel.

Why did God want a special nation of people? He wanted them to be His messengers to the rest of the world, to tell them about God and His wonderful plan of salvation. Through this nation, God promised to bless the whole world (12:1-3). That blessing came when the Lord Jesus was born into a Jewish family.

In Genesis the Israelites end up in Egypt as slaves; this is a type (or example) of how all mankind is in bondage to sin. (Egypt is a type of the sinful world.)

Exodus

In Exodus Moses rescues the Israelites from Egypt and leads them back to Israel, the Promised Land. Exodus means "*Exit*" or "*This Way Out*."

In Exodus we find the story of Moses. In the beginning of this book God's people are living in Egypt as slaves. Exodus tells about the plagues God sent to Egypt to convince Pharaoh to let His people go. We read in this book how God led the Israelites through the wilderness on their way to the Promised Land.

The Promised Land is a type of heaven; Moses is a type of Jesus who rescues us from the bondage of sin in the world and leads us to an eternal dwelling place with God in heaven.

When they stopped at Mt. Sinai, God called Moses to meet Him on the mountain where He gave him the Ten Commandments. Please

find Exodus 20:1-17. God's instructions for building the tabernacle are here in the Book of Exodus, too (25:8, 9). The tabernacle was a special tent where the people would come to worship. The tabernacle was set up as the center of worship wherever the people settled.

Leviticus

Find the book of Leviticus. In this book God told His people how He wanted them to worship Him. Chapters 1 – 7 lay out the exact ways in which offerings should be made. The animal sacrifices described here are a picture of Jesus' sacrifice for us on the cross (John 1:29; Ephesians 5:2; 1 Peter 1:18, 19). Then we learn about Aaron, the first high priest, and his sons, who also served as priests (chapters 8 and 9). Today we go to God directly through the Lord Jesus, our Great High Priest (1 Timothy 2:5; Hebrews 4:14). Chapters 10-22 record special laws the priests and people were to follow. And God also gave the Israelites several feasts or holidays, as well as other special days to celebrate as they worshiped Him (chapters 23 – 25). Even these special days picture certain parts of God's wonderful plan to save us from our sin (for example, see 1 Corinthians 5:7).

Numbers

Now find the book of Numbers. This book begins and ends with the census or the numbering of the people of Israel. But there are more than just numbers in this book. We also find the story of God's people as they traveled toward the Promised Land. Joshua is introduced here as one of the twelve spies sent into the Promised Land (13:16). Too bad the Israelites didn't trust God enough to obey Him and go in. Because they chose to disobey, they had to spend forty years wandering around in the Wilderness (14:33).

Deuteronomy

Finally, let's find the Book of Deuteronomy. Deuteronomy means "*Second Law*." In Deuteronomy, the Israelites were just about to enter the Promised Land.

Since most of the people who followed Moses out of Egypt had died in the Wilderness, God reviewed the history of Israel for them. Then, for the second time, God gave Israel His commandments. We can read them again beginning in Deuteronomy 5:6 (find and read the Ten Commandments again.) Through Moses, God tells His people how they are to live in the Promised Land. Read at Deuteronomy 11:26. God warns Israel of what will happen to them if they disobey Him and promises to bless them if they will keep His laws.

So far, we've only talked about the first 5 books of the Bible, the Books of Moses, or the Law. Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy are important to us. They teach us about God's laws. Breaking God's law is sin. In these first five books, God shows us that only by the shedding of blood can our sins be forgiven (Leviticus 17:11). Though the Israelites had to make animal sacrifices again and again, God gave His promise that one day He would send a Savior who would shed His Blood once and for all to save us from our sin (Genesis 3:15). That Savior is the Lord Jesus Christ (Hebrews 9:12, 27, 28; 1 Peter 3:18). Next week we will talk about the next group of books called the books of History.

All the books in the Bible make the whole picture — it's the whole puzzle put together. They tell one complete story — God's plan of redemption.

Closing Prayer

Father, thank You for not leaving us clueless as to why we exist and what Your plan is for our lives. We love You, Lord, and appreciate the fact that You want to communicate with us through Your Word, the Bible. Give us a desire in our hearts to read and understand it every day. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Learning Activities

Books of the Old Testament Song

(To the tune of "Did You Ever See a Lassie?")

Let us sing the books of Moses, of Moses, of Moses,

Let us sing the books of Moses, for he wrote the law.

*First, **Genesis**; second, **Exodus**; third, **Leviticus**; fourth, **Numbers**;*

*And the fifth is **Deuteronomy**, the last of them all.*

Game Center

Bible Ping Pong

Divide the class into two teams. The first member of team #1 says "Genesis." The first member of team #2 says "Exodus." The second member of team #1 must say "Leviticus," etc. until all five books are named. If a child misses, have him sit down, and give the opposing team the opportunity to respond. Set a timer for one to three minutes, depending on the size of your group. To keep the game moving, allow each player only until the slow count of three to name the next book. After Deuteronomy, go back to Genesis and repeat until the timer goes off. The team with the most members standing when the timer goes off is the winner. This drill may be repeated adding more book names as they are learned.

Or, Use the following review questions in a game of your choice:

1. How many books are in the Bible? (66)
2. How many men wrote the 66 books of the Bible? (40)
3. Over how many years did it take to write the Bible? (1,600)

4. Whose ideas are written in the Bible and how did the authors get them? (The thoughts and ideas are God's. The men were inspired by the Holy Spirit to write them down.)
5. Why can you trust that what is written in the Bible is true? (God inspired it and He never changes His mind.)
6. Where do you read about the beginnings of things? (Genesis)
7. Where do you read about the endings of things? (Revelation)
8. What is the main theme of the Bible? (God's message of salvation; His plan of redemption.)
9. What are some "beginnings" told in the book of Genesis? (Time & matter, heavens & earth, man, sin, judgment.)
10. Who did God promise to make a great nation of people from? (Abraham)
11. What is the name of the nation of people that came from Abraham & Sarah? (Israel)
12. Why did God want a special nation of people? (He wanted them to be His messengers to the rest of the world, to tell about God and His wonderful plan of salvation.)
13. Why is it important for us to read and understand the Bible? (What pleased God in those stories will please Him today.)

[For more expositional lessons for children, visit <https://www.freechildrensministrylessons.com>.]

The Books of History

(God's True Story)

Introduction

[Teacher, discuss with your class how the Word of God is nourishing like the bread of life. Before class cut a slit in the bottom of a round loaf of French bread and pull out a little of the bread. Tuck a pocket-sized New Testament in the loaf. During the pre-session activity, have the children come and break bread with you. They will be amazed to find the Bible inside the loaf and will make the connection between the Word of God and the bread.]

Today we're going to learn more about this very special book, called the Bible.

Opening Prayer

Father, we are so blessed to be able to read Your word! Thank You for giving us these special messages that give us everything we need for life and godliness. This morning, I pray that you would guide us in Your truth and teach us what we cannot learn in school. In Jesus name, we pray. Amen.

Memory Verse:

Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away. (Matthew 24:35)

Lesson

The History Books

We divide the books of the Bible into groups. The first five books in our Bible are called *The Books of Moses* or sometimes just *the Law*, because they tell of God's Ten commandments and other instructions. The next 12 books are called the *Books of History*. These books tell us the history of God's chosen people, the Israelites.

Open your Bible to the Table of Contents and let's read the names of the History Books together. (Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 Samuel, 2 Samuel, 1 Kings, 2 Kings, 1 Chronicles, 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther.)

Joshua

In Joshua, we read about Moses' death and the new leader God chose, Joshua. This book tells us the exciting stories of how God helped the Israelites conquer the people living in the land that was promised to them. There were many battles. Have you ever heard the story about Joshua and the battle of Jericho? In every battle the Israelites learned that when they obeyed God, they came out winners; but when they disobeyed Him, they lost. What an important lesson! Just before he died, Joshua challenged God's people to fear the Lord and to serve Him (Joshua 24:14).

Judges

In Judges we learn about what happened to the Israelites after they settled into the Promised Land. Time and again the people of Israel forgot about God and all that He had done for them. They sinned against Him by worshiping other gods. So, God punished them by allowing them to be delivered into the hands of enemy nations. Then God raised up judges. Are you familiar with Gideon and Samson? These judges made the people face their sin and reminded them of God's Word. Finally, the people confessed their sin and turned back to God. Each time, God loved them so much that He forgave them. This happened over and over again. We have such a loving and patient God! This is a picture of how we do things that go against God's will, but if we confess our sins and turn from them, God is faithful to forgive us.

The end of the book of Judges tells us the sad state of the nation of Israel.

Judges 21:25

In those days Israel had no king; all the people did whatever seemed right in their own eyes.

After all that God had done for them, they still chose their own way instead of His. Again, that is so much like us. Time and again we make choices to go our own way instead of God's.

Ruth

The book of Ruth is a bright spot during the dark days of the judges. It tells how, after the death of her first husband, God provided Ruth a new husband named Boaz. This reminds us of God's love for us. Boaz rescued and cared for Ruth. Our Savior Jesus Christ shows His love in an even greater way by saving us and caring for us.

1 & 2 Samuel, 1 & 2 Kings, and 1 & 2 Chronicles

In the books of 1 & 2 Samuel, 1 & 2 Kings, and 1 & 2 Chronicles, there are no longer judges leading Israel; there are kings. God chose Saul to be the first king. But Saul disobeyed God and God chose another, David.

As a boy, David had been a shepherd. He loved God very much. David wrote many songs that we sing even to this day while he was sitting out with his sheep on the hillsides around Jerusalem. David was also very brave and killed a giant named Goliath.

After David's death, his son Solomon became king. Solomon built a beautiful temple for God's people to worship in. It was a magnificent place, a type of heaven. But soon God's people began to neglect their worship of God. Their nation became divided. Finally, both halves were conquered and God's people were carried off to other nations as slaves. And God's beautiful temple was destroyed.

Ezra

The book of Ezra was written about 80 years after the Israelites returned from captivity in Babylon. Ezra records how the temple was rebuilt and then challenged the people to worship God properly.

Nehemiah

In the book of Nehemiah we learn of Nehemiah's work to rebuild the walls around the city of Jerusalem.

Esther

Finally the book of Esther tells of a young woman who was used by God to save the Israelites from being killed off.

Throughout the Books of History, we see God at work in people's lives. God never changes. He still works in our lives every day.

Malachi 3:6a

"I am the LORD, and I do not change..."

What pleased Him in these stories will please Him today. If you and I want to please God, we need to read and remember these lessons from Israel's history.

1 Corinthians 10:11

These things happened to them as examples for us. They were written down to warn us who live at the end of the age.

All these lessons were written down so that we could read about them and learn from them.

We've only talked about the first 17 books of the Bible. We divided those books into two groups: the Law and History. Next week we will learn about the books of Poetry.

All the books in the Bible make the whole picture — it's the whole puzzle put together. They tell one complete story — God's plan of redemption.

Closing Prayer

Father, it's so good to know that You are in control of everything that happens in our lives and that You are working it all out. Thank You that you've made sure that we have Your story written down so that we will not be caught off guard. The Bible is about Your story, His-story. Continue to give us a love for our Bibles so that we may know and love You. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Learning Activities

Books of the Old Testament Song

(To the tune of "Did You Ever See a Lassie?")

Let us sing the books of Moses, of Moses, of Moses,

Let us sing the books of Moses, for he wrote the law.

*First, **Genesis**; second, **Exodus**; third, **Leviticus**; fourth, **Numbers**;*

*And the fifth is **Deuteronomy**, the last of them all.*

Let us sing the books of history, of history, of history,

Let us sing the books of history, which tell of the Jews.

*There's **Joshua**, and **Judges**, and the story of **Ruth**.*

*First and second **Samuel**; and two books of **Kings**;*

*There's two books of **Chronicles**, which give us the records;*

*Then **Ezra**; **Nehemiah**; and **Esther**, the Queen.*

Game Center

Puzzle Relay Race

Reading the Bible is like putting together a puzzle. All the stories we read in the Bible help us to see a true picture of what God is like, so we can know and love Him. [Teacher, for this game use any puzzle with about a dozen pieces for each team. Or, make a puzzle by printing the memory verse on a piece of card stock and cutting it into puzzle-like pieces. Use a different color for each team.]

1. Divide group into teams of six to eight students.
2. Have a puzzle for each team.
3. Have Teams form lines.
4. Mix up puzzle pieces and place them about 20 feet from the teams, keeping each team's pieces separate.
5. At your signal, the first student from each team runs to his or her team's puzzle pieces, gets a piece, returns to his or her line and tags the next student to run to the puzzle and get a piece.
6. Students continue until all pieces have been collected.
7. Then students on each team work together to assemble their puzzle.

Option: Print Matthew 24:35 on index cards, one word on each card. Play relay as instructed above, substituting index cards for puzzle pieces and having teams put cards in correct verse order.

[For more expositional lessons for children, visit <https://www.freechildrensministrylessons.com> .]

The Poetry Books

(God's True Story)

Introduction

Teacher, tell your students that we're going on a hunt for someone special, and their job is to find that someone. Have them read the descriptions on the following list:

Who ...

- Makes plants grow
- Heals people
- Loves us all the time
- Gives mercy and grace
- Is more powerful than anything or anyone
- Performs miracles
- Provides food for all creatures
- Made the sea
- Made the sky
- Created people
- Lives in heaven
- Created the world
- Gave us his Son

Have one of the children read aloud the descriptions on the list. Discuss who might fit that description; then write that person's name beside the description. Give the students a few minutes to read and discuss the descriptions. Then ask:

1. Can a human being fit these descriptions? Why not?

2. Is God the only one who can do all these things?
3. How does it feel to know that only God can do all these things?
4. Why do you think God is the only one worthy of our praise and worship?
5. In what ways can we worship God?

Lead the children in naming ways they could worship God such as praying and singing worship songs to the Lord.

God is mightier than anything or anyone and is the only one worthy of worship and praise. Today's lesson is going to give us some ideas on how we can praise and worship God in ways that are pleasing to Him.

Opening Prayer

Father, we thank You for being all that You are. You are more powerful than anything and wiser than anyone. We give You thanks for Your wondrous acts and for Your love. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword,... and is a discerner of [can understand] the thoughts and intents of the heart. (Hebrews 4:12)

Lesson

For the past 3 weeks we've been taking a bird's eye look at the Bible. We discovered that it's not just one book written by one author. Who remembers how many books are in the Bible? (66) How many men wrote the Bible? (40) And, we learned that the authors didn't all live at the same time, so they couldn't get together to plan what they were going to write. Who remembers how many years it took for the whole Bible to be finished? (1,600 years) Yet every story in the Bible perfectly agrees with all the others! How is that possible? [Teacher, let the children respond.] Even though God used men to write the Bible, the words they wrote were not simply their own. They were the

thoughts and ideas of God. The inspiration for this book was given to men from God.

So far, we've learned about the first 17 books of the Bible. We divided those books into two groups: The Law and History. This week we're going to look at the books of Poetry. [Teacher, use the Bible Book poster to point out the groups of books: Law, History, Poetry, Prophets, Gospels, Acts (the history of the church), letters, and finally, the Revelation of Jesus Christ — the story of what will happen when He comes back at the end of the world.]

It's important for you to see the whole Bible as one book. It tells a single story — the story of God's wonderful plan to rescue you and me from Satan's clutches.

Who remembers what sorts of things are in the Law, the first 5 books of the Bible? (The Ten Commandments and other instructions from God.) Who remembers what sorts of things are in the next 12 books of the Bible, the History books? (The history of God's Chosen People, the Israelites.)

Next, we have the books of Poetry — Job through Song of Solomon.

Job

The first book in the Poetry group is Job. It is a story about a man named Job who was a rich man that loved God. All of a sudden, he lost everything — property, wealth, children, and health. But as we read the story of Job, we learn that God is always in control. Job's suffering wasn't a punishment. It was to show him how much he needed God. God doesn't have to explain why He allows us to go through trials. But if we listen to Him during hard times, He will teach us about Himself. Then we will see that we must simply trust Him to do what is best. God lovingly took Job through his suffering and taught him many lessons. Then God blessed Job with more than he had before.

Psalms

Next is the book of Psalms. A psalm is a poem set to music, like a song. The Book of Psalms was like a hymn book for the people of Israel. They sang these songs during their worship times.

King David wrote 73 of the Psalms. As a shepherd boy, David spent many hours in the fields with his sheep. David wrote poems and sang them to God as he played his harp. In his psalms he cried out to God, telling God just how he felt. He told God how much he loved Him and thanked God for all He had done.

Solomon, and other men also wrote some of the psalms. All these men expressed their feelings to God about everything: anger, fear, loneliness, sadness, and gladness. There is nothing we can't tell God.

The Book of Psalms can help you and me to know how to talk to God. And, it can inspire you to worship God during your own quiet times alone with Him.

[Teacher, if you know the songs derived from the following verses, sing them with your class.]

Psalm 3:3

But you, O LORD, are a shield around me; you are my glory, the one who holds my head high.

Psalm 5:1-3

O LORD, hear me as I pray; pay attention to my groaning. (2) Listen to my cry for help, my King and my God, for I pray to no one but you. (3) Listen to my voice in the morning, LORD. Each morning I bring my requests to you and wait expectantly.

Psalm 118:24

This is the day the LORD has made. We will rejoice and be glad in it.

Psalm 42:1

As the deer longs for streams of water, so I long for you, O God..

Proverbs

The next book in the Poetry group is Proverbs. A proverb is a little saying with a lot of meaning. There are over 900 proverbs in this book. They are little lessons from God that help us be wise and brave.

Proverbs 3:5-6

Trust in the LORD with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. (6) Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take.

Ecclesiastes

Next is the book of Ecclesiastes, written by Solomon, David's son. He was one of the wisest and richest men in the Bible. But in spite of his riches, he asked the question, "*Why am I here?*" All people want to find the way to a happy, meaningful life.

Solomon explored all the possibilities; he tried to find happiness in wisdom and knowledge, in money and things, in accomplishments and power. His conclusion at the end of his life?

Ecclesiastes 1:2-3

"Everything is meaningless," says the Teacher, "completely meaningless!" (3) "Everything is meaningless," says the Teacher, "completely meaningless!"

Here Solomon is saying, "*In my opinion, nothing is worthwhile; everything is hopeless or pointless.* For what does a man get for all his hard work?"

At the end of the book, Solomon tells us what the one thing is that gives meaning to life.

Ecclesiastes 12:13-14

That's the whole story. Here now is my final conclusion: Fear God and obey his commands, for this is everyone's duty. (14) God will judge us for everything we do, including every secret thing, whether good or bad.

Nothing in this world lasts except God and the things we do for Him. Only knowing God and serving Him can give real meaning to life.

Song of Solomon

The last book in the Poetry group is the Song of Solomon. It is the story of a husband's love for his bride. But it is more than a human love story. It helps us understand how Jesus, God the Son, feels about those who belong to Him because they have received Him as Savior. The Lord loves His own very much.

To Review the books of Poetry:

- **Job** helps us to see that we can trust God completely.
- **Psalms** helps us express our feelings to Him.
- **Proverbs** teaches us how to live.
- **Ecclesiastes** shows us there is nothing on earth more valuable than our relationship to God.
- **Song of Solomon** helps us realize that God loves us and takes joy in us.

The books of the Law and the books of History told us about the nation of Israel. They told us God cares about people. But the books of Poetry are given to us as examples of ways to tell God we care about Him. He wants you to talk to Him, to tell Him how you feel and what you are thinking. He wants you to live wisely. You are His beloved. Next week we will learn about the books of the Major Prophets.

Closing Prayer

Father, we do care about You. You are an awesome God — full of grace and mercy and love towards us. We want to learn to come into a quiet place, alone with You, so that we can express our feelings to You. We want to learn to talk to you about everything — times when we're afraid or lonely or sad, as well as times when we're excited about life! We praise You and thank You for giving us the books of Poetry that we can learn from. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Learning Activities

Books of the Old Testament Song

(To the tune of "Did You Ever See a Lassie?")

Let us sing the books of Moses, of Moses, of Moses,

Let us sing the books of Moses, for he wrote the law.

*First, **Genesis**; second, **Exodus**; third, **Leviticus**; fourth, **Numbers**;*

*And the fifth is **Deuteronomy**, the last of them all.*

Let us sing the books of history, of history, of history,

Let us sing the books of history, which tell of the Jews.

*There's **Joshua**, and **Judges**, and the story of **Ruth**.*

*First and second **Samuel**; and two books of **Kings**;*

*There's two books of **Chronicles**, which give us the records;*

*Then **Ezra**; **Nehemiah**; and **Esther**, the Queen.*

Let us sing the books of poetry, of poetry, of poetry,

Let us sing the books of poetry, the songs of the Jews.

***Job** the patient, **Psalms** of David, and **Proverbs** of wise men;*

*And then, **Ecclesiastes**, and **Solomon's Song**.*

Game Center

Bible Book Scramble

Print on separate index cards the names of the books of the Bible learned so far. Scramble the cards in a pile, face up, so children can see the book names. Encourage children to use their Table of Contents. Let them come one at a time and place the cards in order. The first child finds Genesis and positions it on the floor, tapes it to the wall, or tacks it on a bulletin board. The second child finds and places Exodus after Genesis, and so on. Do this several times using the Table of Contents; then put Bibles away, and try to order the books from memory. Encourage each child to tell a little about his book.

Or, Use the following review questions in a game of your choice:

1. How many books are in the Bible? (66)
2. How many men wrote the 66 books of the Bible? (40)
3. Over how many years did it take to write the Bible? (1,600)
4. Whose ideas are written in the Bible and how did the authors get them? (The thoughts and ideas are God's. The men were inspired by the Holy Spirit to write them down.)
5. Why can you trust that what is written in the Bible is true? (God inspired it and He never changes His mind.)
6. What is the main theme of the Bible? (God's message of salvation; His plan of redemption.)

7. What sort of information is in the Law, the first 5 books of the Bible? (The Ten Commandments and other instructions from God.)
8. What sort of information is in the next 12 books of the Bible, the History books? (The history of God's Chosen People, the Israelites.)
9. What is the main theme of the book of Job? (Job helps us to see that we can trust God completely.)
10. What is the main purpose of the book of Psalms? (It helps us express our feelings to God.)
11. What is the main purpose of the book of Proverbs? (It teaches us how to live.)
12. What is the main purpose of the book of Ecclesiastes? (It shows us there is nothing on earth more valuable than our relationship to God.)
13. What is the main purpose of the book of Song of Solomon? (It helps us realize that God loves us and takes joy in us.)

[For more expositional lessons for children, visit <https://www.freechildrensministrylessons.com>.]

The Books of the Major Prophets

(God's True Story)

Introduction

[Teacher, review what we have learned so far about the Bible.] Last week we learned about the five books of Poetry. Today we will learn about the 5 books called the Major Prophets.

Opening Prayer

Father, thank You for speaking to the prophets of old and encouraging them to write down all that You told them. Now we are not left wondering what to expect in the future. We will not be surprised by Your return. We look forward to the fulfillment of all Your promises. We ask You to open our eyes so that we might see within our spirits all the wonderful things that you tell us in Your word. In Jesus name, we pray. Amen.

Memory Verse:

For prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. (2 Peter 1:21)

Lesson

So far, we have learned about the Books of Moses, the History books, and the Books of Poetry. The rest of the books in the Old Testament are called the Prophets because each book was written by a prophet.

Who knows what a *prophet* is? A *prophet* is someone who hears God's message and passes it on to His people. Prophets in Bible times were men who spoke and wrote for God. Before the Bible had been completely written down and put together, prophets would tell people what God's messages were. They would speak to God and God would tell them what to tell the people.

Some Bible prophets talked about the past – they reminded the people of what God had done for them and how much He loved them. When the people sinned against God, the prophets warned them about God's punishment for sin (Isaiah 1:18-20).

Some of the prophets wrote about the future—God gave them the ability to tell what was going to happen long before it did. Hundreds of years before Jesus came to earth, the prophets, predicted His place of birth (Micah 5:2). They foretold the painful death He would suffer to save us (Isaiah 52; 53). There was no way they could have known these things unless God had revealed the future to them. The prophet's writings are inspired—just like all the other books in the Bible.

Many prophecies have already come true. But others are yet to be fulfilled. We know the things predicted will happen because God's Word is never wrong (Psalm 119:160). One prophecy we're still waiting to see fulfilled is the second coming of the Lord Jesus (Zechariah 14:4). One day, if we've accepted Him as our Savior from sin, Jesus will come again and take us to be with Him forever (1 Thessalonians 4:16-18).

The books of the prophets are divided into two groups, the Major Prophets and the Minor Prophets. The titles Major and Minor do not mean that the books in one group are more important than those in the other, but that the books in the Major Prophets are longer than those in the Minor Prophets.

Isaiah

Isaiah worked for the government. He was an advisor to the King on important matters involving other countries. Although he had an important job, he told other people about the coming of the Messiah and encouraged them to turn to God. Many people were worshiping false gods and Isaiah challenged them to turn back to the true God (1:18), their Creator, who loved and cared for them (40:18-31). Isaiah encouraged them with God's promise to send a Savior who would one day reign forever (9:6, 7; 53; 66).

Jeremiah

Jeremiah grew up in a wealthy home but had a special love for poor people. God asked Jeremiah to preach a very difficult message: God's people were to surrender to their enemies. God was going to judge them for worshiping idols and for other sins. He was grieved with them for taking advantage of the poor and for following lying preachers who were only after money. When Jeremiah told his people what God had said, the leaders beat him and put him in prison. But Jeremiah remained true to God. God used Jeremiah's suffering to make him a gentle, compassionate man who people called the weeping prophet. Near the end of his life Jeremiah wrote another book, called Lamentations.

Lamentations

Lamentations is a beautiful but sad poem telling us the story of the burning of Jerusalem. The word *lament* means "to cry out in grief." Jeremiah laments as he sees the tears his people shed when their city is destroyed and they are taken captive. The Jews needed to take God's warnings about sin seriously, and so do we. If we ignore them, we will suffer the consequences, too. But even when we are facing judgment, our faithful, loving God offers us forgiveness (Lamentations 3:22-25).

Ezekiel

Ezekiel faced hard times, too. He was a prisoner of war. He grew up in Israel, where his father was a priest. But as a young man, Ezekiel was captured and taken to faraway Babylon. There he became God's prophet, the spiritual leader of the captive Jews. As God revealed His message (often through vision), Ezekiel preached it. The Jews were mourning because they had been taken away from their homeland. Ezekiel told them that they must accept their situation. It was God's punishment for the nation's sins—pride, materialism, idleness, and selfishness (16:48-51). Though Israel as a nation was being judged, Ezekiel challenged his fellow captives to turn back to God (33:14-20)

Then God would bless them as individuals (34:11-17, 26). Ezekiel also reminded them of God's promise to bless and honor the nation of Israel in the future (chapters 36-48).

Daniel

Daniel was a captive who was taken away to Babylon as a teenager, long before Ezekiel arrived there. He and some of his friends (all from important Jewish families) had been selected to receive special training that would prepare them to become loyal leaders for Babylon. Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-Nego studied hard and showed respect to the men in charge of them. But they refused to give up their godly training (Daniel 1:8). Because they were faithful to Him, God made these four excel above all the other students. Then God gave them important positions and used them to spread the message that He alone is God.

God also allowed Daniel and his friends to go through very difficult times. Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-Nego were thrown into a fiery furnace because they refused to bow down and worship the king (Daniel 3:19-28). Daniel was lowered into a den of hungry lions (Daniel 6:16-23). But God was with them and protected them all. Their example can teach us to stand up for right when people want us to do wrong. Because Daniel remained faithful to God, God made him a leader under several kings. God also used Daniel to write about important future events. Many have already been fulfilled (Daniel 2:15-45; 7:1-7), but other exciting events that he foretold, God has not yet brought about (much of chapters. 7-12).

Can you remember the books of the Old Testament from Genesis through Daniel? If you need help, turn to your Table of Contents and read them

Closing Prayer

Father, again, we thank You for our Bibles. They are truly remarkable and special books. I pray that You would instill in our hearts a love for

Your word and a desire to read and understand all that You've made sure was written down for us. You've given us Your word so that we might have all that we need for life and godliness. And for that we are truly grateful. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Learning Activities

Books of the Old Testament Song

(To the tune of "Did You Ever See a Lassie?")

Let us sing the books of Moses, of Moses, of Moses,

Let us sing the books of Moses, for he wrote the law.

*First, **Genesis**; second, **Exodus**; third, **Leviticus**; fourth, **Numbers**;*

*And the fifth is **Deuteronomy**, the last of them all.*

Let us sing the books of history, of history, of history,

Let us sing the books of history, which tell of the Jews.

*There's **Joshua**, and **Judges**, and the story of **Ruth**.*

*First and second **Samuel**; and two books of **Kings**;*

*There's two books of **Chronicles**, which give us the records;*

*Then **Ezra**; **Nehemiah**; and **Esther**, the Queen.*

Let us sing the books of poetry, of poetry, of poetry,

Let us sing the books of poetry, the songs of the Jews.

***Job** the patient, **Psalms** of David, and **Proverbs** of wise men;*

*And then, **Ecclesiastes**, and **Solomon's Song**.*

Let us sing the Major Prophets, Major Prophets, Major Prophets,

Let us sing the Major Prophets, the greatest of all.

***Isaiah**, **Jeremiah**, who wrote **Lamentations**;*

***Ezekiel** and **Daniel**, who were true to their God.*

Game Center

Name that Book

1. This book records the beginning of all things. (Genesis)
2. This book records Joshua and the battle of Jericho. (Joshua)
3. You can find the story of Gideon and Samson in this book. (Judges)
4. You can read about the story of Ruth and Boaz in this book. (Ruth)
5. Where can you find the selection of Saul as the first king of Israel? (1 Samuel)
6. This book records how Prophet Samuel anointed David to succeed King Saul as Israel's king. (1 Samuel)
7. This book records how Ezra led the Israelites rebuild God's temple. (Ezra)
8. This book records how Nehemiah rebuilt the walls around Jerusalem. (Nehemiah)
9. You can find the story of Queen Esther and how she saved the Israelites from being killed in this book. (Esther)
10. This book records the story of Noah and the flood. (Genesis)
11. You can find the parting of the Red Sea by Moses in this book. (Exodus)

12. This book begins and ends with the numbering of the Israelites. (Numbers)
13. This book records the story of the 12 spies sent into the Promised Land. (Numbers)
14. Where do you read about the endings of all things? (Revelation)

Bible Book Scramble

Put the name of each of the Bible books on a separate index card. Scramble the cards and let a child take one. Have the child read the name of the card. Ask what book comes before and after the book. Let the child who answers be the next to take a card.

Review Questions

Or, use the following questions as a hand out, send it home as a "take home" paper, or use in a game of your choice.

Over and over again God spoke to His people through prophets. These men reminded Israel of the coming Messiah — God's promised Savior. God's people listened and waited in hope.

1. One of the greatest prophets was a man named _____. He told Israel many things about the Messiah.
2. Isaiah said that the Lord would send a sign when the Savior came. A virgin would have a _____ named *Immanuel*, which means "*God is with us.*" (Read Isaiah 7:14.)
3. Isaiah promised that the Savior's birth would be like a great light that suddenly brings joy and life to people trapped in darkness.
4. Isaiah wrote that the Savior would come as a child and someday be a great ruler.

5. For whom would this child be born? _____ (Read Isaiah 9:6). This meant the Jews, but the Savior also came for all of us.

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The Books of the Minor Prophets

(God's True Story)

Introduction

[Teacher, review what we have learned so far about the Bible.] Last week we learned about the five books called the Major Prophets. Today we will learn about the 12 books called the Minor Prophets.

Opening Prayer

Father, we're so glad that You have not kept Your will for our lives a secret. You have seen to it that everything we need to know about life was written down in the pages of the Bible, Your word. We pray that You would make the eyes of our heart and our spiritual ears tuned in to You this morning, so that we won't miss anything You want to say to us. In Jesus name, we pray. Amen.

Memory Verse:

How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word. (Psalm 119:9)

Lesson

The books of the Minor Prophets are just as important as the ones in the Major Prophets, but each book is shorter—that is why they are called Minor. Let's read the names of the Minor Prophets from our Table of Contents together.

Most of these prophets preached during the times of the kings of Israel whose stories are told in 2 Kings and 2 Chronicles. [Teacher, use a Bible Book poster to point out these books.]

[Teacher, explain what the captivity is about...]

After the children of Israel came back from Egypt and Joshua helped them conquer the land, they had Judges who ruled over them for about 300 years. Then, they begged God for a king.

They were ruled by kings for many years. The first king was Saul, the second king was David. Then Solomon ruled the people. Some of the kings followed after the ways of God, like David. But, some of the kings were bad, like King Ahab and his wicked wife, Jezebel.

The books of First and Second Kings, and First and Second Chronicles are record books, like diaries, that tell us the stories of what these kings did and what they were like.

The last chapter of 2 Chronicles tells the story of Zedekiah, the last of the kings. He was so unfaithful to God that He finally had to punish the people.

2 Chronicles 36:11-15 [Teacher, read...]

Zedekiah was twenty-one years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem eleven years. (12) But Zedekiah did what was evil in the sight of the LORD his God, and he refused to humble himself when the prophet Jeremiah spoke to him directly from the LORD. (13) He also rebelled against King Nebuchadnezzar, even though he had taken an oath of loyalty in God's name. Zedekiah was a hard and stubborn man, refusing to turn to the LORD, the God of Israel. (14) Likewise, all the leaders of the priests and the people became more and more unfaithful. They followed all the pagan practices of the surrounding nations, desecrating the Temple of the LORD that had been consecrated in Jerusalem. (15) The LORD, the God of their ancestors, repeatedly sent his prophets to warn them, for he had compassion on his people and his Temple.

Again, and again over the years God sent prophets to the various kings to warn them to follow His ways. But they made fun of the prophets.

2 Chronicles 36:16

But the people mocked these messengers of God and despised their words. They scoffed at the prophets until the LORD's anger could no longer be restrained and nothing could be done.

God could not stand the people's unfaithfulness any longer and He brought the Babylonians against the children of Israel to punish them. Let's read how they destroyed Jerusalem and took the people captive.

2 Chronicles 36:18-20

The king took home to Babylon all the articles, large and small, used in the Temple of God, and the treasures from both the LORD's Temple and from the palace of the king and his officials. (19) Then his army burned the Temple of God, tore down the walls of Jerusalem, burned all the palaces, and completely destroyed everything of value. (20) The few who survived were taken as exiles to Babylon, and they became servants to the king and his sons until the kingdom of Persia came to power.

God allowed the Babylonians to punish the people for not being faithful to Him. They looted the Temple of all the gold and silver things, and then they burned the place down and led the people off 900 miles to present day Iraq where they became slaves to King Nebuchadnezzar until the kingdom of Persia conquered Babylon.]

Each of the twelve books of the Minor Prophets tells part of God's story. Some of the men that wrote these books lived *before* the children of Israel were sent off to captivity, some lived *during* the time of the captivity, and some lived *after* the time of captivity.

Pre-Exilic Books

Before the captivity, God sent messenger after messenger to warn the people. He told them that He must punish them for all their sins. But He also assured them that if they were sorry, confessed their sins, and repented from their wicked ways (that is, stopped sinning and started living righteously), that He would pour out His blessing upon them again.

Hosea

Hosea preached at a time when all seemed to be going well for Israel, but there was much hidden sin.

Hosea 11:7

For my people are determined to desert me. They call me the Most High, but they don't truly honor me.

Yet Hosea told them of God's steadfast love in spite of their unfaithfulness.

Hosea 14:1-4

Return, O Israel, to the LORD your God, for your sins have brought you down. (2) Bring your confessions, and return to the LORD. Say to him, "Forgive all our sins and graciously receive us, so that we may offer you our praises. (3) Assyria cannot save us, nor can our warhorses. Never again will we say to the idols we have made, "You are our gods." No, in you alone do the orphans find mercy." (4) The LORD says, "Then I will heal you of your faithlessness; my love will know no bounds, for my anger will be gone forever.

God's arms were open wide if they would just come back to Him. And His arms are always open for you and me, too.

Joel

Joel reminded the people that God is always willing to forgive if we will turn our hearts back to Him.

Joel 2:12-13

That is why the LORD says, "Turn to me now, while there is time. Give me your hearts. Come with fasting, weeping, and mourning. (13) Don't tear your clothing in your grief, but tear your hearts instead." Return to the LORD your God, for he is merciful and compassionate, slow to get angry and filled with unfailing love. He is eager to relent and not punish.

This was a message of hope – in spite of the judgment of God, He will restore His people and dwell with them.

Amos

Amos was a farmer, but he knew God's word. God saw this farmer's tender heart and asked him to take a message to the king of Israel.

Amos went boldly and listed the sins that God was going to judge. He challenged the people to confess their sins to God and repent. But the

people ignored his preaching. So, Amos warned the people that they must prepare to meet God.

Amos 4:12

"Therefore, I will bring upon you all the disasters I have announced. Prepare to meet your God in judgment, you people of Israel!"

Someday we will all have to stand before God and give an account for all that we have said and done; we need to be ready to meet God!

If you confess your sins and repent of them, God will not withhold His love from you.

Obadiah

God asked Obadiah to give a very powerful message to the country of Edom. The Edomites had hated Israel and actually celebrated when they saw the Israelites suffering hardships. But Obadiah gives them God's sentence of destruction.

Obadiah 1:15-16

"The day is near when I, the LORD, will judge all godless nations! As you have done to Israel, so it will be done to you. All your evil deeds will fall back on your own heads. (16) Just as you swallowed up my people on my holy mountain, so you and the surrounding nations will swallow the punishment I pour out on you. Yes, all you nations will drink and stagger and disappear from history.

Obadiah's message still applies to us today. Never be so proud that you laugh when trouble comes to others. Remember that pride can lead you to a fall.

Jonah

Jonah is the only prophet God used who did not want to deliver God's message. [Teacher, briefly summarize the story of Jonah.] We don't know why, but Jonah hated the people of Nineveh. They were known for the cruel ways they tortured their captives. Jonah wanted God to

destroy them. He was afraid that God would be merciful and forgive them if they repented of their sins. So, when God asked Jonah to go to Nineveh, he ran the other way.

The message of Jonah is not about Jonah running from God, but about God's mercy on sinners. The lesson for us is that God has concern for the whole world; His gracious offer of salvation extends to all who repent and turn to Him.

Isn't it wonderful that God is merciful? There is no sin that God will not forgive! The Lord Jesus died for the sins of the whole world and offers salvation to everyone. God loves each of us and will forgive us if we repent.

Exilic Books

While they were in captivity, God continued to speak to His people through the prophets. He wanted them to know why they were being punished and to remind them that if they were sorry, confessed their sins, and repented from their wicked ways (that is, stopped sinning), that He would pour out His blessing upon them again.

Micah

Micah was a simple country preacher who loved to work with the common people. He had great compassion for people's problems. Micah reminded the people to live righteously before God.

Micah 6:8

No, O people, the LORD has told you what is good, and this is what he requires of you: to do what is right, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God.

Nahum

Nahum lived a 100 years after Jonah and God used him to preach a message of judgment against Nineveh, too.

Nahum 1:9

Why are you scheming against the LORD? He will destroy you with one blow; he won't need to strike twice!

This time the people of Nineveh did not repent and Nahum's prophecies came true. Shortly after this warning Nineveh was completely destroyed. God does punish people that do not turn away from their sins.

Habakkuk

Habakkuk was a trained preacher who lived near Jerusalem. He lived at the time that Israel was facing an invasion by the Babylonians.

Habakkuk 1:6-7

I am raising up the Babylonians, a cruel and violent people. They will march across the world and conquer other lands. (7) They are notorious for their cruelty and do whatever they like.

Habakkuk couldn't believe that God would raise up the Babylonians to punish the children of Israel. He cries out to God...

Habakkuk 1:12

O LORD my God, my Holy One, you who are eternal—surely you do not plan to wipe us out? O LORD, our Rock, you have sent these Babylonians to correct us, to punish us for our many sins.

God tells Habakkuk that He will not allow evil to continue; it has to be punished. But, He also reassures the people if they turn from their sins in faith, that God will deliver them.

Habakkuk 2:4

"Look at the proud! They trust in themselves, and their lives are crooked. But the righteous will live by their faithfulness to God."

What is important is that each of us turns to Him in faith. When you do that, your life will be filled with joy, no matter what circumstances you find yourself in.

Zephaniah

For more than fifty years the nation had lived wickedly under kings. The people had become lazy and unconcerned about God. They had disobeyed God and relied on themselves.

Zephaniah 3:1-2

What sorrow awaits rebellious, polluted Jerusalem, the city of violence and crime! (2) No one can tell it anything; it refuses all correction. It does not trust in the LORD or draw near to its God.

Zephaniah's message of hope to the people was that after the exile, if the people turned back to God, He would rescue them. God was longing to save them.

Zephaniah 3:17

For the LORD your God is living among you. He is a mighty savior. He will take delight in you with gladness. With his love, he will calm all your fears. He will rejoice over you with joyful songs."

Soon after Zephaniah's preaching, there was a national revival. God truly does keep His word.

Post-Exilic Books

After the punishment was completed, God allowed the people to go back to Promised Land, the land of Israel.

Haggai

Haggai preached during an exciting time. He was the first prophet to speak to the people after they returned from captivity in Babylon.

Happy to be back in their own land, the Israelites began right away to rebuild God's house and to worship Him with their whole hearts.

Then God used Haggai to share some special promises of wonderful things that He will do for Israel in the future.

Haggai 2:9

The future glory of this Temple will be greater than its past glory, says the LORD of Heaven's Armies. And in this place I will bring peace. I, the LORD of Heaven's Armies, have spoken!"

Zechariah

Zechariah challenged the people to turn from their sins of selfishness and love of things and accept the coming Savior. Zechariah predicted many details concerning the coming Messiah, Jesus, God's promised Savior. He prophesied that He would enter Jerusalem as a king just before His death.

Zechariah 9:9

Rejoice, O people of Zion! Shout in triumph, O people of Jerusalem! Look, your king is coming to you. He is righteous and victorious, yet he is humble, riding on a donkey—riding on a donkey's colt.

And he described Jesus' death on the cross.

Zechariah 12:10

"Then I will pour out a spirit of grace and prayer on the family of David and on the people of Jerusalem. They will look on me whom they have pierced and mourn for him as for an only son. They will grieve bitterly for him as for a firstborn son who has died.

Zechariah's message ends with God's promise that the Messiah will return a second time to judge His enemies and to deliver His people forever (chapter 14).

It is sad to know that Zechariah was killed by a mob of angry people who rejected his message from God. They did not want to believe that

it was true. But during His life on earth the Lord Jesus fulfilled every prophecy about the first coming of the Messiah. And it is certain that He will fulfill all the predictions about the second coming as well! Isn't it exciting to know that we can trust God's Word?

Malachi

Several generations passed after Zechariah and Haggai challenged the people to rebuild the Temple and return to God. They did listen for a time, but gradually they drifted away from God. They stopped worshiping at God's Temple and no longer took care of it. Eventually God sent Ezra and Nehemiah to stir the people to turn back to Him. Then there was a revival; the people truly repented and worshiped God with sincere hearts. They repaired the Temple and built strong walls around Jerusalem. But the revival lasted only a few years. Oh, the Jews continued to go through the motions of worship. But they did not mean it in their hearts. It was at this time in history, about a hundred years after God brought the Jews back to their land from Babylon, that Malachi preached.

Malachi saw the sins of his people, and God used him to rebuke Israel. His message was simple: Worship God with pure hearts and follow His laws completely.

Malachi 2:2

Listen to me and make up your minds to honor my name," says the LORD of Heaven's Armies, "or I will bring a terrible curse against you. I will curse even the blessings you receive. Indeed, I have already cursed them, because you have not taken my warning to heart.

God wants you to serve Him with a pure heart, too. Through Malachi, God promises that if you obey Him, He will bless you in ways far greater than you can imagine.

Malachi 3:10

Bring all the tithes into the storehouse so there will be enough food in my Temple. If you do," says the LORD of Heaven's Armies, "I will open the

windows of heaven for you. I will pour out a blessing so great you won't have enough room to take it in! Try it! Put me to the test!

This brings us to the close of our brief study of the Old Testament. Let's thank God for His Word right now.

Closing Prayer

Father, we want to thank You for all the promises you give us in Your word. Thank You for all those that have already come true: You sent Jesus to be born to a virgin, just as You said you would. Then Jesus died and rose again, just as You predicted. Thank You also for all Your promises that will come true in the future, too. We especially look forward to Jesus' return. You are a good and gracious God to have all of your prophecies written down in Your book, the Bible, so that we may come to know and love You. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Learning Activities

Books of the Old Testament Song

(To the tune of "Did You Ever See a Lassie?")

Let us sing the books of Moses, of Moses, of Moses,

Let us sing the books of Moses, for he wrote the law.

*First, **Genesis**; second, **Exodus**; third, **Leviticus**; fourth, **Numbers**;*

*And the fifth is **Deuteronomy**, the last of them all.*

Let us sing the books of history, of history, of history,

Let us sing the books of history, which tell of the Jews.

*There's **Joshua**, and **Judges**, and the story of **Ruth**.*

*First and second **Samuel**; and two books of **Kings**;*

*There's two books of **Chronicles**, which give us the records;*

*Then **Ezra**; **Nehemiah**; and **Esther**, the Queen.*

Let us sing the books of poetry, of poetry, of poetry,

Let us sing the books of poetry, the songs of the Jews.

***Job** the patient, **Psalms** of David, and **Proverbs** of wise men;*

*And then, **Ecclesiastes**, and **Solomon's Song**.*

Let us sing the Major Prophets, Major Prophets, Major Prophets,

Let us sing the Major Prophets, the greatest of all.

***Isaiah**, **Jeremiah**, who wrote **Lamentations**;*

***Ezekiel** and **Daniel**, who were true to their God.*

Let us sing the Minor Prophets, Minor Prophets, Minor Prophets,

Let us sing the Minor Prophets, there are twelve of them all:

***Hosea**, **Joel**, **Amos**, **Obadiah**, **Jonah**, **Micah**, **Nahum**, **Habakkuk**,*

***Zephaniah**, **Haggai**, **Zechariah**, **Malachi**.*

Game Center

God's Word Game

In order to find out what God's Word says, we need to know how to find our way around in God's Word!

Write the name of each book of the Bible (or a section of the Bible) on a separate index card. Mix up the cards and divide evenly between

the players. Each player places his or her stack face down in front of him- or herself. Then, at the same time, each player turns the top card from his or her stack face up and says the Bible book name aloud. Players compare face-up cards. Player who played the Bible book card that come latest in the Bible, collects face-up cards and add them to the bottom of his or her stack. (For example, if two people are playing and one player played the card for the book of Genesis and the other player played the card for the book of Luke, the latter player would collect both cards.) Repeat play until one player has all of the cards.

Review Questions:

1. What is a prophet? (A messenger)
2. Why are the books of the Minor Prophets called "minor"? Are they less important than the Major Prophets? (They are shorter)
3. How many books make up the Minor Prophets of the Old Testament? (12)
4. The prophet Haggai comes on the scene encourage people to finish an uncompleted project. What was it he wanted the people to do? (Finish rebuilding the Temple.)
5. Who was the farmer who warned the people of his day about their sin? (Amos)
6. Which prophet is said to have prophesied the place where Jesus would be born? (Micah)
7. Why did the great fish swallow Jonah? (Jonah refused to go to Nineveh as God commanded.)
8. Who prophesied the ultimate destruction of Nineveh? (Nahum)
9. Which prophet complained to God about using wicked nations to punish the children of Israel? (Habakkuk)
10. Which of Jesus' disciples quoted the Prophet Joel in the second chapter of Acts on the day of Pentecost? (Peter)
11. Obadiah's prophecy was to what nation that was making fun of the children of Israel? (Edom)
12. In what section of the Bible can you find information about the Ten Commandments? (The Law)
13. How many books are in the Bible? (66)
14. How many men wrote the 66 books of the Bible? (40)
15. Over how many years did it take to write the Bible? (1,600)
16. Whose ideas are written in the Bible and how did the authors get them? (The thoughts and ideas are God's. The men were inspired by the Holy Spirit to write them down.)
17. Why can you trust that what is written in the Bible is true? (God inspired it and He never changes His mind.)
18. What is the main theme of the Bible? (God's message of salvation; His plan of redemption.)
19. What sort of information is in the two books of Kings and the two books of Chronicles? (The records or journals of the time of the kings.)
20. What sort of information is in the history books? (The history of God's Chosen People, the Israelites.)
21. What is the main purpose of the book of Psalms? (It helps us express our feelings to God.)

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The Gospels

(God's True Story)

Introduction

[Teacher, review what we have learned so far about the Bible.] Last week we finished talking about the Old Testament. Today we begin learning about the books of the New Testament.

The New Testament is the part of the Bible written *after* the Lord Jesus came to earth. Here we find the stories about the life of Jesus, about His disciples, and about the early church. The last book of the New Testament tells what it will be like when the Lord Jesus comes the second time.

Opening Prayer

Father, thank You for having these four men write down the stories of Jesus. Now we can come to a fuller understanding of who You are and just how wonderful Your plan of salvation is. Cause us now to open the eyes of our heart so that we might see Jesus more clearly this morning. In Jesus name, we pray. Amen.

Memory Verse:

But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name. (John 20:31)

Lesson

The word *gospel* means “good news.” And that’s just what we find in the first 4 books of the New Testament. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John tell us the story of Jesus’ life on earth.

By reading all four Gospels, we can get a full view of what Jesus was really like during His life on earth.

Matthew

Matthew wrote especially for the Jews. He presented Jesus as the Christ—the Messiah—the King who had been promised in the Old Testament. He points to 128 Old Testament prophecies fulfilled during the life of the Lord Jesus! Matthew clearly shows us that Jesus is the Savior God had promised to send.

Mark

Mark presents Jesus as the One who willingly became a servant. He came to suffer and give His life that we might be saved. In almost every chapter of Mark we see the Lord working by doing miracles (chapters 1-11).

Mark 10:45 is the key verse in his book. Look it up and let’s read it.

Mark 10:45

For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve others and to give his life as a ransom for many.

Jesus, the Suffering Servant, is our great example. And once we know Him as Savior, He wants us to be servants, too.

Mark 10:43

But among you it will be different. Whoever wants to be a leader among you must be your servant,

Luke

Luke was a doctor, and he shows Jesus as the Son of Man. We learn of His entry into the world as a human being (Luke 1:26-38; 2:1-20)

Luke 1:26-27

In the sixth month of Elizabeth’s pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a village in Galilee, (27) to a virgin named Mary. She was engaged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of King David.

Luke tells us about the childhood of Jesus (2:40-52).

Luke 2:40

There the child grew up healthy and strong. He was filled with wisdom, and God's favor was on him.

Because Jesus was in a human body like you and me, He knows how we feel and can sympathize with us and pray for us.

John

John points to Jesus as the Son of God.

John 20:31 [Our Memory Verse is in New King James]

But these are written so that you may continue to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing in him you will have life by the power of his name.

John wanted us to know that Jesus was just who He said He was, God in the flesh!

How We Know Jesus Is God

The Gospels give us four accounts of one wonderful message. They show us clearly that Jesus is God the Son. They tell us about the miracles Jesus did while He was here. Jesus could heal the sick (Mark 2:8-12) and make the blind see...

Luke 7:21

At that very time, Jesus cured many people of their diseases, illnesses, and evil spirits, and he restored sight to many who were blind.

And He cured many diseases...

Matthew 11:5

the blind see, the lame walk, those with leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised to life, and the Good News is being preached to the poor.

He could even bring the dead back to life (John 11). He did those things because He loved people. But most of all He did them so that people would understand who He is.

Jesus did other things no one else could do: He walked on water (Matthew 14:25), calmed the wind and the sea (Luke 8:24), and fed five thousand people with just five loaves of bread and two small fish (Matthew 14:17-21). Jesus did all these things because He wanted us to know that He was the Son of God.

The Bible tells us that while Jesus was on earth, He had a body like you and me. His body got hungry and tired. And it felt pain. Jesus was sometimes tempted to do wrong as we are. But one thing was different about Him: Jesus never sinned.

The Bad News: We Have Sinned

What is sin? It is anything that displeases God. The Bible says that all have sinned (Romans 3:23). *All* means every person who has ever lived. Every person, that is, except Jesus (1 Peter 2:21, 22). The Bible also says that the punishment for sin is death (Romans 6:23). Unless our sin is taken care of, we will be separated from God in a place of punishment forever and ever.

The Good News: We Can Be Forgiven

Jesus died on the cross, was buried, and rose again (1 Corinthians 15:3, 4). He gave His blood so that our sins could be forgiven. Why did He have to die like that? The Bible tells us that without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sin. (Hebrews 9:22b.)

The good news is that you and I can have our sins forgiven! All you have to do is accept the Lord Jesus as your Savior from sin—believe that He died to take the punishment you deserved, and you will be saved (Acts 16:31).

Jesus' Plan for His Disciples

God's plan is for everyone to hear the good news so they can be saved (Matt 18:14). But how will they hear? While Jesus was here on earth, He chose twelve men to take the good news to all the world.

Jesus carefully taught these men and others. He told them about His love for the people of the world (John 3:16). He told them how to live (Matthew 5). He taught them how to pray (Matthew 6:9-13). He told them that He would die and rise again — even though they didn't understand until after it had happened (Luke 24:37-45). He taught them how He was going to heaven to prepare a place for them (John 14:2). He promised that after He left He would send the Holy Spirit to be their teacher (John 14:26). And Jesus promised He would return for them (John 14:3).

Jesus' Plan for You and Me

As we read through the Gospels, Jesus shares that same teaching with us. He wants us to learn all about Him and His plan for salvation so that we can share it with others. Jesus' last words in the Gospel of Mark give His last command to us. Let's find and read it.

Mark 16:15

And then he told them, "Go into all the world and preach the Good News to everyone."

Jesus wants us to go and tell everyone we can about the good news that He took the punishment for our sins. What an important job! We need to read the Gospels to get to know Jesus better so we can tell others about Him.

Closing Prayer

Father, thank You for Your marvelous plan of salvation! Where would we be without You? Give us a desire in our hearts to learn all we can about You so that we can share the good news with all of our friends. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Learning Activities

Craft Corner

Game Center

Musical chairs:

Place chairs back to back in a row, and tape half of a construction paper of different colors to the back of each chair. The teacher keeps the other half. Play music and have children walk around the chairs. Stop the music and have children find a seat.

The teacher chooses a half sheet of paper. Whoever is seated in a chair with the matching color must stand and answer a Lesson Review question. If more than 1 child has the color, they will form a team and answer the question together.

Toss-For-It

Lay out a grid with masking tape. Divide it into 48 squares. Label each square with a Bible book name and a number to represent the point value of the square. Divide children into 2 teams. Players toss bean bags onto the grid from a distance. Then he or she must tell if the book touched by the bean bag is a book of Law, History, Poetry, etc. The players receive the points for each Bible book they can correctly identify by category. The team with the highest score wins.

Bible Ping Pong

Divide the class into two teams. Choose a child from each team to compete with each other.

One child names the first book of the Bible, the other names the second book, and so on. They alternate until one misses or they finish through the Gospel of John. If a child misses, he is replaced by another. The child who stays up the longest is the "Ping-Pong" champion of the day.

Or, use the following questions in a game of your choice:

1. What are the names of first four books of the New Testament? (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.)
2. What does the word *gospel* mean? (Good News)
3. Why are the first four books of the New Testament called Gospels? (They tell the good news that Jesus came to earth to save us from our sins.)
4. Who can share the gospel? (Let children share the gospel, helping them to include Jesus' birth, perfect life, death, burial, and resurrection.)
5. Which gospel clearly shows us that Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah, the Savior that God had promised to send? (Matthew)
6. Which gospel presents Jesus as the suffering servant? (Mark)
7. Which gospel shows us the human side of Jesus? (Luke)
8. Which gospel shows us the God side of Jesus? (John)
9. How do we know that Jesus is God? (He did things that are humanly impossible.)
10. What were some of the miracles that Jesus performed? (walked on water, calmed the wind and the sea, fed 5,000 with 5 loaves and 2 fishes, healed the sick, made the blind to see, and the lame to walk, cleansed the lepers, made the dead alive again, etc.)
11. Why do we need a Savior? (We all have sinned!)
12. Why did Jesus have to die? (He gave His blood so our sins could be forgiven.)
13. Why did Jesus pick His 12 disciples? (To teach them about the Kingdom of God, how to live a life that is pleasing to God, and how to pray, etc. He raised them up to spread the Good News about Him to the people around them.)
14. Why does Jesus want us to learn all about Him and His great plan of salvation? (He wants us to go out into the world around us and tell everyone about the Good News!)

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Acts – The History of the Church

(God's True Story)

Introduction

The book of Acts was written by Luke, the same Luke who wrote the gospel with his name. Luke was a doctor, and he traveled around with the apostle Paul. As with every other book in the Bible, we can trust that the stories in it are true.

This book is a history book. In it Luke records the deeds of the apostles, empowered by the Holy Spirit, as they shared the gospel and saw the church develop.

Opening Prayer

Father, thank You for inspiring Dr. Luke to write down the history of how the Christian church got started. Give us good listening ears this morning as we learn how the Holy Spirit empowered the early Christians to spread the Good News about Jesus everywhere they went. And, give us the desire to tell everyone we meet about You, too. In Jesus name, we pray. Amen.

Memory Verse:

The entirety of Your word is truth, and every one of Your righteous judgments endure forever. (Psalm 119:160)

Lesson

The Good News is Spread in Jerusalem

After Jesus rose in the clouds, the disciples went back to Jerusalem and waited for the Holy Spirit to come. On the day of Pentecost, they heard a sound like a rushing wind, and they saw tongues like fire over each of them. Then the disciples were all filled with the Holy Spirit.

When that happened, they went out into the city of Jerusalem and told the good news about Jesus Christ to everyone they saw. Even though

there were people there who spoke many different languages, everyone could understand what was being said (2:6). That day Peter preached; about 3,000 people accepted the good news and were saved (Acts 2:41). And that was just the beginning!

In the first part of the Book of Acts, Peter is the apostle talked about most. He and the other apostles told the Jews that Jesus, the One they had crucified, had risen from the dead. He was the promised Savior. The angry religious leaders ordered them to stop telling the good news. But the apostles refused. They knew that no one but Jesus could save the people (Acts 4:12).

When they were put into jail for preaching the gospel, the apostles were asked why they had continued to preach even though they had been forbidden. Peter and the other apostles replied, “*We ought to obey God rather than men*” (Acts 5:29). That’s telling the good news that Jesus is the Savior (Acts 5:42).

The Good News Goes to Judea and Samaria

Not only were people put in jail for preaching the gospel, but some were killed (Acts 7). As the persecution increased, many who believed the message of the apostles scattered and moved away from Jerusalem.

One day when Saul was on his way to Damascus to persecute more believers, he had a surprise meeting with the Lord Jesus (Acts 9:1-5). Suddenly, he understood who Jesus was. At once, Saul the persecutor became Paul the preacher. Paul became one of the most outspoken of all the apostles in the early church. From this point on, we see the gospel being taken “*to the end of the earth*” (Acts 1:8)

The Good News Goes to the End of the Earth

Until now, the gospel had only been preached to the Jewish people. But God had sent His Son to be the Savior for the entire world. Someone had to tell the people in other nations.

Paul took three missionary trips. As he traveled and preached, many more people believed. Paul and his companions were beaten and put in prison. But even then people turned to the Lord (Acts 16).

When Paul went back to Jerusalem after his third trip, he was arrested. He was taken before governors and kings. He even told them how they could be saved.

Eventually Paul was taken to Rome, the center of government, where he was killed. But before he died, he wrote many letters to the churches he had started. And, we have those letters in our Bible today.

The book of Acts gives us the history of the early church. The rest of the New Testament teaches us how to live a godly and fruitful life.

Closing Prayer

Father, it is exciting to know that the same Holy Spirit that empowered the early Christians to go out to all the world to tell people about the Good News about Jesus is still available to us today. We pray that You will fill us with the Holy Spirit so that we will be bold witnesses for You. We want every man, woman, and child to know what Jesus did for us. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Learning Activities

Craft Corner

Game Center

I'm Thinking of a Book

Choose one book of the Bible. Don't say it. Name the book that comes *before* and the book that comes *after* the book you've chosen. Ask for a volunteer to name the book. The child with the correct answer gets to choose another book and name the book *before* and *after*, and then call on another volunteer to name his book. Continue until each book has been named at least once.

Toss Game

Goal: Learn the first 5 books in the N.T. in order.

How to play: Before class, mark out a 5-square grid with masking tape on the floor. On each square, tape a card with a Bible book name written on it. Divide the class into 2 teams. Give each team a set of 5 cards with the 5 Bible book names on them. Each team takes a turn tossing a bean bag to the grid. If the child's bean bag lands on a square with a Bible book that his/her team does not already have, the child who tossed the bean bag gets to pick up the matching card for their team and places the card in order. The team that puts all the cards in order first wins.

Or, play a game of your choice with the following review questions:

1. What are the names of first four books of the New Testament? (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.)
2. What does the word *gospel* mean? (Good News)
3. Why are the first four books of the New Testament called Gospels? (They tell the good news that Jesus came to earth to save us from our sins.)
4. What book comes after the gospels? (Acts)
5. What do we learn in Acts? (How Jesus' followers spread the gospel to the end of the earth.)

[For more expositional lessons for children, visit <https://www.freechildrensministrylessons.com>.]

Paul's Letters

(God's True Story)

Introduction

Teacher, put a Bible into a bag along with a variety of mail, such as bills, letters, greeting cards, advertising, catalog, eMail, magazine, etc. Keeping the Bible until last, pull one piece of mail out at a time and ask the children to describe it. Discuss the mail by asking questions such as, “*Who is this mail from? What is this mail trying to get me to do? What message does this mail tell me? Why might I be excited to get this mail?*” Then, hold up the Bible and ask, how would you describe this letter? How is God's letter to us different from the rest of the mail I've received? (It was written long ago; its message is for everyone.) What makes God's Word better than any other message to us? (It's true. It tells the good news about Jesus.)

The Bible is like a letter from God — written just to me and you. Today we're going to talk about Paul's letters.

Opening Prayer

We love You, Lord. Thank You for giving us Your Word, the Holy Bible. You speak to us so personally through the words that are written on these pages. It's like a love letter from You. I pray that we would always treasure our Bibles. In Jesus name, we pray. Amen.

Memory Verse:

*Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against you.
(Psalm 119:11)*

Lesson

Right after Jesus ascended into Heaven, His followers started telling everyone about the good news about Jesus. But the Jews persecuted the first Christians. They put people in jail for preaching the gospel and killed the followers of Jesus. As the persecution increased, many believers scattered and moved away from Jerusalem. As the believers

traveled around they told others about good news of Jesus. Many people were saved and churches began to start up.

As Peter, Paul, and others traveled, they wanted to be sure that the believers in these new churches would grow. So they wrote letters to the churches that had sprung up. Even though their writings started out as letters, they are now part of our Bible. These writers may not have known that the letters they were writing would be saved and read by Christians for the next two thousand years, but the Holy Spirit did. Every word in those letters was written at the direction of the Holy Spirit, just as the rest of the Bible was (2 Peter 1:21).

Turn to your Table of Contents. Twenty-one of the twenty-two books that follow Acts were written as letters. The apostle Paul wrote most of these letters. Peter, James, John, and Jude wrote the others.

Paul Wrote to Churches

Paul wrote to churches located in certain cities. I'll name the places where the letters were sent, and you look at the Table of Contents and tell me what you think the name of the book is. What do we call the letter he wrote to the church at Corinth? (Corinthians) Paul wrote two different letters to the believers at Corinth. Which book was written to the churches of Galatia? Which letter went to the church at Ephesus? How many letters did Paul write to the church in Thessalonica?

Paul Wrote to Individuals

Paul also wrote to individual men. Look at your Table of Contents and tell me how many books Paul wrote to Timothy? (Two) Each of Paul's letters has a special message—not just to the Christians who first received them, but each has a message for us today.

For example, when Paul was out on his missionary trips he started many churches and he was always looking for good solid men to pastor them.

Acts 16:1-3

Paul went first to Derbe and then to Lystra, where there was a young disciple named Timothy. His mother was a Jewish believer, but his father

was a Greek. (2) Timothy was well thought of by the believers in Lystra and Iconium, (3) so Paul wanted him to join them on their journey. In deference to the Jews of the area, he arranged for Timothy to be circumcised before they left, for everyone knew that his father was a Greek.

Timothy had good character. He was so well thought of by the believers in that area that Paul heard about him; his good reputation was spread about. He was respected highly as a young man who was faithful and honest. He had learned how to live a life that is well pleasing to God.

Children are not born wanting to live their lives in a way that pleases God. They are born totally self-centered. They demand to be fed, to be changed, to be held.... They have to be taught to live a life that is pleasing to God. Later when Paul wrote a letter to Timothy, he reveals to us how Timothy learned how to be such a godly man:

2 Timothy 1:2-5

I am writing to Timothy, my dear son. May God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord give you grace, mercy, and peace. (3) Timothy, I thank God for you—the God I serve with a clear conscience, just as my ancestors did. Night and day I constantly remember you in my prayers. (4) I long to see you again, for I remember your tears as we parted. And I will be filled with joy when we are together again. (5) I remember your genuine faith, for you share the faith that first filled your grandmother Lois and your mother, Eunice. And I know that same faith continues strong in you.

Timothy was blessed to have a godly grandmother and mother who loved him enough to train him up in the ways of the Lord.

That same faith that Timothy has, dwelt first in his mother and his grandmother before her. Those two women were sincere believers in Christ and followed His ways. And they understood the importance of training up Timothy in the ways of the Lord, too. We don't really know much about Timothy's father, other than he was Greek. That could mean that he wasn't a believer, but maybe Luke makes a point of mentioning this to explain why Timothy wasn't circumcised.

Later in this same letter to Timothy, Paul describes the way many people will live in the last days:

2 Timothy 3:1-5

You should know this, Timothy, that in the last days there will be very difficult times. (2) For people will love only themselves and their money. They will be boastful and proud, scoffing at God, disobedient to their parents, and ungrateful. They will consider nothing sacred. (3) They will be unloving and unforgiving; they will slander others and have no self-control. They will be cruel and hate what is good. (4) They will betray their friends, be reckless, be puffed up with pride, and love pleasure rather than God. (5) They will act religious, but they will reject the power that could make them godly. Stay away from people like that!

Then in verse 10, Paul commends Timothy:

2 Timothy 3:10

But you, Timothy, certainly know what I teach, and how I live, and what my purpose in life is. You know my faith, my patience, my love, and my endurance.

And Paul warns Timothy in verse 12:

2 Timothy 3:12

Yes, and everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.

And then Paul exhorts Timothy in verse 14:

2 Timothy 3:14-15

But you must remain faithful to the things you have been taught. You know they are true, for you know you can trust those who taught you. (15) You have been taught the holy Scriptures from childhood, and they have given you the wisdom to receive the salvation that comes by trusting in Christ Jesus.

This world is full of people that will tempt you to sin against God with your lips or your hands or even with your mind. So God has given parents the important job of teaching their children right from wrong.

How many of you have ever been naughty? Did you get disciplined? I bet there isn't a single one of you that likes to get scolded by your Mom or Dad, is there? But you see, someday they will have to answer to God for how well they taught you to love God and to make Him happy with everything that you think and say and do.

That's why It is so important for you to pay attention to your parents when they try to correct you. They do it because they love you so much. They don't want you to get into bad habits.

Parents have an awesome responsibility to teach their children how to steer clear of troubles in life. They need to train you how to make good choices in life, how to choose good friends, how to live your lives in such a way that brings honor and glory to God.

Closing Prayer

Father, thank You for inspiring Paul to write all these letters. And, thank You for making sure they have been kept safe for all these years. When we read them we can come to know You better! I pray that You will inspire us to read them often. In Jesus name, we pray. Amen.

Learning Activities

Craft Corner

Have children write a letter to God.

Bible House Memorization Tool

Memorize the books of the New Testament by "room". Start with the four pillars of the New Testament (the gospels) at the front of the

house. Enter the house down the passage to where the **ACT**ion is, then move into the **Roman** pools. Then starting in the upper-right corner of the house, move clockwise from room to room.

Game Center

Bible Popcorn

Begin with all children seated. You say the name of the first book. Someone else pops up and says the name of the second book. That person sits down. As soon as he is seated, someone else pops up and says the third, and so on, until all the books have been named. Tell children they are not allowed to pop up two times in a row. This will keep the activity from being dominated by one or two children. If more than one child pops at the same time, that's fine. Remind children that once someone has said the name of the book, they should not repeat it but try to be the first to name another book.

Or, use the following review questions in a game of your choice:

1. Which books are called *The Gospels*? (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John).
2. Which book tells the history of the early church? (Acts.)
3. Which letters did Paul write to the church at Corinth? (1 Corinthians and 2 Corinthians)
4. Which letter was written to the churches of Galatia? (Galatians)
5. Which letter went to the church at Ephesus? (Ephesians)
6. How many letters did Paul write to the church at Thessalonica? (2)

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General Letters

(God's True Story)

Introduction

If you got a letter from someone special would you read only a small part of it and then put the letter away? No! You would read the whole letter from start to finish.

Review. Open your Bibles to the Table of Contents. Which books are called *The Gospels*? (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John). Which book tells the history of the early church? (Acts.)

Last week we learned that Paul's letters were written to specific churches or to specific individuals. Which letters did Paul write to churches? Which letters did Paul write to individual men?

Opening Prayer

Father, thank You for inspiring the people of old to save and preserve these wonderful letters that are now the books in our Bible. They give us all the information we need for life and godliness. Please help us to treasure the wonderful messages there for us from You. Amen.

Memory Verse:

For the word of the Lord is right. (Psalm 33:4a)

Lesson

The last seven letters in the New Testament were not written by Paul. Instead of calling these books by the names of the people to whom the letters were written, these books are called by the names of the men who wrote them—James, Peter, John, and Jude.

Though these books were written by men, God watched over every word they wrote (2 Timothy 3:16). And He has seen to it that these books have been preserved through hundreds of years because they contain God's message to us today.

James

James is a very practical book. It is a book that explains not just *what* to believe, but *how* to live the life of a believer. James is all about putting our faith into action. It encourages us to:

- Turn from temptation to sin
- Tame our tongues (that is, be careful what we say)
- Patiently pray

One of the most important verses is this:

James 1:19

Understand this, my dear brothers and sisters: You must all be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to get angry.

First Peter

First Peter was written during a time when Christianity had been outlawed! Anyone who claimed to be a Christian could be tortured, imprisoned, or even killed simply because he believed in God and believed that Jesus was the Messiah. Christians were being thrown into lion's dens for being believers and followers of Jesus.

Since Peter was writing at such a time, you might think he would have been depressed or at least scared. But when you read 1 Peter, you hear hope in Peter's message, not discouragement. You hear confidence and, if you listen really closely, you even hear joy!

Peter wrote this letter to encourage Christians who were suffering for their faith.

1 Peter 1:3

All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is by his great mercy that we have been born again, because God raised Jesus Christ from the dead. Now we live with great expectation.

Peter was a man that was truly looking forward to the Lord's return.

1 Peter 1:13

So prepare your minds for action and exercise self-control. Put all your hope in the gracious salvation that will come to you when Jesus Christ is revealed to the world.

Peter thought that the end of the world was coming any day!

1 Peter 4:7-8

The end of the world is coming soon. Therefore, be earnest and disciplined in your prayers. (8) Most important of all, continue to show deep love for each other, for love covers a multitude of sins.

Second Peter

In Peter's second letter he warns the people about false teachers. False teachers had been coming into their church gatherings and telling people that Jesus wasn't really coming back again and that they didn't have to be responsible for their actions.

If you were being persecuted for your faith and someone told you that faith in Jesus wasn't really important, then you would probably think, "What's the use in being a follower of Jesus?" So, Peter wanted to set the people straight.

2 Peter 3:9

The Lord isn't really being slow about his promise, as some people think. No, he is being patient for your sake. He does not want anyone to be destroyed, but wants everyone to repent.

He says that the Lord doesn't want to come back and end the world until everyone has a chance to become a believer. But, don't be fooled by how long it's taking Him to return. He *is* coming back!

2 Peter 3:10

But the day of the Lord will come as unexpectedly as a thief. Then the heavens will pass away with a terrible noise, and the very elements

themselves will disappear in fire, and the earth and everything on it will be found to deserve judgment.

Peter told the people that Jesus is coming back, so we ought to live every day as if this might be the day.

2 Peter 1:5-8

In view of all this, make every effort to respond to God's promises. Supplement your faith with a generous provision of moral excellence, and moral excellence with knowledge, (6) and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with patient endurance, and patient endurance with godliness, (7) and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love for everyone. (8) The more you grow like this, the more productive and useful you will be in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Peter knew what he was talking about when he encouraged other Christians to keep the faith. He himself had been beaten and jailed for being a Christian, and he was eventually killed for his faith. But Peter knew that faith in Jesus is the most important thing in life, and he had grown to the point that nothing could shake his faith in Jesus. Next time you feel like it's hard to be a Christian, remember Peter.

John's Letters

John not only wrote the Gospel of John, but he also wrote, 1 John, 2 John, 3 John, as well as the book of Revelation.

John wanted to encourage people to live righteously and to love each other.

1 John 3:18-20

Dear children, let's not merely say that we love each other; let us show the truth by our actions. (19) Our actions will show that we belong to the truth, so we will be confident when we stand before God. (20) Even if we feel guilty, God is greater than our feelings, and he knows everything.

Talk is cheap; it's easy to say we are believers in Jesus and not really let Jesus be our Lord. We need to show people we love them with our actions. It will be how we treat others that really shows people that Christ is living in us.

1 John 4:11-12

Dear friends, since God loved us that much, we surely ought to love each other. (12) No one has ever seen God. But if we love each other, God lives in us, and his love is brought to full expression in us.

Jude

Jude was probably one of Jesus' brothers. He wrote his letter to persuade people to encourage each other to keep their faith.

Jude 1: 20-22

But you, dear friends, must build each other up in your most holy faith, pray in the power of the Holy Spirit, (21) and await the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, who will bring you eternal life. In this way, you will keep yourselves safe in God's love. (22) And you must show mercy to those whose faith is wavering.

Just like you would encourage someone to run a race well, we are to cheer each other on to keep living your life in a way that pleases God.

God wants us to know how we should live as Christians. In these letters, He has told us everything we need to know.

Closing Prayer

Lord, we love Your word! It is so precious to us. You are so awesome to inspire them to write down all the things that were on Your heart. The messages Your word contains are still powerful in our lives today, too. Reading Your word is like reading a love letter from You to me. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Learning Activities

Craft Corner

Game Center

Postman

Print the names of all the "letter" books—Romans through Jude—on separate envelopes. Put all the envelopes in a "mail" box. Pass the box around, letting the children draw one or more envelopes at random. The number of envelopes they draw will depend on the size of your class. When all "letters" have been distributed, pretend you are the postmaster and ask the children bring you the letters in the order they appear in our Bible. If necessary, children can look at their Table of Contents or a Bible Book poster. But, encourage them to try delivering the letters without having to look.

Ask-It-Basket

Write the review questions on separate pieces of paper. Wad them up into balls and put them in a decorated basket. Ask each child to choose a question to answer.

Memory Verse Review

As a group, recite the memory verse a few times, removing one word from the whiteboard each time until the entire verse is gone. Then, divide the class into two teams. Draw a vertical line down the middle of the white board (or have two separate white boards). At "Go!" let one child from each team come to the whiteboard and print the first word of the memory verse. As soon as the child is finished, he runs back to his team and tags the next person in line. The next person goes up to the whiteboard and prints the next word, and so forth. The first team to finish the memory verse in the correct order wins.

Or, use the following review questions in a game of your choice:

1. Which books are called *The Gospels*? (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John).
2. Which book tells the history of the early church? (Acts.)
3. Which letters did Paul write to the church at Corinth? (1 Corinthians and 2 Corinthians)
4. Which letter was written to the churches of Galatia? (Galatians)
5. Which letter went to the church at Ephesus? (Ephesians)
6. How many letters did Paul write to the church at Thessalonica? (2)
7. How many authors wrote the last 7 letters in the New Testament? (4)
8. Peter wrote his letters during a time that Christians were being persecuted for following the ways of Jesus. What does it mean to be persecuted? (Anyone who claimed to be a Christian could be tortured, imprisoned, or even killed simply because he believed in God and believed that Jesus was the Messiah.)
9. Why is it surprising that Peter doesn't sound discouraged or scared in his letters? (People were being put to death for believing in Jesus, yet Peter was hopeful.)
10. During Peter's life, what did the false teachers try to tell the Christians? (That Jesus wasn't really coming back again and that they didn't have to be responsible for their actions.)
11. If you were being persecuted for your faith and someone told you that faith in Jesus wasn't really important, what might you think? (That there was no point in following Jesus.)
12. Why did Peter know what he was talking about when he encouraged other Christians to keep the faith? (He himself had been beaten and jailed for being a Christian. He was eventually killed for his faith.)
13. What 5 books did John write? (Gospel of John, 1 John, 2 John, 3 John, and Revelation.)
14. What does John encourage us to do to one another? (Love each other; show people we love them with our actions)
15. Who was Jude to Jesus? (Jesus' brother)

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The Revelation of Jesus Christ

(God's True Story)

Introduction

All of the books in the Bible tell us about Jesus. In the Old Testament, He was the promised Savior. In the New Testament, we saw Jesus leave heaven to come as a baby and be born in Bethlehem. We saw Him teaching, preaching, and healing. We saw Him dead on the cross, buried in the tomb, and alive after His resurrection. We even saw Him ascend into heaven. When He left, Jesus promised that one day He would come again (John 14:3).

When that happens, we'll see Jesus as we've never seen Him before; we'll see Him as "*King of Kings and Lord of Lords*" (Revelation 19:16).

Opening Prayer

Father, You promised that You will come back to earth someday. I pray that this morning we will get even a small vision of Your glory, just to get us excited for that day that You will return to take us to Heaven where we will see you face-to-face and live with You forever. In Jesus name, we pray. Amen.

Memory Verse:

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable (2 Timothy 3:16)

Lesson

The last book in our Bible is called *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*. It tells about events that will occur in the future when Jesus comes back to earth for the second time. We call this book "*Revelation*" because it reveals or uncovers things known only to God.

Revelation was written by the apostle John. John wrote four other books in the New Testament, one gospel and three letters. John was in prison for preaching the gospel. But it wasn't an ordinary prison.

John was being held on an island—the island of Patmos (Revelation 1:9). While he was there, God showed John many things. Those things are written for us in the Book of Revelation.

In this book the Lord Jesus speaks to the apostle John. As John writes, we learn more about what Jesus is like. We see His great power. And we discover some of the amazing things that will happen in the future. Because Revelation describes events before they happen, it is called a book of prophecy.

The Judge Punishes Sin

Revelation tells about the terrible events that will happen to the earth and to the people alive during the terrible time of tribulation, or trouble, that God will send (Revelation 6:14-17). You and I don't have to be afraid of those days, for the Lord has promised to deliver us if we've believed and received Him as our Savior (1 Thessalonians 1:10). God will punish evil and reward His faithful servants.

The Conqueror Binds Satan Forever

In Revelation, Jesus shows Himself as the conquering "*King of Kings and Lord of Lords*" (Revelation 19:16). And in the end, Jesus wins the final battle with the Devil and casts him into the "*lake of fire and brimstone*" (20:10).

The Book of Life is Opened

After that, the "Book of Life" is opened. All those whose names are not found written in this book are also cast into the lake of fire (Revelation 20:15). What about you? Will your name be in the "Book of Life"? It is written there if you've accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior.

If you've never asked Jesus to be your Savior, you can do that right now. Simply tell Him you know that you are a sinner (Romans 3:23) and that you deserve to be punished (Romans 6:23). Tell Jesus you believe He died on the cross to take the punishment for your sin (1 Corinthians 15:3). Call on Him and He will save you (Romans 10:13). When you do, your name will be written in the "Lamb's Book of Life" (Revelation 13:8; 21:27), and you will be assured of living forever with God.

The Lord Welcomes His Bride

In the last two chapters of the Bible we see Jesus pictured as the Bridegroom (Revelation 21:2, 3) who welcomes His bride—the church that He loves—into the beautiful home He has prepared for us. The description of heaven is wonderful. God will wipe away every tear from our eyes and once Jesus wipes away our tears, we'll never cry again. We'll never be sad ever again! There will be no more pain and there will be no more death. But the best thing about it is that we will be forever in the presence of the One person the whole Bible is about—the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Bible—God's Special Message to You

The Bible is no ordinary book. It is God's Word, written especially for you and me. In the very beginning of this book, God promises to send a Savior who will take away our sin (Genesis 3:15). In the very end, we see what it will be like for those of us who have accepted His gift of salvation. We'll be able to be with Him forever and ever and ever.

Are you looking forward to His return?

Closing Prayer

Father, thank You so much for giving us this wonderful book we call the Bible. Thank You for inspiring the men of old to write down Your very thoughts and desires for us. Thank You for making sure that it has been kept safe for us all these years. Thank You that we can read it and hear Your voice speaking into our hearts. You haven't kept us clueless about how to live a life that is well-pleasing to You. I pray that we will always treasure Your word in our hearts. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Learning Activities

Craft Corner

Game Center

1. Which books are called *The Gospels*? (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John).
2. Which book tells the history of the early church? (Acts.)
3. Which letters did Paul write to the church at Corinth? (1 Corinthians and 2 Corinthians)
4. Which letter was written to the churches of Galatia? (Galatians)
5. Which letter went to the church at Ephesus? (Ephesians)
6. How many letters did Paul write to the church at Thessalonica? (2)
7. How many authors wrote the last 7 letters in the New Testament? (4)
8. Why can we refer to the last book in the Bible as the "Projection Room"?
9. What does the book of Revelation tell us about?

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