

# Basic Training Lesson 5.4

## The Bible is God's Word Part 4

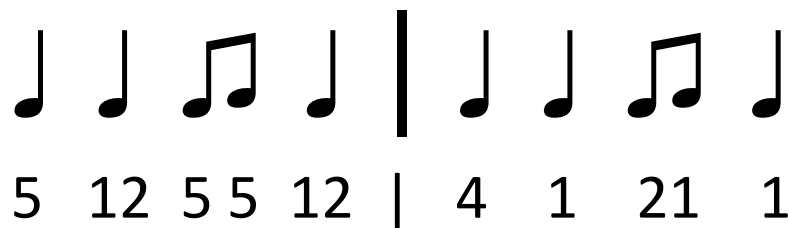
### I. Review: lessons

#### 1. Circle of the Earth

*Isa 40:22 It is he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth [image of Earth], and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in:*

### II. Learn the entire Bible

#### 1. Clap code of the entire Bible: long, long, short, short, long (handout)



### III. Division of books

#### A. Old Testament

1. Torah or Pentateuch, Greek means “5 books”. 5 (from creation ~4000BC – 1406BC)
  2. History 12 (from 1406BC – 742BC)
  3. Poetry 5 (mixed in with the Pentateuch and History)
  4. Major prophets 5 (from History)
  5. Minor prophets 12 (from History)
- B. Old Testament timeline
1. Although we refer to the first section as the **Pentateuch** and the second section as **History**, both sections contain historical books, that when linked together, make up the entirety of the Old Testament history.
  2. The books of poetry include Job possibly written around 2100BC, and Psalm 90, which is the Song of Moses, written around 1406BC, so beginning in the **Pentateuch** period.

3. The rest of the poetry section was written during the History era. Think of many of the psalms written by David and his musicians.
  4. And Proverbs, Song of Solomon, and Ecclesiastes written by Solomon, which was also of the **History** period.
  5. The major prophets begin with Isaiah who wrote during the time of the kings, which is included in the **History** period.
- C. New Testament
1. Gospels 4
  2. History 1
  3. Letters 21
  4. Prophecy 1
- D. New Testament timeline
1. The timeline of the New Testament books flows a little differently than the Old Testament books.
  2. We call the Book of Acts the **History** section in the New Testament, but the four books of the gospels are also history books that

put together, begin with the period just before the birth of Jesus and end with the death and resurrection of Jesus.

3. So the **Gospels** are the history of the life of Jesus, while **Acts** is the history of the church.
4. And most of the **Letters** were written during the period covered by the Book of **Acts**, but some of them were written after the period covered in **Acts**.
5. The Apostle John who wrote the Gospel of John, the three letters of John, and the Book of Revelation, was believed to be the youngest of the apostles and was the last apostle to die, somewhere around 100AD.<sup>1</sup>
6. It is thought John wrote his letters and the one **Prophecy** book of the New Testament, the Book of Revelation, toward the end of his life, perhaps around 90-95AD.

#### IV. Recognition of the Canon

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<sup>1</sup> <https://chat.openai.com/chat>

- A. They are IN because they were INspired
1. Speaking of the books of the Bible, have you ever thought about how we got the specific collection of 66 books that are included the Bible? And have you ever noticed that some versions of the Bible have more books than others? And what should we think about the so-called, “lost books” of the Bible?
  2. When talking about the complete Bible that we use from Genesis to Revelation, the word we use to describe that collection of books is called, **[slide]** “the canon of scripture.” “Canon” means the measure, or rule.
  3. The canon of scripture is a phrase that identifies which books were worthy of being called “scripture” based on their divine authority.
  4. For instance, while God was having His book written, He gave the writers a command to preserve events and the words that He had spoken.

*Exodus 34:27 And the LORD said unto Moses, Write thou these words: for after the tenor of these words I have made a covenant with thee and with Israel.*

5. The books that are included in the Bible are in the Bible because they have clear divine authority based on how they were inspired by God for that purpose.
  
- B. How did people discover the canon?
  1. From history, we read that after God's Word was written down, God's people in that generation and future generations recognized it as scripture.
  2. By Jesus' day, we are privileged to be able to read how He and the apostles considered the whole of the Old Testament books as "the scriptures".
  3. Jesus and the apostles did not call the Old Testament, "The Old Testament." That designation came along much later.

4. When they were speaking of the whole of scripture, they either referred to it as the Law and the Prophets, or the Law of Moses, or like Jesus did, He broke it into three sections:

*Luke 24:44 And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in **the law of Moses**, and in **the prophets**, and in **the psalms**, concerning me.*

5. As we read, the Law of Moses was immediately accepted as scripture.
6. The **Psalms** were poems, songs written by Moses, King David, Asaph, one of Solomon's musicians, are accepted by Jesus as scripture.
7. The **Prophets** maintained a collection of writings of various prophets that Jesus accepted as scripture.

8. Samuel, other prophets, and kings added to the collection, with the list ending with Malachi, the last Old Testament prophet.
9. It is interesting that at the close of the book of Malachi, the Lord described the next prophet that would arise so they would know who to look for:  
*Malachi 4:5 Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD:*
10. Jesus identified that next prophet was John the Baptist (Mark 9:11-13).
11. That is why Malachi is followed by the Gospels with nothing in between.
12. There are 39 books in the Old Testament, and the authors of the New Testament quoted from all of them but five.<sup>2</sup>
13. The authorized Old Testament canon then became Genesis to Malachi based on this authority:

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.bible.ca/b-canon-old-testament-quoted-by-jesus-and-apostles.htm>: Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Solomon.



*2 Peter 1:21 For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.*

c. Authorship and Authority of the New Testament Books

1. The primary test for the canon of the New Testament books, was based on who wrote the books and how physically close to Jesus Christ they lived.
2. The authors of the NT were the apostles chosen by Jesus Christ, Jesus' brothers (James and Jude), and two close associates of the apostles, Mark and Luke.
3. The writers of the New Testament spoke with authority Jesus gave them.
4. The apostles had been eyewitnesses of Jesus Christ and were told to "bear witness" of Jesus. Speaking to His disciples, Jesus said:

*John 15:27 And ye also shall bear witness,*

*because ye have been with me from the beginning.*

5. Not only had they seen Jesus, they were close enough to touch Him:

*1 John 1:1 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the **Word of life**;*

6. Jesus promised his apostles that the Spirit would bring His words to their remembrance.

*John 14:26 But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.*

7. Jesus prayed that people would be saved by believing on the word given by the apostles.

*John 17:20 Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word;*

8. And we have the books of the New Testament because Jesus commissioned His disciples to “bear witness”, or in other words, “make a record” of the things concerning Him.
9. So fulfilling Jesus’ prayer and command to write the New Testament, His disciples, by the Holy Ghost, have brought Jesus’ words down to us today.

D. The Canon is Complete

1. With the Old Testament, the covenant to the Jews, and the New Testament, the covenant to the church, there is no need of another covenant because we are still in the church age.

*Revelation 22:18-19*

*18 For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book:*

*19 And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.*

2. The Bible is complete not to be added to or taken from.
3. There are those who have tried to argue that there are other books or even “lost books” that should have been included.
4. For instance, some versions of the Bible include a group of books between Malachi and Matthew called the “**apocrypha**” meaning, of unknown or spurious origin. The books of Tobit, Judith, Additions to Esther, Wisdom of Solomon, Sirach, Baruch, 1 Maccabees, 2 Maccabees are in that list.
5. Those books were popular Jewish literature written in the years following the prophet Malachi, but they were never accepted by the Jews as divinely inspired scripture, but were merely popular religious-themed

literature containing a mix of history and fanciful fiction.

6. Similarly, there were some books written in the centuries following the apostles by unknown authors, that some call “lost books” of the Bible.
7. But they were not lost. They had been known for more than a thousand years, but were not considered divinely authoritative, even in the days when they were written.
8. They were merely fanciful, fictional literature that contained some Christian themes, and were even named for people associated with the Bible. In this group there is The Gospel of Thomas, Secret Mark, The Apocalypse of Peter, The Gospel of Mary, The Infancy Gospel of Thomas, and others.
9. Some of these writings came out of a false teaching about Jesus called Gnosticism. The Gnostics denied that Jesus had come in human flesh, but was a spirit-being only.

That is why the elder Apostle John wrote:

*1 John 4:1-3*

*1 Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.*

*2 Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God:*

*3 And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.*

10. John saw it necessary to warn of what was coming with those “other gospels” which were no gospel at all.
11. We can be sure that the Bible, the Old Testament that Jesus approved, and the New Testament that Jesus commissioned, is God’s word to mankind and is a trustworthy guide for our soul.

- v. The benefit of the Dead Sea Scrolls
  - A. What are they?
    1. In the winter of 1947<sup>3</sup>, three shepherds were tending their sheep and goats near a spring near Wadi Qumran, when one of the shepherds was throwing a rock into a small cave opening on a cliff, and on one throw, the rock not only made it into the cave opening, but when it did, it made shattering sound.
    2. Later, another of their group lowered himself into the cave, and once inside, he found ten tall jars up against a wall. From searching the cave, they found three scrolls, and later four others.
    3. They sold them to an antiquities dealer in Bethlehem, and news of this find ultimately got to a professor of archaeology at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem.

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<sup>3</sup> Comfort, Philip W., *Essential Guide to Bible Versions*, Tyndale House Publishers, inc., Wheaton, Illinois, 2000, p. 20-25.

4. By 1949, several hundred caves were explored, with eleven of them producing almost 600 manuscripts.
  5. About 200 of those were biblical material containing portions of every Old Testament book except the Book of Esther.<sup>4</sup>
  6. The other scrolls contain historical information about the group who lived there, thanksgiving hymns, and commentaries on biblical books.
- B. Importance of the Dead Sea Scrolls
1. Based on an analysis of the pottery jars used, and other various dating methods, these scrolls were created and stored between 200BC and 100AD.
  2. Before this discovery, the oldest copies of the Old Testament books available to us was a manuscript dated to about 1010AD, referred to as the Masoretic Text.

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid. p. 17.



3. The King James Bible was based on that manuscript. But now with the Dead Sea scrolls, we have manuscripts that were produced within about three hundred years of when they were originally written.
4. But what was even more astounding, when the Dead Sea scrolls were compared to the Masoretic Text, “there are some differences in spelling and grammar between [the two, but] the differences have not warranted any major changes in the substance of the Old Testament.”<sup>5</sup>

## VI. English Bibles

1. Something that most English speakers don't think much about is that the Word of God was given to mankind in the languages the authors understood, and not English.
2. The Old Testament was written in Hebrew and also includes some Aramaic, which was

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid. p. 33.

a combination of the Hebrew and Assyrian languages.

3. Here is how God would have communicated to Moses:

**Deut 6:4 [play audio file]**

שמע ישראל יהוה אחד יהוה אחד יהוה אחד

- 4.

5. The New Testament was written in Greek and includes some Aramaic as well, since that was the common language of the first-century Jews.

6. Here how God would have communicated to the Apostle John:

7. 1:1 Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος καὶ ὁ λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν θεόν καὶ θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος

8. So God's word originally came to us in a language other than English, so for us to understand God's word, we either need to learn those original languages—which is the very best choice—or to have the original languages translated into English.

9. The gospel reached England within about a century of the early church's founding, but

the first known English translations of portions of scripture came during the seventh century by a monk named Caedmon.

10. Since then, there were many other English versions: John Wycliffe in the late 1300s, William Tyndale in 1525. Coverdale's version of 1537, Matthew's the Great Bible of 1537, The Geneva Bible of 1550, the Bishop's Bible of 1568.
11. Many people throughout history have been passionate about making God's word understandable to the common people.
12. But that opinion was not shared by the leaders of the Roman Catholic church around 1000AD. The church wanted to keep the scriptures in what they considered the most sacred language, Latin, and sought to stop scripture from being translated into common languages.
13. Pope Gregory VII (1073-1085) wrote in 1079""

“For it is clear to those who reflect upon it that not without reason has **it pleased Almighty God that holy scriptures should be a secret** in certain places lest, **if it were plainly apparent to all men**, perchance it would be little esteemed and be subject to disrespect; or **it might be falsely understood** by those of mediocre learning **and lead to error.**”<sup>6</sup>

14. It is an interesting fact that the very first book ever mass produced on a printing press was 180 copies of the Latin Vulgate Bible printed in 1450 by Johannes Gutenberg, called the Gutenberg Bible.<sup>7</sup> The Lilly Library on the IUB campus has one of those copies in its collection.
15. But getting the Bible into a language other than Latin was dangerous. That was the goal of William Tyndale in 1522. A clergyman argued with Tyndale saying that

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<sup>6</sup> Comfort... p. 138.

<sup>7</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gutenberg\\_Bible](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gutenberg_Bible). Accessed 3/15/2023.

only clergymen were qualified to read the Bible.

16. Tyndale defended his efforts to translate the Bible into English by saying:  
“If God spare my life, ere many years, I will cause a boy that driveth the plough to know more of the Scripture than thou dost.”<sup>8</sup>
17. Because of this view and his successful production of an English translation, his final version released in 1535, he was arrested and condemned to death by strangling and burning in 1536.
18. Then in 1611, the king of England, James I, commissioned another translation that we know as the King James Version. The king declared it to be the official, authorized version of the kingdom.
19. For 400 years since, the KJV has been the most popular Bible for English-speaking people throughout the world.

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<sup>8</sup> Comfort, p. 138.

20. Because of the popularity of the KJV, the question has been asked, Can we use other translations in our study? Remember, God's word to mankind did not come to us in English. Here is my take. As long as the English translation was made from the original languages, and their goal is to make the Word of God more understandable to the you and I, then we can benefit from it.
21. William Tyndale wanted the boy that driveth the plough to know the scripture by making it understandable to him, and that is when scripture can change our lives.
22. In my studies, I found it safe to reference many translations alongside the KJV, including the Greek and Hebrew. And this helps me clearly understand its meaning.