

Lesson 1

BIBLE: THE HISTORY OF SALVATION



The word Bible means book. This is from the Greek Word **biblia**.- The Bible is not a single book but a collection of many books. There are 73 books in the Holy Scriptures. These 73 books are classified into two sections-the Old Testament containing 46 books and the New Testament containing 27. Through all these books God the loving Father talks to us.

Among the books in world literature, the Bible has many distinctions such as the most read book, the most sold book, the largest in the number of copies printed and the largest in the number of languages in which it is published. God gave the Holy Scripture not just for Christians but for the whole humanity.

Bible: A Guide to Life

The Word of God in the Bible is the guide to our life. David the Psalmist says: “Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path” (Psalm 119:105). The Bible gives us lessons on such varied subjects as the beginning of the universe, the origin of the humans, the goal of human life as well as the means to attain that goal etc. Thus the Holy Scripture serves as a guide for a life leading to heaven or union with God as the final goal.

Bible: The Life-Giving Word

The Word of God is life-giving. Jesus said: “One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God” (Mt.4:4). Jesus taught that, for human life to reach its fullness what is needed is not just food for the body but also the Word of God, which is food for the soul. For, the Word of God is life and spirit. One who listens to the Word of God receives eternal life. Jesus once said: “Very truly, I tell you anyone who hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life” (John 5:24).



Bible: The Message of God

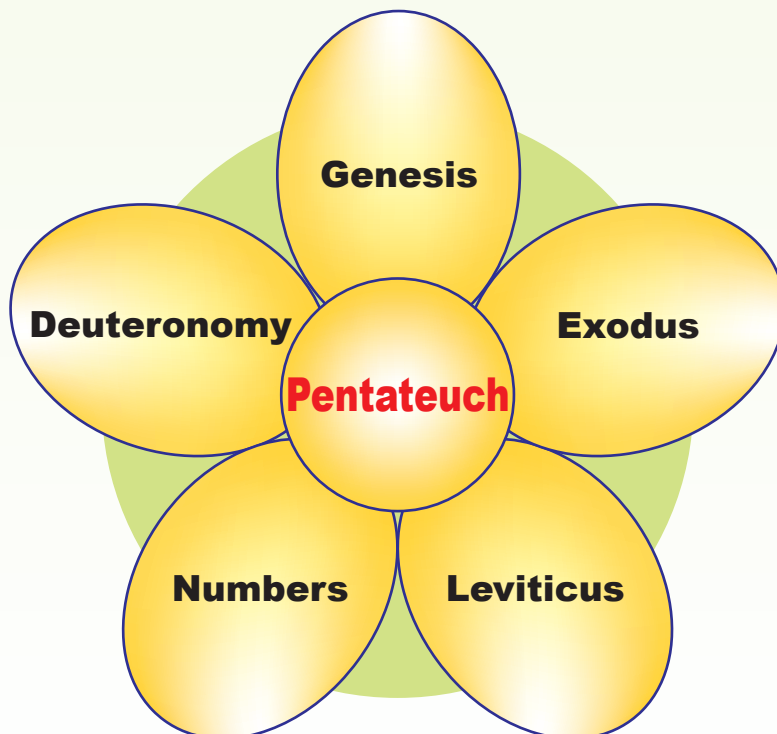
It is God himself who speaks through the Bible. Bible is full of messages of love that God the Father sends to His children, the human beings. God speaks to us in different ways through each book of the Bible. It is through the Bible that God has revealed Himself. Those who wish to know the will of God can do so

through the Bible. The Bible teaches us that it is God who created us and that He wishes we always live in His love. The books of the Bible are full of manifestations and messages of His love for us.

Those who listen to the Word of God with faith and live accordingly shall have salvation and life. The Word of God provides life, comfort in distress, health in illness and strength in weakness. It lifts you up when you fall.

The Old Testament and the New Testament

The books of the Old Testament present the first part of God's plan for the salvation of mankind. Among these the first five books deal with the creation of the universe, election of Israel as God's own people, liberation of Israel from slavery, entry into the promised land and the laws set out as guidance for life. The collection of these five books is known as the **Pentateuch**. The Greek word Pentateuch means five books or Panchagranthi in Malayalam.



A major event in the Old Testament is God selecting the people of Israel as His own people, 'the chosen people'. The Old Testament also contains quite a large number of messages of salvation that God gives us through the patriarchs, judges, kings and prophets. The books of the Old Testament are generally divided into three categories-**historical, prophetic and instructional**.

The books of the New Testament contain the messages that God gives us through Jesus, the Son of God and the apostles of Jesus. The life of Jesus forms the core of the New Testament. **The first four books of the New Testament, called the Gospels, describe the life and teachings of Jesus Christ the Redeemer. The other books are, the Acts of the Apostles that describes the history of the early church, thirteen letters of St. Paul, the letters to the Hebrews, the seven catholic letters and the book of Revelation.**

The New Testament is the fulfillment of the Old Testament. While the history of Israel is the subject of the Old Testament, the New Testament deals with the history of salvation accomplished through Jesus.

Bible: History of God-Experience

The Old Testament is the collection of a large number of historic events. It is also the record of the God-experience of the Old Testament people. It is the narration of the historic events through which the Israel experienced the Almighty God who constantly stayed with them and cared for them. The Old Testament books were written as a result of the earnest desire of these people to hand over their God-experience to the coming generations.

The God who constantly intervened in the lives of Israel does intervene in our lives as well. He who guided Israel in their crises shall come to our aid also in times of need. He has a salvific plan for us. The God-experience of the people of the Old Testament will help us to realize this truth and to live in the constant protection of God.

Let us Pray

O Lord, I seek you with my whole heart.
Don't let me stray from your commandments.

Read and Recount

The Covenant with Noah (Gen. 9:1-17).



Word of God for our Guidance

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

My decision

I will read the Holy Bible daily with devotion.

Let us do

Name the first five books of the Old Testament

Five empty rounded rectangular boxes for writing the names of the first five books of the Old Testament, arranged in two rows: three in the top row and two in the bottom row.

Let us find out the answer

1. Why do we say that the holy Bible is the guide for life?
2. How do the words of the Bible become life-giving?
3. What is the content of the Pentateuch?
4. What are the books in the New Testament other than the Gospels?
5. How does the God-experience of the Old Testament people help us?