

LESSON 2A

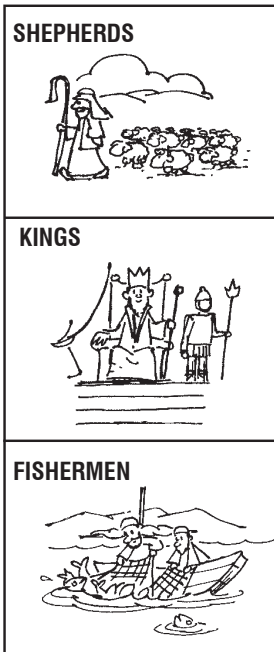
How the Bible was written

We all believe that the Bible is the word of God. But have you ever thought about how it come to be written? That is what we will study in this lesson.

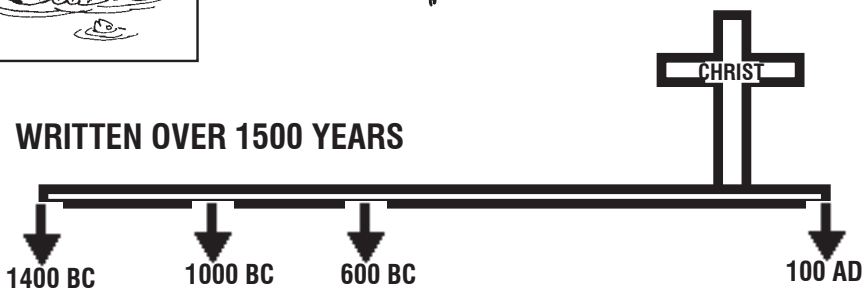
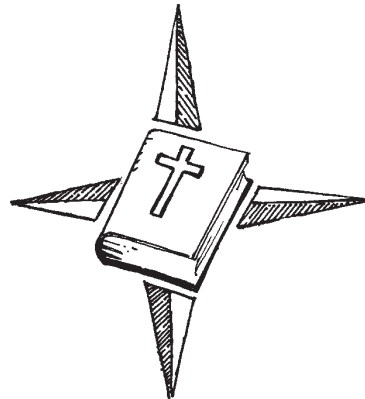
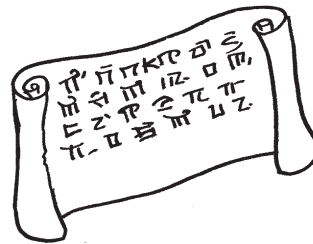


WRITTEN IN THREE CONTINENTS

WRITTEN BY SOME FORTY AUTHORS, AMONG THEM:



WRITTEN IN TWO MAIN LANGUAGES



1. In 2 Peter 1:21 it is written that:

'Prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.'

Fill in the gaps:

'Prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but _____ spoke from _____ as they were carried along by the _____.'

(Reference: 2 Peter _____: _____)

2. From the verse you have just read, you can answer each of the following with 'True' or 'False':

- a) Prophecy was invented by the prophets themselves. _____
- b) Prophecy was delivered by the angel Gabriel. _____
- c) Prophecy came from God through people. _____
- d) The prophets were inspired by the Holy Spirit. _____

3. The prophets all claimed to speak God's words. For instance,

'The word of the Lord that came to Joel' (Joel 1:1)

'The word of the Lord came through the prophet Haggai' (Haggai 1:1)

What is true of the prophets' writings is true of all the Holy Scriptures.

- a) The Holy Scripture is the word of whom? _____
- b) The books were written by men,
but inspired by whom? The H_____ S_____.

4. To say that the Bible is inspired means that God, by the Holy Spirit, put into the writers' minds all the thoughts which they should write.

The authors were ordinary _____, but they were inspired by means of the _____ to write the word of _____.

5. Write and memorize 2 Peter 1:21.

Answers

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. men/God/Holy Spirit/1:21 | 3. a) God
b) The Holy Spirit |
| 2. a) False
b) False
c) True
d) True | 4. men/Holy Spirit/God
5. See frame 1 |

6. We call the Bible the word of God because: (check one)
- a. It speaks only of God.
 - b. It was dictated by God without any human involvement.
 - c. God put into the writers' minds all the thoughts which they should write.
7. Actually, the Bible is not a single book but a collection of 66 books. These were written by different people, about 40 writers altogether. Some of these were great kings, like David and Solomon, but most were ordinary people - for example Peter was a fisherman, Amos a shepherd and Matthew a tax collector.
- Did they receive any special education to write religious books? _____
8. Mostly, they were not highly educated. When God told Jeremiah to speak his message, Jeremiah protested that he didn't know how to speak. But God replied, *'I have put my words in your mouth.'* (Jeremiah 1:7,9)
- So what did God put into Jeremiah's mind? _____
9. a) How many authors took part in writing the Bible?
(If you can't remember, look back to Frame 7) _____
- b) How many books are in the Bible? _____
10. It was from God that the writers received the message. But they had to express this message in the language and terms which people would be able to understand. The writers communicated the message of God in:
- a. A heavenly language.
 - b. A foreign language.
 - c. The language of ordinary people.
11. This is a major difference between the Holy Bible and the Quran. Our Muslim friends believe that Arabic is the language of heaven, that the Quran was written first in heaven and then transmitted to earth in the Arabic language and that it should only be used in Arabic, today. Christians, however, believe that God spoke in the everyday language of the ordinary people so they could understand.

Continued

Answers

- | | | | |
|----|-----------------|-----|-------------|
| 6. | c. | 9. | a) about 40 |
| 7. | No | | b) 66 |
| 8. | God's own words | 10. | c. |

11. Continued

In the Bible the Old Testament was written in Hebrew, the language of the Jewish people. Which one of the following is correct?

- a. Hebrew is the language of heaven.
- b. Hebrew is the language of a nation.
- c. Hebrew is a special language, spoken only by prophets.

12. The Old Testament was originally the Holy Scripture of which nation? _____

13. Hebrew is a language of the East. Hebrew script looks like this. You read it from right to left, as indicated by the arrow.

בְּרֵאשִׁית בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת הָאָרֶץ : וְהָאָרֶץ
הָיְתָה תֹהוֹ וָבֹהוּ וְרוּחַ אֱלֹהִים מְרַחֵף עַל-פְּנֵי הַמַּיִם וְיְהוָה
עֹלֵף-פָּנָי הַמַּיִם :

←

Which part of the Bible was written in Hebrew? _____

14. You will enjoy learning about the Old Testament during this course. The Old Testament was written in a language of the East, initially for a people of the East.

Bearing this in mind, which one or more of these nations could more easily understand the background and culture of the Old Testament:

- a. English?
- b. Syrians?
- c. Americans?
- d. Pakistanis?
- e. Indians?

15. Jesus was born as a Jew and learned Hebrew. But by his time, another language was more widely known around the world – namely the Greek language. Just as today the language for international communication is English, so in Jesus’ day the international language was Greek. To be able to communicate a worldwide message you had to speak in Greek. The message of Jesus was not just for the Jews, but for the whole world.

So, in his days, which would be the more suitable language for his message to be written in, Hebrew or Greek? _____

Answers

- | | |
|-----------------------|--------------|
| 11. b. | 14. b. d. e. |
| 12. The Jewish people | 15. Greek |
| 13. The Old Testament | |

16. For this reason the New Testament, which contains the message of Jesus, was written in Greek. Being written in an international language, it spread very quickly and was understood everywhere. The Greek script looks like this. This is read from left to right, the same as with English.

Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος, καὶ ὁ λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν Θεόν, καὶ Θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος.

What can we learn about the wisdom of God in providing the Old Testament in an Eastern language, i.e. Hebrew, and the New Testament in a Western language, i.e. Greek? Write your answer and be ready to discuss it in the Group Meeting.

17. a) How many books are in the Bible? _____
 b) How many writers? _____
18. The Bible has two main sections.
 a) What is the first called? _____
 b) In what language is it written? _____
 c) What is the second section called? _____
 d) In what language was it written? _____
 e) Why was this language suitable for spreading Christ's message? _____

19. At the time the Bible was written, there were no printing presses. Each book had to be copied out by hand. The **Old Testament** was written on long scrolls of leather, which looked like this.



Continued

Answers

- | | |
|-----------------------|------------------------------------|
| 16. For Group meeting | 18. a) Old Testament |
| 17. a) 66 | b) Hebrew |
| b) About 40 | c) New Testament |
| | d) Greek |
| | e) Most people could understand it |

19. Continued.

The person reading the scroll would start at one end and unroll it till he found the right place. We read of Jesus doing this when he was asked to preach a sermon:

'The scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me".' (Luke 4:17-18)

On what was the Old Testament written? _____

20. The Jewish scribes used to take great care in copying these scrolls. To check for mistakes in copying, they used to count the number of words, then the number of letters, then the middle word and the middle letter of the text, etc. So over hundreds of years the text was preserved in a remarkably accurate form. Even today we have scrolls of some Old Testament books dating back more than two thousand years! This gives us confidence that the Hebrew text is accurate.

By what methods did the Jewish scribes check their copying?

21. The **New Testament** was mostly written on rolls or sheets of papyrus. This was a primitive form of paper, made from a reed called papyrus which grew in Egypt. The papyrus reed was called 'bibles' in the Greek language. From this the word 'Bible' developed!

People used to slice up these reeds, soak them and beat them to make them into flat sheets. After drying in the sun they could be used like sheets of paper.

On what was the New Testament written? _____

22. Many copies of the New Testament were made on papyrus. The earliest piece so far discovered is a fragment of John's Gospel, which had been preserved in the dry sands of Egypt. Besides this, we have over 5,000 early copies of parts of the New Testament books in Greek, so this gives us much confidence in the accuracy of the text.

In what language was the New Testament written? _____

23. Did God give us the Old and New Testaments in some heavenly language or in the language of ordinary people? _____

Answers

- | | |
|---|------------------------|
| 19. On scrolls | 21. Papyrus |
| 20. By counting words and letters and their positions | 22. Greek |
| | 23. Of ordinary people |

24. God wants everyone to understand his word. That is why he gave us his message in the language of ordinary people. Therefore it is very important that the Bible should be translated into other languages so that all the nations of the world can read it.

Over the centuries since the Bible was written, parts of it have been translated into more than 2,000 languages. Now most of the nations of the world can read God's word in their own language. One tribe in South America was thrilled, when they read the translation, saying that 'God speaks to us in our own language!'

Why is it important for the Bible to be translated into every language of the world?

25. In this lesson we have learned how the Bible was written. Now we have this precious book in our own hands. God has entrusted it to us. It is available in our own language. God has blessed us with eyesight and the ability to read. At the close of this lesson, stop and thank God for this precious gift. Ask him to help us understand and obey his word.

When you have prayed, go on to do the Lesson 2A Review.

Answers

24. So that all people can read and understand it in their own language

LESSON 2A REVIEW

1. Write out 2 Peter 1:21.

‘ _____

_____.’

2. The writers of the Bible communicated the message of God in:

- a. A heavenly message, dictated by the angel Gabriel.
 b. A foreign language.
 c. The language of their own countrymen.

3. Why is Bible translation important?

4. a) How many books are in the Bible? _____
b) About how many writers contributed to the Bible? _____
c) In what language was the Old Testament written? _____
d) Of which nation was this the language? _____
e) In what language was the New Testament written? _____
f) Why was this a suitable language for spreading Christ’s message?

