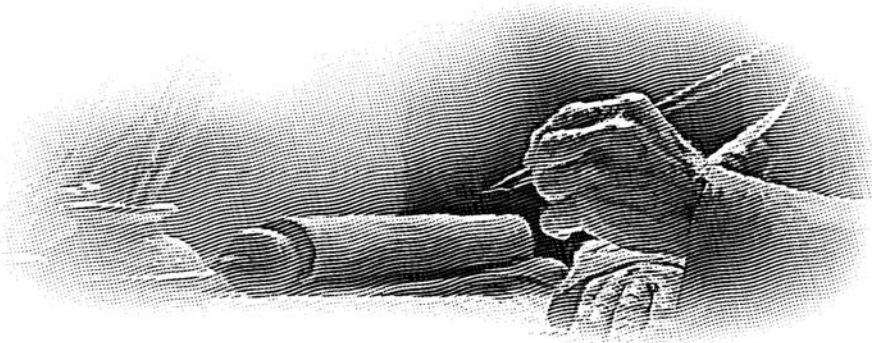


Who Wrote the Bible?



SABBATH—APRIL 4

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON: 2 Peter 1:19–21; 2 Timothy 3:16, 17; Exodus 34:27; John 1:14; Hebrews 11:3, 6.

MEMORY VERSE: “ ‘We never stop thanking God for the way you received his word [Bible truth]. You heard it from us. But you didn't accept it as a human word. You accepted it for what it really is. It is God's word. It is really at work in you who believe' ” (1 Thessalonians 2:13, NIV).

WHERE DID THE BIBLE come from? How was it made? Is it really filled with God's messages to us? The answers to these questions help us to understand why the Bible is so important to our lives and to our church worldwide. Our beliefs about the Bible come from our understanding about how God led men to write the Bible.

What is the best way to understand the Bible? First, we must let the Bible decide the rules that we use to read and understand its messages. We cannot study math with the same rules we use to study and understand science. We cannot study science with the same rules and tools we use to study history. In the same way, we cannot understand the Bible if we doubt it is true. We also must believe in God too. We also need to believe that God led humans to write the Bible. So, the most important thing we need to have is faith. Then we can start to understand what the Bible means with full faith in what God says.

This week, we will look at where the Bible came from and how it became a book. This will help us to understand the Bible better.



The most important thing we need to have is faith. Then we can start to understand the Bible.

GOD GAVE HUMANS THE BIBLE (2 Peter 1:19–21)

Read 2 Peter 1:19–21. What does Peter say about where the Bible’s messages come from?



Our Holy God is the real writer of the Bible.

The Bible is different from any other book. Peter says that the Holy Spirit led the prophets, or special messengers, to write the Bible. The Holy Spirit gave these men their messages. The prophets did not make up the messages they wrote. The Bible is “not just clever [interesting] stories that people invented” (2 Peter 1:16, ERV). So, we can trust the Bible. It is God’s truth for our lives. “No prophecy [special messages from God] ever came from what some person wanted to say. But people were led by the Holy Spirit and spoke words from God” (2 Peter 1:21, ERV). God chose humans to be His prophets. Then God showed them His truth.

Yes, God communicated with His servants, the prophets. That is why the Bible is special. It is filled with God’s power. It is His Word to us. We must remember these things when we study the Bible. Our holy God is the real writer of the Bible. That is why the books in the Bible are named God’s “Holy Writings” (Romans 1:2, NLV; 2 Timothy 3:15, NLV).

God gave us the Bible to change our lives. The Bible “is useful for teaching and for showing people what is wrong in their lives. It is useful for correcting faults and teaching the right way to live” (2 Timothy 3:16, ERV). The Bible “gives the man who belongs to God everything he needs to work well for Him” (2 Timothy 3:17, NLV).

We need the Holy Spirit’s help to understand and to follow Bible truth. Peter says that we must not force the Bible to say what we want it to say. We must accept God’s truth as He wrote it. That is why we need the Spirit’s help. He will help us to understand the Bible’s meaning.

The Bible also says, “When the Lord God decides to do something, he will first tell his servants, the prophets” (Amos 3:7, ERV). The word “revelation” shows us that God makes secret or hidden things known to us. As humans, we need God to make things known to us. We are sinners. Our sins separate us from God. So, we need God’s special help, or revelation, to understand His plan for our lives.

HOW THE SPIRIT LED MEN TO WRITE THE BIBLE (2 Timothy 3:16, 17)

God uses language to show His truth to humans. So, this information helps us to see that God's truth can be written in words. As we saw already, the Bible is God's truth. God shares His truth with His servants, the prophets. Prophets are God's special messengers. The Holy Spirit shows God's truth to the prophets. The Spirit also makes sure that the prophets write God's messages carefully. The Spirit keeps the messages safe from mistakes. That is the reason we can expect to see that all the books of the Bible agree with each other. They teach the same truths. We see this from Genesis to Revelation. (Compare Genesis 3:14, 15 to Revelation 12:17.)

Read 2 Peter 1:21; 2 Timothy 3:16, 17; and Deuteronomy 18:18. What do these verses show us about how the prophets wrote the Bible?

The whole Bible comes from God. True, some parts of the Bible do not have as much meaning for our lives now as they did for God's people in the past. (One example is the Hebrew feasts. God asked the Israelites to celebrate these feasts. But we do not need to celebrate them today.) Yes, some parts of the Bible are not easy to read and understand. Other parts do not have as much meaning for our lives today. But we need to learn from all of the Bible.

Also, not everything in the Bible came from God in the same way. Sometimes God asked Bible writers to carefully study things around them. Other times God asked Bible writers to use information from books and records (read Joshua 10:13; Luke 1:1–3). God used these writings to communicate His message to His writers. Even so, the whole Bible comes from God (2 Timothy 3:16). This is the reason why Paul says, "Everything that was written in the past was written to teach us. Those things were written so that we could have hope" (Romans 15:4, ERV).

"The Bible shows us that God is its writer. At the same time, the Bible was written by human hands. The Bible writers used different writing styles. We see these different styles when we read the Bible. Yes, the truths shown in the Bible are 'given by God' (2 Timothy 3:16, ERV). But they are written in the words of men."—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, page 7, adapted.



The Holy Spirit shows God's truth to the prophets.

**THE BIBLE, GOD’S WRITTEN WORD
(Exodus 34:27)**

“Then the LORD said to Moses, ‘Write everything that I have told you. This is the agreement that I made with you and the Israelites’ ” (Exodus 34:27, ERV). Why does the Lord ask Moses to write His words and say them to the people? Why is it good to have a written copy of God’s Word, the Bible?



Writings can be copied many times. They can be shared with many people all over the earth.

God made human language. He helps His servants to share His truths and thoughts in words that we can trust. So, we are not surprised to learn that God told the Bible writers to write down His teachings and truths.

What do the verses below teach us about why God told His servants to write His messages down?

Exodus 17:14; Exodus 24:4 _____

Joshua 24:26 _____

Jeremiah 30:2 _____

Revelation 1:11, 19; Revelation 21:5; and Revelation 22:18, 19 _____

Why did God tell His servants to write down His messages? So we will remember them better. We can trust information we read more than we can trust information that someone says to us. Writings can be copied many times. They can be shared with many people all over the earth.

THE WAYS THAT JESUS AND THE BIBLE ARE THE SAME (John 1:14)

Read John 1:14; John 2:22; John 8:31, 32; and John 17:17. These verses talk about Jesus and the Bible, the Word of God. Jesus also is God's Word, or the Truth. Jesus, the Word, became a man. In what ways are Jesus and the Written Word of God, the Bible, the same?

First, Jesus was born from a woman by the Holy Spirit's power. In the same way, the Bible comes from God. But God gave the Bible to us by human writers. They wrote the Bible with the Holy Spirit's help.

Jesus became a man. He lived during a certain time and at a certain place. But He continued to be God. Jesus is the only Savior for all people who ever lived on the earth (read Acts 4:12). In the same way, God gave us His Written Word, the Bible, at a certain time and place. But the Bible's message is for anyone. Stories that happened in the past have something to teach us today. Bible truth is for all people everywhere.

God showed Himself to humans when He became a man. Jesus became a man after human flesh was weak from 4,000 years of sin. But Jesus did not sin. In the same way that Jesus was born in a human body, the Bible was written in human language. The Bible is not written in the language of angels that no one understands. Yes, language has its limits. It cannot say everything we want. But the God who made us made human language too. God can communicate His truth to humans in a way that we can understand and trust.

Of course, Jesus and the Bible are not exactly the same. Yes, there are many things that are the same about both of them. So, we can compare them to each other only in some ways. But the Bible is **not** God. God is not a book. God in Jesus became a man. We love the Bible because we worship the Savior that the Bible talks about.

The Bible is a special book. It shows how God works together with humans to write it. Ellen G. White understood this idea. She wrote: "The Bible is the truth that God gave us. Men wrote God's truth in human language. The Bible shows us how God joins together with humans. We see this same thing in the life of Jesus. Jesus was the Son of God and the Son of Man. So, we can say the same thing about the Bible that John said about Jesus: 'And the Word became flesh and dwelt [lived] among us.' John 1:14, ESV."—*The Great Controversy*, page 8, adapted.



Bible truth is for all people.

WE NEED FAITH TO UNDERSTAND THE BIBLE
(Hebrews 11:3, 6)

Read Hebrews 11:3, 6. Why must we have faith to understand God and the Bible? Can we make God happy without faith? If not, why do we need faith to please God?



We must have the faith that a child has in his or her parents.

We must have faith. Or we cannot learn anything about God or the Bible. We must have the faith that a child has in his or her parents. This faith will help us to learn new things. Faith is trusting God to guide us. Faith is believing that God will help us learn about love and His plan for our lives. So, our knowledge and understanding about the Bible will grow while we learn how to grow closer to God.

It is also important to know that we will not understand the Bible correctly when we study it with doubt. We must study the Bible with a spirit of love and faith. Paul writes, “Without faith no one can please God” (Hebrews 11:6, ERV). So, we must have faith when we study the Bible. We also must believe that the Bible comes from God. It is not a human book. The Holy Spirit helped humans to write it.

Seventh-day Adventists talk about this idea in the Basic Beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. In the first belief, we read: “Both the Old and New Testaments are God’s Written Word. God gave it to humans. The human writers of the Bible spoke and wrote as they were led by the Holy Spirit. The Bible shows humans the knowledge they need to be saved. The Bible has the power to speak for God. It shows us what He wants from us. It shows us His perfect plan for our lives. The Bible shows us how we should think and feel. It helps us to judge our experiences and to understand them. The Bible teaches us God’s truth. We can trust the Bible. It is a clear and true record. It shows us God’s acts in history. (Psalm 119:105; Proverbs 30:5, 6; Isaiah 8:20; John 17:17; 1 Thessalonians 2:13; 2 Timothy 3:16, 17; Hebrews 4:12; and 2 Peter 1:20, 21.)”—“Fundamental Beliefs of Seventh-day Adventists,” in *The Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual*, page 162, adapted.

Why must people have faith in the Bible when they study it? What happens if they do not have faith? What are the good reasons that we have for our faith in the Bible?

ADDITIONAL THOUGHT: Read “2. Presuppositions Arising From the Claims of Scripture,” part a, “Origin,” and part b, “Authority,” in “Methods of Bible Study” (www.adventistbiblicalresearch.org/materials/bible-interpretation-hermeneutics/methods-bible-study).

The Bible is very important to our faith. But the Bible has no real value for us if we do not have help from the Holy Spirit. So, we need to have the Holy Spirit in our hearts and minds. Then we will be able to understand what we read and study in the Bible.

“In the Bible, God gives men the knowledge they need to be saved. We must accept the Bible as God’s plan for our lives. The Bible is God’s Word. The Bible is true. It cannot lie or lead us in the wrong way. The Bible shows us what God expects of us. The Bible is God’s test for our lives. It shows us how we should think and feel. It teaches us the truth. The Bible helps us to understand all our experience. . . . Yes, God shows us His plan for our lives in the Bible. But that does not mean that we do not need the Holy Spirit’s help. We need the Spirit to guide us and help us to understand the Bible. Jesus promised to give us the Holy Spirit. Jesus also promised that the Spirit will help His servants to understand Bible truth. The Spirit will make the Bible’s teachings clear to our minds. The Spirit will help us live Bible truth too. Remember, God’s Spirit helped men to write the Bible. So, the Spirit will not ever teach us anything that does not agree with the Bible.”—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, page 9, adapted.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- 1 Why does God show Himself and His plan to us in the Bible? Why do we need God to show us His truth in special ways?
- 2 God also shows Himself to us in nature. God shows Himself in dreams to His chosen servants too (Daniel 7:1; Genesis 15:1); and in signs (1 Kings 18:24, 38). Jesus also shows us who God is (Hebrews 1:1, 2). How has God shown Himself to you? Share your experience.
- 3 Some people teach that the stories in the Bible are made up stories that teach spiritual truths. Why is this way of thinking wrong?
- 4 What does your behavior teach other people about God? How do you show people who God is?



“Jesus promised that the Spirit will help His servants to understand Bible truth.”