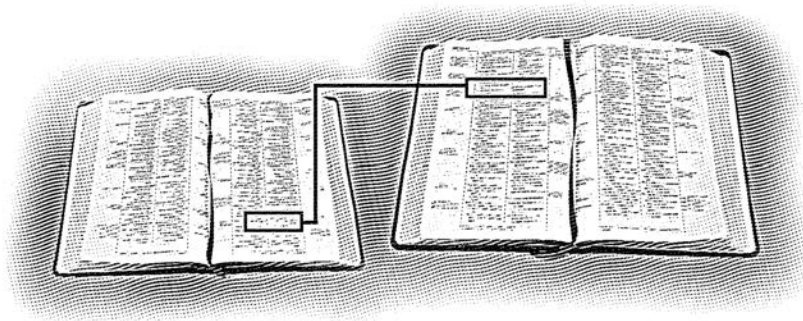


Words, Books, and Their Meanings



SABBATH—MAY 9

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON: 2 Timothy 3:16, 17; 1 Kings 3:6; Genesis 1:26, 27; Genesis 2:7; Genesis 15:1–5.

MEMORY VERSE: “He said, ‘Take this Book of the Teachings. Put it beside the Ark of the Covenant with the Lord your God. It must stay there as a witness against you’ ” (Deuteronomy 31:26, ICB).

THERE ARE BILLIONS of people living on earth. How many languages do they speak? More than 6,000! The Bible has been written in more than 600 languages. The New Testament has been written in more than 2,500 languages too. That is a lot of languages! At the same time, 2,500 is less than half the languages spoken on the earth.

About 1.5 billion people do not have the full Bible in their own language. Bible societies have done a lot of work to change that. But a lot more work needs to be done to write the Bible in other languages.

Yes, it is a blessing to read the Bible in your own language! We often do not think about all the people who do not have the Bible in their own language. For hundreds of years in Europe, the Roman Catholic Church hid the Bible away from people. Then things changed with the printing press and the Protestant Reformation. The Protestant Reformation was a time when people in Europe woke up to Bible truth. Hundreds of years later, we continue to look for new ways to study the Bible and learn more about Jesus.



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UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLE (2 Timothy 3:16, 17)

Read 2 Timothy 3:16, 17. What did God give us the Bible for?

The Bible shows us God's work in history. It shows us God's plan for saving humans from sin too. God also gave us the Bible to teach us His truth. The Bible shows us how we can live holy lives for Him. God chose to share these truths with us in human language. In the Bible, God makes His thoughts and ideas known to us in human words. When God saved Israel from Egypt, God chose Israel to communicate His message to all people on the earth. God let Israel communicate the Bible in their own language. So, they wrote the Bible in Hebrew, with a few parts in the Aramaic language. Aramaic is almost the same as Hebrew.

The New Testament is written in Greek, not Hebrew. Greek was the language that most people spoke in that part of the earth at that time. The Old Testament also was written in Greek. Greek was spoken all over the kingdom of Rome. So, that made it easy for Jesus' followers and the church to share the Good News in many places. Later, we read in Revelation about Jesus' follower John. "John is a witness to everything he saw. What he saw is God's word and what Jesus Christ has said" (Revelation 1:2, NIV). In this verse, we see that Bible writers are witnesses to God's truth. The Bible shows us that all the Bible writers are in agreement, from Moses in Genesis to John in Revelation. That is because all Bible writers write what Jesus shows them and what He says to them. They are His witnesses.

Read Deuteronomy 32:46, 47. Why was it important for the Israelites to "obey all the words of this law" (Deuteronomy 32:46, NIV)? How does obeying God's Word, the Bible, help Israel to live longer? How is that true for us today?

Some people have the Bible written in their own languages. They may have many different translations too. Other people may have only one translation. The most important thing is not how many different Bible translations you have in your language. The most important thing of all is loving God's Word, the Bible, with all your heart and obeying its teachings.

Why is obeying Bible truth *NOT* a waste of time?



The most important thing of all is loving God's Word, the Bible, with all your heart and obeying its teachings.

WORDS AND THEIR MEANINGS (1 Kings 3:6)

In every language, there are words that have a rich and deep meaning. The deep meaning makes it hard to write these words in another language. Sometimes it is hard to find only one word that shows everything this word means. So, you must use many words. There are many Hebrew and Greek words in the Bible that are rich and deep. So, we need to study the different ways they are used in the Bible. Then we can better understand what these words mean.

Read about God’s mercy and love in 1 Kings 3:6; Psalm 57:3; Psalm 66:20; Psalm 143:8; and Micah 7:20. How does God show His mercy and love to humans?

The Hebrew word for mercy is “chesed.” “Chesed” is full of deep meaning. In the Old Testament, “chesed” means God’s love, His kind heart, and His mercy. “Chesed” also shows us that God keeps His Special Agreement with His people. In the verses above, we see examples of the word “chesed” and how it is used. In 1 Kings 3:6 (NIRV), we read: “Solomon answered, ‘You have been very kind [chesed] to my father David, your servant. That’s because he was faithful [obedient] to you. He did what was right. His heart was honest. And you have continued to be very kind [chesed] to him.’ ” And in Psalm 57:3 (ICB), we read: “God sends me his love [chesed] and truth.” In Micah 7:20 (NIRV), the Bible promises that God will “show [His] love [chesed] to Abraham’s children.” People have written whole books about the word “chesed.” The books try to explain God’s wonderful love and mercy for us.



“Shabbat [Sabbath] shalom” is a blessing. It shows us the peace that God provides us with on the Sabbath. God gives us this peace when we have fellowship with Him.

Numbers 6:24–26; Job 3:26; Psalm 29:11; Isaiah 9:6; and Isaiah 32:17 talk about peace. What is this peace about?

The Hebrew word “shalom” often is written as “peace.” But the word means much more than that. Shalom can be written as “being whole”; “having everything that is needed”; and “having joy, health, and success.” God blesses us with “shalom,” or everything we need in life. So, “shalom” is a gift from God (Numbers 6:24–26). The words “Shabbat [Sabbath] shalom” are a blessing. They show us the peace that God provides us with on the Sabbath. God gives us this peace when we have fellowship with Him.

WORDS AND THEIR MEANINGS (Genesis 1:26, 27)

In the Hebrew language, you can write an idea in different ways. These ways help the reader to understand words in Hebrew writing or to show that an idea is important. Hebrew language does not use commas or periods. So, how did someone know where a sentence stopped? People who wrote Hebrew came up with other ways to show where a sentence ended.

Read Genesis 1:26, 27 and Isaiah 6:1–3. What words are said again and again in these verses? What ideas do these words show us? How do these ideas change the meaning of the words that are said again and again?

How did a Hebrew writer show that a word or idea about God was important? The writer said this same word three times. We see an example of this in Genesis when God made humans on day #6. “And God **made** man in His own likeness [a copy of Himself]. In the likeness of God He **made** him. He **made** both male and female” (Genesis 1:27, NLV). Do you see that Moses writes the word “made” three times? Why do you think Moses did that? The Hebrew word for “made” shows us the answer. It comes from the Hebrew word “bara’.” This word shows us that God is the only One who has power to make things from nothing. God made humans as copies of Himself. That is what Moses wants to show us.

Now let us look at an example in Isaiah. Isaiah has a dream about six-winged angels. These angels say, “ ‘Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of heaven’s armies’ ” (Isaiah 6:3, ICB). The angels say “holy” three times to show us God’s glory and power. We see the same idea again when Isaiah sees God. Isaiah says: “ ‘Oh, no! I will be destroyed’ ” (Isaiah 6:5, ERV). What do Isaiah’s words show us? They show us that Isaiah sees he is a sinner when he stands in front of a holy God. Isaiah’s words also show us that humans need a Savior. Isaiah shows us this idea long before Paul writes about our need for a Savior in Romans 1–3.

In Daniel 3, we see the words “King Nebuchadnezzar made a gold statue” (NirV). Daniel writes these words ten times in chapter 3. He says them so many times to show us that Nebuchadnezzar is fighting against God’s plan for the future (Daniel 2:31–45). Daniel wants us to see that humans must not try to be worshiped as gods. God is the only true God. He is the only One we should worship.



The word “bara’ [made]” shows us that God is the only One who has power to make things from nothing.

VERSES AND THE WORDS AND VERSES AROUND THEM (Genesis 2:7)

The words in Bible verses always have other words and verses around them. These other words and verses help us to understand the meaning of a verse. We can understand a Bible verse in one of two ways. First, a word is always written in a sentence. We need to understand what the word means in that sentence. Then we need to look at the chapter, the verses, or chapters where the word is used. It is important for us to understand the verses and chapters around the words and sentences we are studying in the Bible. Then we will not believe wrong ideas.

Compare Genesis 1:27 with Genesis 2:7. Next, read Genesis 2:15–23. How do these different verses show us what the word “adam” means? “Adam” is the Hebrew word for “man.”

We saw that the word “bara” in Genesis 1:27 is written three times to show that God made man. In Genesis 1:27 (ERV), we see that man is part of the pair “male and female.” What does this show us? It shows us that the Hebrew word “adam” **in this verse** means humans.

But in Genesis 2:7 (ERV), Moses uses the same word “adam” to show us that God “took dust from the ground [adamah] and made a man.” (Do you see that the Hebrew word for “ground” is “adamah”? It looks the same as “adam” or “man.”) In Genesis 2:7, we read only about the male Adam. That is because God does not make Eve until later. God also makes Eve in a different way than He makes Adam. So, in each verse, and even in the two different chapters where the verses are, we see that the word “adam” has different meanings. In Genesis 1:27, “adam” means “humans.” But in Genesis 2:7, “adam” means the man Adam. Later on, the Bible shows us that Adam is a real person (Genesis 5:1–5; 1 Chronicles 1:1; Luke 3:38). Also, Paul says that Jesus is the second Adam (Romans 5:12–14).

So, we see the word “Adam” in certain verses in the Bible. In the same way, the story about how God made Adam and Eve is found in the bigger story about how God made the earth in Genesis 1 and 2. These chapters show us new ideas and topics. Genesis 2:4–25 is often named the second story about how God makes the earth. Next week we will see that Genesis 1 and Genesis 2:4–25 really show us the same story. The only thing different is that they focus on different ideas. But both stories show us that God made humans.



In Genesis 2:7 (ERV), Moses uses the word “adam” to show us that God “took dust from the ground [adamah] and made a man.”

BOOKS AND THEIR MESSAGE (Genesis 15:1–5)

Bible books are the biggest parts of the Bible. They were written for different reasons and in different places. Some Bible books show us the future. Other Bible books are a collection of songs or poems (the Psalms). There also are history books (1 and 2 Kings). There also are letters written to different churches. (Examples in the Bible include the letters that Paul and other men wrote.)

What is the first thing we need to do to understand a Bible book's message? We must start with learning about the writer and the place where he wrote. Moses wrote the 1st five books of the Old Testament. How do we know? The Bible tells us in Joshua 8:31, 32; 1 Kings 2:3; 2 Kings 14:6; 2 Kings 21:8; Ezra 6:18; Nehemiah 13:1; Daniel 9:11–13; and Malachi 4:4. Jesus also tells us the same thing in Mark 12:26; John 5:46, 47; and John 7:19. The New Testament writers do too (Acts 3:22; Romans 10:5). But we do not always know who wrote some of the Bible books. We do not know who wrote Esther, Ruth, Samuel, and Chronicles.

Read Genesis 15:1–5 and Genesis 22:17, 18. Why is it important to us that Moses wrote the book of Genesis?

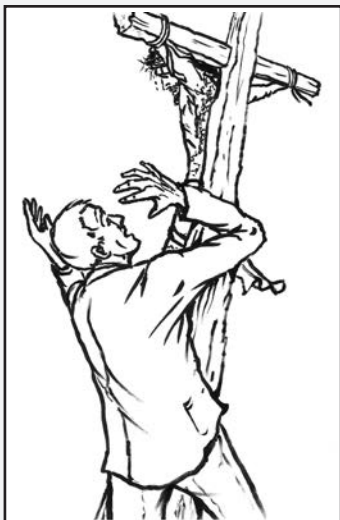
Moses wrote the books of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy after Israel left Egypt, of course. But we believe that Moses wrote Genesis before God made Israel free from slavery. Why do we think that? Because Genesis shows us the history of God's acts from the time when God made the earth to the time of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

"As the years passed, Moses took his sheep to places far away from other people. There, Moses thought about how his people were slaves in Egypt. Moses also thought about what God did for Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Moses thought about God's promises too. God gave these promises to the future children of Israel as a gift because they were His chosen people. So, Moses prayed for Israel day and night. Angels from heaven put their light around Moses. Here, with the Holy Spirit's help, Moses wrote the book of Genesis."—Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 251, adapted.

The book of Genesis shows us where we came from. It also shows us God's plan to save sinners. Later, God shows Abraham more information about this plan: God promised to give Abraham many children (Genesis 22:17, NIV).



"Angels from heaven put their light around Moses. Here with the Holy Spirit's help, Moses wrote the book of Genesis."



“In the Bible, God gives men the knowledge they need to be saved.”

ADDITIONAL THOUGHT: Read Ellen G. White, “John Wycliffe,” pages 79–96; “Luther Before the Diet,” pages 145–170 in *The Great Controversy*. Also read section 4.A.–J. from the article “Methods of Bible Study,” which can be found at the following link: www.adventistbiblicalresearch.org/materials/bible-interpretation-hermeneutics/methods-bible-study.

“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. It shows us exactly 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. It is the test for 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 led 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 How many different Bibles do you have in your own language? How can you do the best you can with what you have? How can you learn to love the Bible and see it as God’s Word? What are ways you can obey its teachings?
- 2 What does the Bible teach us about how life started on this earth? What does “science” teach us? The Bible’s teaching is very different from science’s teaching. Humans can become very confused when they turn away from Bible truth and what it teaches. What should this tell us about why it is important for us to trust what the Bible teaches?
- 3 What Bible tools do you have? How can they help you to understand the Bible better?
- 4 Moses told the children of Israel to teach their children Bible truth and to tell them their stories about everything God did for them (Deuteronomy 4:9). How does sharing our stories about God’s love help our faith to grow?