

# Bible Stories for Adults

## The Word of God

Genesis - Revelation

### Opening

- Gathering: Give an example of how the Bible has helped you in your everyday life.
- Today's Focus: To understand what the Bible is, why God gave it to us and how it is organized to help us find and apply its truths to our lives.
- Key Verses: *All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.* 2 Timothy 3:16
- These are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His name.* John 20:31

Opening Prayer

### Lesson

What We Believe (*John 20:31*)

- Does it matter what we believe?  
Acts 4:12
- What does it mean to be saved, and what is this name by which we must be saved?  
John 17:3
- Is thinking about God enough to know Him and be saved?  
Mark 12:24
- How can we know God and Jesus enough to receive the life He offers?  
John 20:31

The Bible for Everyday Life (*2 Timothy 3:16*)

- Is the Bible given only to build our faith to receive eternal life?  
Matthew 4:4
- How can the Bible help us in our daily lives?  
2 Timothy 3:16-17
- Other than growth, what promise does God give to those who study His word?  
Luke 11:28

What is God's Word? (*John 1*)

- How long has God's Word been around?  
John 1:1-3
- Why does John refer to the Word as "him"?  
John 1:14
- How were all things made through the Word?  
Genesis 1:3, 31
- How did the Word become flesh?  
Luke 24:27
- Note: *Moses and the Prophets* or *Law and Prophets* was name for Bible (OT) in Jesus' time

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### Law and Gospel (*Romans 3:21-24*)

What two paths towards salvation are revealed in the Bible?

Romans 3:21-24

Is God's Law only found in the Old Testament?

Matthew 5:17-18, 21-22a

Is God's Gospel ("Good News") of grace found only in the New Testament?

Genesis 12:1-3

### God's Law (*Matthew 22:37-40*)

What are the three types of God's Law?

*Civil* - Exodus 22:1

*Ceremonial* - Exodus 34:22

*Moral* - Exodus 20:3-4, 7-8, 12-17

How did Jesus summarize God's Moral Law?

Matthew 22:37-38

Matthew 22:39-40

Since all fall short of being saved by obedience, what are the purposes of God's Law?

Curb - 1 Timothy 1:9-10

Mirror - Romans 7:7

Guide - Psalm 119:9 (119:1-9)

What are the promises of God's Law?

Deuteronomy 6:24-25

What are the curses of God's Law?

Deuteronomy 8:19-20 (see Galatians 3:10-13)

### God's Gospel (*Ephesians 2:8-9*)

How did Paul summarize God's Gospel?

Ephesians 2:8-9

What purpose does God have in this Gospel?

John 3:16

What are the promises of God's Gospel?

Ephesians 1:4-8, 13-14

What are the curses of God's Gospel?

John 3:36

### Contrasts of Law and Gospel (*Galatians 3:10-25*)

#### LAW

Galatians 3:10

Galatians 3:12

Galatians 3:19

Galatians 3:22-23

#### GOSPEL

Galatians 3:13-14

Galatians 3:11

Galatians 3:19b

Galatians 3:24-25

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### The Bible

Not one book, but a book of books (66)

*biblion*

*Canon*

List of books recognized as the genuine, original inspired, authoritative Word of God

What did Peter explain to be the source of the books in the Bible?

2 Peter 1:20-21

How did Paul, the author of nearly half of the New Testament books, feel about the message he gave?

Galatians 1:11-12

How seriously should we consider the words in the Bible to be the exact Words of God?

Galatians 1:8

### The Old Testament

*Testament* - A covenant or agreement between two parties, especially between God and His people.

Implies a strong relationship between the two.

What was God's old testament?

Leviticus 26:3, 6, 9, 12

What is the focus of the Old Testament books of the Bible?

Genesis 28:13-15

Current Old Testament canon selected soon after return from Babylon, around the time of Ezra

Books organized mostly chronologically within 5 categories (39 books):

The Law (Torah) - Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy

History - Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 & 2 Samuel, 1 & 2 Kings, 1 & 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther

Poetry - Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs

Major Prophets - Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel

Minor Prophets - Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi

### The New Testament

What was God's new testament?

Hebrews 9:15

Is this new covenant still restricted to the children of Abraham?

Galatians 3:6-9, 14, 29

What is the focus of the New Testament books of the Bible?

Ephesians 3:4-6

Current New Testament canon selected in 397 AD at the Council of Carthage

Were any of our New Testament books regarded as Scripture before this time?

2 Peter 3:15-16

Books organized thematically within 5 categories (27 books):

Gospels - Matthew, Mark, Luke, John

History - Acts

Letters of Paul - Romans, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians, 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon

Letters of Others - Hebrews, James, 1 Peter, 2 Peter, 1 John, 2 John, 3 John, Jude

Apocalypse - Revelation

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### Versions

Old Testament originally written in Hebrew, New Testament originally written in Greek

*Translation* - A rendering of the original text into another language

*Paraphrase* - A careful restatement of the authors thoughts

#### *Literal Bible Versions*

Translations aimed at word-for-word accuracy

Septuagint (Old Testament Hebrew translated into Greek) - 285-132 BC

Vulgate (Bible translated into Latin by Jerome) - 405 AD

German Bible (Translated by Martin Luther) - 1522-1534

King James Version (KJV, Authorized) - 1611

Revised Standard Version (RSV) - 1952

New American Standard (NASB) - 1960

#### *Dynamic Bible Versions*

Translations aimed at dynamic equivalency (phrase-by-phrase)

New International Version (NIV) - 1978

#### *Paraphrases*

Sentences and verses rewritten to maximize readability in today's language

The Living Bible (TLB) - 1971

Today's English Version (Good News) - 1976

The Message - 2002

### How To Take Advantage of God's Word

Why should we study the Bible?

Matthew 22:29

How should we begin to study the Bible?

Colossians 1:9

How can praying help us better understand the deep truths of the Bible?

John 14:26

But what if what we read is too difficult to understand?

Hebrews 5:11-14

What are three main ways we are to study the Bible?

Acts 17:2-3

Acts 17:11

2 Timothy 3:14-15

### Closing Prayer

### Response

1. Why should I regularly read and study the Bible?  
(*John 16:12-15; 20:31; Romans 15:4; Hebrews 5:11-14; 2 Timothy 3:16-17*)
2. How seriously should I take and trust the words in the Bible?  
(*Matthew 5:18; 24:35; Acts 24:14; 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20-21*)
3. When and how have I been blessed by studying God's Word?  
(*Deuteronomy 4:1-14; 8:1-10; Psalm 119; Ezekiel 3:1-3; Matthew 4:4*)
4. When and how have I been cursed by ignoring God's Word? (*Deut 8:11-20; 11:26-28; Prov 30:5-6*)
5. What steps can and will I take to learn more about God's plan for my life and my future with Him?  
(*Proverbs 1:7; Colossians 3:16-17; 2 Timothy 2:15; 3:14-15; James 1:21-25*)

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### Books of the Old Testament

**The Law** - *Torah* (Hebrew for "law" or "teaching"), *Pentateuch* (Greek for "five volumes")

- Genesis** - Beginnings of God's People
- Exodus** - Birth of God's Chosen Nation
- Leviticus** - Instructions for Living as God's Holy People
- Numbers** - Israel's Journey to the Promised Land
- Deuteronomy** - Moses Reminds Israel of Her Calling

**History** - *Stories of the Jews before Christ*

- Joshua** - Israel Enters, Conquers and Settles the Promised Land
- Judges** - Israel's Early Years as a Confederacy
- Ruth** - Story of God's Love and Care to Ancestor of David and Jesus
- 1 Samuel** - God Gives Israel a King - Saul
- 2 Samuel** - Israel's Second and Most Faithful King - David
- 1 Kings** - Israel Under Solomon and Divided into Two Kingdoms
- 2 Kings** - Kings and Fall of Israel and Judah
- 1 Chronicles** - Chronicle of the Reign of King David
- 2 Chronicles** - Chronicle of the Reigns of Solomon and Kings of Judah
- Ezra** - Jews Return from Exile and Commit to God
- Nehemiah** - Jews Rebuild Jerusalem and Rebuild Holy Nation
- Esther** - Story of God's Protection of His People

**Poetry** - *Also called Wisdom Literature*

- Job** - Faithful Man Tries to Understand God's Will Through Suffering
- Psalms** - Hymns, Poems and Prayers of Israel
- Proverbs** - Words of Wisdom from Solomon and Other Wise Israelites
- Ecclesiastes** - Solomon's Thoughts on the Vanity of Earthly Life
- Song of Solomon** - Love Songs Symbolizing God's Relationship With His People

**Major Prophets** - *Pointed Israel Back to God, Warned of Judgment, Promised Hope*

- Isaiah** - Prophet to Southern Kingdom During Northern Kingdom's Destruction, Foretold of the Messiah
- Jeremiah** - Prophet to Southern Kingdom of Judah During its Last Days
- Lamentations** - Songs of Mourning by Jeremiah Over Exile of Judah
- Ezekiel** - Prophet of Judgment and Hope to Jews During Exile in Babylon
- Daniel** - Prophet of God's Plans to Jews During Exile in Babylon

**Minor Prophets** - *"Minor" Because Books are Smaller*

- Hosea** - Prophet to Northern Kingdom of Israel During its Last Days
- Joel** - Prophet to Judah Compares Famine to the Day of the Lord's Judgment
- Amos** - Prophet of Judgment Against Social Injustice
- Obadiah** - Prophet of Judgment Against Judah's Neighbor Edom
- Jonah** - Story of Unwilling Prophet to Ninevah (capital of enemy, Assyria)
- Micah** - Prophet Against Social, Political and Religious Evils
- Nahum** - Prophet Foretells Destruction of Ninevah (capital of enemy, Assyria)
- Habakkuk** - Prophet Questions God's Purpose in Imminent Babylonian Conquest of Judah
- Zephaniah** - Prophet Proclaims God's Judgment on Judah and Jerusalem For Evils
- Haggai** - Prophet Reprimands Jews to Return to Rebuilding the Temple
- Zechariah** - Prophet Calls Jews to Rebuild Temple and Reveals God's Future Plans
- Malachi** - Prophet Calls Jews to Commitment and Obedience While Awaiting the Messiah

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### Books of the New Testament

**Gospels** - *“Good News” of Jesus, the Christ (Messiah)*

**Matthew** - Story of Jesus as the Promised Messiah, Directed to Jews

**Mark** - Story of Jesus as the Active Son of God, Directed to Romans

**Luke** - Story of Jesus as the Perfect Son of Man, Focuses on Jesus' Humanity

**John** - Story of Jesus as the Full Son of God, Focuses on Jesus' Divinity

**History** - *Story of God's New Covenant People*

**Acts** - Formation and Expansion of the Christian Church

#### Letters by Paul

**Romans** - Explanation of Christianity, Saving Righteousness Comes Through Faith

**1 Corinthians** - Exhortations Against Disorders Within the Church

**2 Corinthians** - Reconciliation Between Christians and With God

**Galatians** - Christians Are to Live By Grace, Not By Law

**Ephesians** - Live As Members of Christ's Body, the Church

**Philippians** - Be Joyful and Thankful in all Circumstances

**Colossians** - Salvation is in Christ and in Christ Alone

**1 Thessalonians** - Remain Steadfast While Awaiting Christ's Return

**2 Thessalonians** - Misconceptions of Christ's Second Coming Corrected

**1 Timothy** - Advice for Pastor of Christian Congregation

**2 Timothy** - Persevere in Faith Despite Persecution and Godlessness in the World

**Titus** - Guidance to Pastor in Handling Opposition

**Philemon** - Forgiveness and Acceptance of Runaway Slave as Fellow Christian

#### Letters by Others

**Hebrews** - Christ Supersedes All Things of God's Old Covenant

**James** - True Faith is Evident in its Resultant Good Works

**1 Peter** - Encouragement to Stay on the Narrow Road Despite Persecution

**2 Peter** - Condemnation of False Teachings Within the Church

**1 John** - Avoid False Teachings and Live Out God's Love For Others

**2 John** - Avoid False Teachers and Obey God's Commands

**3 John** - Hospitality Commended in Face of Opposition From Church Leader

**Jude** - Defending the Faith Against False Teachers

**Apocalypse** - *Highly Symbolic Writings that Describe Future Times*

**Revelation** - Visions of Heaven and the Last Days Given to John

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### Books of the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha

#### Apocrypha & Pseudepigrapha

Religious writings not accepted as divinely inspired (not in *canon*)

Old Testament canon defined by rabbis at Jamnia in 90 AD

Produced and circulated during period of 200 BC - 100 AD

Contain various historical references and stories

Recommended by Jerome & Luther for ethical but not doctrinal teaching

Many apocryphal New Testament writings also exist, such as:

*Gospel of the Infancy, Gospel of Thomas, ... Nicodemus, ... Bartholomew*

*Acts of John, ... Paul, ... Peter, ... Andrew, ... Philip, ... Thomas*

#### Apocrypha - Greek for *hidden things*

Contain ideas that disagree with Protestant doctrine

Purgatory, masses for the dead, good works earn merit with God

Roman Catholics accept 12 of these 15 books as *Deuterocanonical*

Accepted at *Council of Trent* in 1546 in response to reformers

Eastern Orthodox accept all but 2 Esdras as canonical

*1 & 2 Esdras*

*Tobit*

*Judith*

*Additions To Esther*

*Wisdom of Solomon*

*Ecclesiasticus*

*Baruch*

*Letter of Jeremiah*

*Song of the Three Young Men*

*Susanna*

*Bel and the Dragon*

*Prayer of Manasseh*

*1 & 2 Maccabees*

#### Pseudepigrapha - Greek for *false authorship*

Falsely claimed to be written by a well-known ancient figure

Given even less credence than apocrypha

Called Apocrypha by Roman Catholics

Eastern Orthodox accept 3 & 4 Maccabees as canonical

*Enoch*

*Psalms of Solomon*

*Books of Adam and Eve*

*Martyrdom of Isaiah*

*Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs*

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### Bible Versions

#### King James Version

(A Psalm of David.)

- 23** THE Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.  
2 He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.  
3 He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his names sake.  
4 Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.  
5 Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.  
6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

#### The Living Bible

- 23** Because the Lord is my Shepherd, I have everything I need!  
2,3 He lets me rest in the meadow grass and leads me beside the quiet streams. He gives me new strength. He helps me do what honors him the most.  
4 Even when walking through the dark valley of death I will not be afraid, for you are close beside me, guarding, guiding all the way.[b]  
5 You provide delicious food for me in the presence of my enemies. You have welcomed me as your guest;[c] blessings overflow!  
6 Your goodness and unfailing kindness shall be with me all of my life, and afterwards I will live with you forever in your home.

#### New International Version

A psalm of David.

- 23** The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not be in want.  
2 He makes me lie down in green pastures,  
he leads me beside quiet waters,  
3 he restores my soul.  
He guides me in paths of righteousness  
for his name's sake.  
4 Even though I walk  
through the valley of the shadow of death,  
I will fear no evil,  
for you are with me;  
your rod and your staff,  
they comfort me.  
5 You prepare a table before me  
in the presence of my enemies;  
You anoint my head with oil;  
my cup overflows.  
6 Surely goodness and love will follow me  
all the days of my life,  
and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

#### Revised Standard Version

A psalm of David.

- 23** The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want;  
2 he makes me lie down in green pastures.  
He leads me beside still waters;  
3 he restores my soul.  
He leads me in paths of righteousness  
for his name's sake.  
4 Even though I walk through the valley of the  
shadow of death,  
I fear no evil;  
for thou art with me;  
thy rod and thy staff,  
they comfort me.  
5 Thou preparest a table before me  
in the presence of my enemies;  
thou anointest my head with oil,  
my cup overflows.  
6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me  
all the days of my life;  
and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.