

Lesson One

Welcome!

(You are receiving the first lesson of an English Course with the Bible story as the subject. Your name was most likely given by a friend or you saw it advertised on www.gospelstudies.org IF YOU DO NOT WANT TO RECEIVE THESE LESSONS IN THE FUTURE PLEASE EMAIL ME IMMEDIATELY AND WE WILL TAKE YOU OFF THE LIST. The lessons are sent out once a week. If you simply want to read the content and do not want to participate by answering the questions, that is fine. If you want to answer the questions at the end of the lesson I will let you know your grade if you email your answers to me. If you have questions please include them; I will do my best to answer in time. If you have friends who would like to take the course please send us their email address. You can be a blessing to others in your fellowship in this work. We always allow new students to begin at the first lesson and will make it easy for them to stop receiving the lessons if that is their desire. Please if you have questions or suggestions please let me hear from you. I want to serve you in the name of our God.)

INTERESTING FACTS ABOUT THE BIBLE (1)

The Bible is not one book, but a collection of 66 books.

It was written by over 40 different men over a period of fifteen centuries (From 1450 B.C. until about 70 A.D.).

**** The term B.C.** refers to how many years an event happened BEFORE the birth of Jesus Christ. It is an abbreviation for "Before Christ". A.D. is an abbreviation of a term from the Latin language, "Anno Domini", which in English means "in the year of our Lord". Therefore, 70 A.D. would be 70 years after Jesus Christ was born. Our present year 2004 is two thousand and four years since his birth. This way of counting time was not used while Jesus was alive. He was born to poor parents in a country (Israel) that was occupied by the armies of Rome. He was not well known even by his own race. He lived in the Roman Empire and most people around Europe and Africa dated events from the founding of the city of Rome. Many of the people of Israel (the nation of Jesus) dated events from the founding of their nation. Several centuries after Jesus Christ died and was brought to life again (resurrected), Christians (or those who believed in Him) became so numerous in the Roman Empire that they began to count time from his birth. Now, most of the modern world in their business dealings uses this way of counting time. Jesus' coming back to life (the resurrection) was the greatest event in human history. One of the scholars who coordinated the date of Christ's birth with Roman events made a mistake in his calculations. This mistake was not found out for several centuries so no one wanted to change the calendar. We know now that Jesus actually was born a little before 4 B.C.

The writers of the Bible were from many different backgrounds. Some were shepherds, kings, fishermen, peasants, doctors, & tax collectors. The authors were mostly descended from the nation of Israel, but wrote from many different places; Rome, Jerusalem, Babylon (Iraq), Persia (Iran), Greece, and Turkey.

Because the men who wrote the Bible were from such different cultures and times you would expect its 66 books to contradict each other. But this is not true. While written by over 40 human hands, it was revealed by ONE MIND, the mind of God. "Holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the spirit of God" (see the Bible, 2 Peter 1:21).

While these 66 books, written over a period of 1500 years, and by 40 different men, tell about over 10,000 events; when they are put together they make ONE STORY. This story is the working of

God's love for sinful man in human history to bring about man's salvation through Jesus Christ. Most of the writers were separated by time and distance and even culture, but wrote one continuous, unified story. As you investigate the story in the Bible you will come to appreciate this fact, and it points to only ONE author. The evidence points to God being the author since he is the only one who has lived through 15 centuries. The 40 men who wrote the Bible were actually prophets of God. A "prophet" is one who is a mouth or spokesman of another. A prophet of God speaks for God.

Questions:

1. How many books are in the Bible?
2. How many centuries did it take for this collection of books to be written?
3. Did the writers all live in one place?
4. Normally, would you expect a collection of books written by 40 different people living in different places and different times to contradict each other?

Your opinion please: If the Bible (66 books) is unified and does not contradict itself -- do you think this could be evidence that God is responsible for the Bible?