

Bible: the book of wonderful variety

by: Samuel Asumadu-Sarkodie

Published by uPublish.info

In summary of the course module above the following lessons were taken into consideration: Panorama Bible, Exodus, John, Romans, 1 Corinthians, Ephesians, 1 Peter and, History of the Bible. The Bible, as you know, is not merely a collection of books: It is a divine library. It was written during the course of some fifteen centuries, and forty or more authors contributed to it, some of whom we know, some we do not know.

It is a book of wonderful variety. There are beautiful love stories which reflect the tenderness and most delicate of human passions; there are stories of political intrigue and maneuvering which rival anything we know in the 20th Century.

The whole book is the glorious story of how God became flesh, the immortal became mortal, and the Eternal One became a temporal being like us, for a while, in becoming man. In the story which gathers around this theme, God has incorporated all the truths we need to know about ourselves. In summarizing the Panorama Bible, I found out that, the purpose of revelation aims at the maturing of all of us as individual believers in Christ until, together; we come to fullness of stature and the complete expression of Jesus Christ in the world. It takes the entire Bible to accomplish this, and it takes the work of the Holy Spirit in interpreting this Scripture to us.

Revelation, in the full sense, is really Scripture interpreted by the Holy Spirit. We have this book, which was given to us by God, as Paul declared to Timothy: "All scripture is inspired by God," (2 Tim 3:16a RSV).

It did not originate with man. Man is only the channel it has come through. "Holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit," Peter says, (1 Pet 1:21). The writers of the New Testament sat down and wrote letters, just as we would write them today, expressing their feelings, their reactions, their attitudes, and their ideas in the most natural and uncomplicated manner. But in their doing so, the strange mystery of Scripture is that the Holy Spirit worked through them to guide, to direct, to inspire, to motivate, to choose the very words which gather up and express God's thoughts to men.

This marvelous, secret, and hidden wisdom which we cannot learn in school, nor find in any of the libraries on earth, yet which is absolutely essential to life was thereby incorporated for us in a book. But this book is still totally worthless and useless to us if it is not illuminated by the Holy Spirit. We know it is possible to read the Bible and never get anything from it. So revelation is not found merely by reading the Bible. It is the Bible illuminated, interpreted, by the Holy Spirit. And it takes both the Word and the Spirit.

In summary, the book of Exodus consists mainly of two genres, Narrative History and Laws. It was written by Moses about 1450-1410 B.C. The key personalities include Moses, Miriam, Pharaoh, Pharaoh's daughter, Aaron, and Joshua. It was written to record the events of Israel's deliverance from slavery in Egypt.

It describes the events to the reader in chronological order and also lists the Laws that God has given to the Israelites, in order to guide them in their relationship with Him.

Chapters 1-7 of Exodus, introduce Moses and the Israelites in bondage in Egypt. This setting is approximately 400 years after Joseph and his families were living in Goshen at the end of Genesis. God protects baby Moses and spares his life, as Moses is adopted by Pharaoh's daughter and is raised as an Egyptian. God calls Moses with a special revelation, through a burning bush to release His people from slavery in Egypt. Moses obeys and with his brother Aaron, confronts Pharaoh to let God's people go free, but Pharaoh ignores the warning.

In Chapters 7-13 Moses through the power of God releases 10 plagues of different sorts on the land of Egypt which included, turning all the water to blood, plagues of insects, boils, and hail. Finally, the death of every first-born son, this included the death of Pharaoh's eldest who would someday inherit

the kingdom of Egypt. However, the Israelites obeyed God and followed the ordinance of the Passover and God spared them.

Chapters 14-18 describe the Exodus or "Exit" from Egypt. Pharaoh can no longer endure the plagues that God poured on Egypt and himself and allows them to leave. Moses and the Israelites escape making it to the Red Sea. Shortly after, Pharaoh changes his mind and pursues them, but God destroys his army with the sea.

Chapters 19-24 Moses presents all of the Laws to all the people at Mt. Sinai as God has commanded.

From chapters 25-40, Moses gives the Israelites the tabernacle, priest and worship instructions. In summary, the book of John is a Gospel that contains Narrative History, Sermons, Parables, and a few Prophetic Oracles. It is written by the Disciple/Apostle John around 85-95 A.D. The key personalities of this book are Jesus Christ, His Twelve Disciples, Mary Magdalene, John the Baptist, Lazarus and his sisters, Mary and Martha, Jewish religious leaders, and Pilate.

It was written so that all may believe in Jesus Christ the Son of God who gives eternal life. John's gospel uses the word "Believe" 98 times and the word "Life" 36 times, in an effort to embed the importance that one must believe in order to live eternally. John is not one of the three synoptic (common view) gospels, but instead was written with a more theological substance, yet equally as inspired and important as the first three gospels.

Chapter 1 is the preamble of the Messiah's coming ministry. John gives clear evidence that Jesus is more than just a man, "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (1:1). John then describes that the "Word" is Jesus who became a man to "live among us" (1:14). The beginning verses the first chapter teaches us that Jesus is more than just a man who came into existence but rather, He is infinite God.

Chapters 2-12 consist of Jesus' ministry. He meets with a religious leader named Nicodemus and teaches him that no one can enter the Kingdom of Heaven unless they have a personally "Born-Again" (3:3). Several times throughout the book, Jesus claims that He Himself is God, "I am the Father are one" (10:30). Jesus also repeats applies to Himself, the Jehovaic statement, "I AM" as found in Exodus 3:14, for example, when Jesus declares, "I am the resurrection and the life" (11:25), "I am the way the truth and the life" (14:6), "I am the door" (10:9), and "I am the bread of life" (6:35).

The events in Chapters 13-17 occur less than 24 hours before Jesus' death. They describe the details of the Last Supper with Jesus and His disciples. Jesus taught many important topics to the Disciples during this time. Some of these were Topics about the Kingdom, and about the work of the Holy Spirit that would be sent to them. He also prays for Himself, His disciples, and for all the future believers.

Chapters 18-21 portray the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. In these final chapters, He is on trial and then convicted illegally. After which He is appallingly beaten, humiliated, and then crucified. Jesus resurrected and arose from the tomb and appeared to Mary Magdalene and to His disciples. When John finishes his gospel he writes one of the most amazing truths about Jesus Christ, "And there are many other things which Jesus did, which if they were written in detail, I suppose that even the world itself would not contain the books that would be written" (21:25).

In summary, the book of Romans is a letter from Paul. The Apostle Paul wrote it roughly about 56-57 A.D. The key personalities in the book of Romans are the Apostle Paul, and Phoebe who delivered the letter. Paul wrote the letter to the believers in Rome, hence the name "Romans". He wrote it to give them a concrete theological foundation on which to construct their faith and to serve God effectively. Most scholars also describe it as the righteousness of God (1:17), which can be received only by faith in the atoning death of Jesus Christ.

In chapters 1-8, Paul explains the fundamentals and foundations of the Christian faith, this is the Gospel Message, which all believers are commanded to share with the entire world. Some of the most popular and precious memorization passages about Salvation can be found in the first several chapters of Romans, "For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (6:23). Paul teaches about the sinful nature of all men in the eyes of God, justification by faith in Jesus Christ, freedom from sin, and victory in Christ.

Chapters 9-11, Paul explains to whom this Gospel message is provided. He teaches that salvation is available to, "Whoever will call on the name of the Lord will be saved" (10:13). Paul struggles in sorrow because of the Jew's rejection of the Messiah Jesus Christ.

In chapters 12-16, Paul gives instructions for all Christians about of how to live a holy lifestyle. In the beginning of chapter 12 he writes, "Present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice", and "Do not be conformed to this world". Much of the errors and trials that Paul dealt with in his "Epistles", were because the believers had conformed their lives to the world and not to God.

In summary, the book of 1st Corinthians is a Pauline Epistle. The Apostle Paul wrote it about 56 A.D. The key personalities of this book are the Apostle Paul, Timothy and also Chloe's household. Paul's purpose in writing this letter to the church in Corinth was to address and correct the immorality and divisions that had arisen and were occurring among them.

Chapters 1-4, Paul received reports of problems in the church in Corinth and therefore addresses their problems and disorders, "there are quarrels among you" (1:11).

In chapters 5-11, Paul exposes all of the immorality that was occurring in the church at Corinth. These include Sexual immorality, issues of marriage, and lawsuits with other believers. "Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God" (6:9).

In chapters 12-14, he clears up some of the confusion about practices of worship. He corrects difficult doctrines that had caused divisions. Some of these differences were the role of women in worship, the use of spiritual gifts, and observing the Lord's Supper.

Chapters 15-16 consist of Paul deal with the topic of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. This is the topic that is, "of first importance" to Paul. It is here we find the most important information on planet Earth, the Gospel of Jesus Christ in verses 1-4. "Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures" (15:1-4).

In summary, the book of Ephesians is a Prison Epistle (letter written while in prison). Paul wrote it about 60-62 A.D. The key personalities of Ephesians are the Apostle Paul, and Tychicus. It was written to encourage believers to walk as fruitful followers of Christ and to serve in unity and love in the midst of persecution.

In chapters 1-3, Paul teaches about the unity of believers. These are the truths and blessings that all believers have in common. He wrote that all Christians are "adopted as sons through Jesus Christ" (1:5). All believers are, "redeemed through His blood" (1:7), and "sealed by the Holy Spirit" (1:13). Paul continues on to clear up one of the most misconceived and/or often ignored subject even to this day, "Salvation by Grace". He wrote that salvation is by the "Grace "of God and that it is through "Faith", and that no one can contribute to salvation, in any way, even with good deeds (2:8-9).

In chapters 4-6, Paul encourages the believer to "walk in a manner worthy of the calling". Every believer has a responsibility to live as servants of Jesus Christ. In these chapters, Paul teaches that it takes hard work to be in unity with others; and that we are to be "imitators of God" (5:1). He mentions imperative truths and advice for well-functioning families, including husbands and wives who upon the oath of marriage become as "one flesh" (5:31). In chapter 6, Paul instructs believers how to prepare for spiritual battle by dressing in the "full armour of God" (6:11). Prayer is the key weapon of the Christian soldier. He emphasizes his principle with the repeated statement "stand firm".

In summary, the book of 1st Peter is a General Epistle (Apostolic Letter). It was written to all believers in general. The author is Peter who wrote it about 60 A.D. The key personalities are the Apostle Peter, Silas, and Mark. Its purpose was to encourage suffering Christians and to call them to personal holiness; Peter's central focus is persecution.

Chapters 1-2, Peter addresses the issue that believers are to live a life of personal holiness as God's people, even during times of suffering and persecution. He teaches that all Christians are to

expect suffering; it is normal and Scriptural for Christians to suffer persecution and even imprisonment and death. Peter explains that our salvation in Christ is secure and that He took our sin on the cross and, "for by His wounds you were healed" (2:24).

In chapters 3-5, Peter explains that in living holy lives the believer is to, "sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defence to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence" (3:15). A part of living a holy life is obeying the commands of Christ and Peter claimed that we are obligated to preach the "Hope that is in you". He expounds that believers should not be surprised when persecution comes upon them, "be on the alert" because Satan is continuously, "seeking whom he may devour" (5:8). In addition, if the believer does suffer persecution, they are to glorify God and entrust their souls to Him.

In summarizing the history of the Bible, the books that make up the Old Testament are part of the history, laws, poetry and prophecies of the Jewish people. At first, much of this material was passed down from generation to generation by word of mouth. Although scholars are not sure when the books were first written because various dates are suggested and it seems certain that the period of writing covered several centuries.

By the first century AD, Jewish religious leaders had laid down that certain books were "holy" directly inspired by God and it is these books which now make up the Old Testament.

We know a little more about the beginnings of the New Testament. As with the Old Testament, no original New Testament manuscripts survive, but some that do exist are very close, in time, to the first writing down of the New Testament. Scholars generally agree that the first New Testament books to be written were Paul's letters.

They were kept by the churches that received them, but other churches soon wanted copies. Before the end of the first century AD they were collected together, copied and circulated, along with some other New Testament letters, and Acts and Revelation. Of the Gospels, Mark's is usually thought to be the first to be written, followed by Matthew's and Luke's. All three, usually called the Synoptic Gospels, seem to be based on more or less the same oral tradition about Jesus' life and teaching. Some scholars say John's Gospel was the last to be written in about AD 100, but many now believe that John's was written very early on and maybe even as early as Mark's.

Critique:

The authors of the course module did a great work by vividly explaining the verses in the chosen Bible lessons. It was also a great idea to know about the history of the Bible.

Since, this is not an article but lessons from the Holy Bible, I cannot add my voice to it because it has been inspired by the Holy Spirit.

I suggest that, they add the rest of the Scriptures to this course module to make it complete.

Personal Benefits:

Studying this course module has equipped me to be a better workman for God. I was remembered that my citizenship is not on earth but in heaven and while on earth I am to represent Christ in everything I do. That is my job to represent Christ in the world and to preach His saving message. Since, the Bible was written by Men that were inspired by the Holy Spirit; I have learned to make God's word a standard for my life.