

# HEARTBEAT BIBLE STUDY LESSON ONE



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## HEARTBEAT BIBLE STUDY

### Lesson One Version 3.2

GOD'S LETTER TO US

Student's Outline

Copyright May, 2008

By Darryl Knappen

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#### Has God Spoken to Mankind?

Hebrews 1:1 says, "God, after He \_\_\_\_\_ long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, . . .

#### Little Known Facts About the Bible

Holy means \_\_\_\_\_ from God. Bible means \_\_\_\_\_.

The Bible is over \_\_\_\_\_ years old.

Moses wrote the first five books around \_\_\_\_\_.

John finished writing the book of Revelation in \_\_\_\_\_.

The letters B.C. means \_\_\_\_\_ and the letters A.D. stand for \_\_\_\_\_ which means "in the year of the Lord".

The Old Testament was written in H\_\_\_\_\_, the New Testament was written in G\_\_\_\_\_, and small portions of Ezra and Daniel were written in Aramaic.

The most common English translations of the Bible are:

The King James Version (KJV)

The Revised Standard Version (RSV)

The New American Standard Bible (now updated) (NASB-U)

The New International Version (NIV)

The New King James Version (NKJV)

The English Standard Version (ESV)

A translation is a \_\_\_\_\_ for word or \_\_\_\_\_ for thought translation process. A paraphrase is a re-\_\_\_\_\_ of a translation into common English.

By the year 2000 portions of the Bible had been translated into over \_\_\_\_\_ languages.

#### Proof That the Bible is God's Word

2 Timothy 3:16 (ESV)

All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness,

Scripture is another word for \_\_\_\_\_.

All means \_\_\_\_\_ word.

Theos means \_\_\_\_\_, and Pneumas means \_\_\_\_\_. Therefore all Scripture is God-breathed.

2 Peter 1:20-21 (ESV)

knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation.

[21] For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

#### Prophecies that Prove the Bible is God's Word

Prophecy	Date Given	Fulfillment	Years Later
<i>Isaiah 7:14</i>	<i>700 BC</i>	<i>Matthew 1:18-23</i>	<i>700</i>
<i>Micah 5:2</i>	<i>700 BC</i>	<i>Luke 2:4,6,7</i>	<i>700</i>
<i>Psalms 22:14-18</i>	<i>1000 BC</i>	<i>Matthew 27:35 and Luke 24:39</i>	<i>1,000</i>
<i>Isaiah 53:9</i>	<i>700 BC</i>	<i>Matthew 27:57-60</i>	<i>700</i>

\_\_\_\_\_Junction 1: I am almost convinced the Bible is God's word, but I need just a little more proof. I would like a few more prophetic examples to show me that there is no doubt God wrote the Bible.

\_\_\_\_\_Junction 2: I am convinced that the Bible is God's word, but I'm not sure what I am supposed to do with it or where to go from here, and because of that I'm a little hesitant to step out blindly into the unknown.

\_\_\_\_\_Junction 3: I am convinced that the Bible is God's word, and I'm ready to do whatever God tells me to do.

## HEARTBEAT BIBLE STUDY

## Lesson One

GOD'S LETTER TO US

Student's Lesson

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This is the complete lesson from which the teacher taught.

### Has God Spoken to Mankind?

Our goal in these lessons is to answer questions about *God's Letter* (Lesson One) which is the Bible, *God's Purpose* (Lesson Two) which is to redeem people for His glory, *God's Son* (Lesson Three) which is Jesus Christ our Savior, and *God's Plan* (Lesson Four) which is to make disciples. Through the course of these lessons, questions you now have about God, about Heaven and Hell, about how to arrive at one and avoid the other will be answered in detail.

Let's begin by studying about God's Letter, the Bible. First we want to ask a question. Do you think that God took the time and effort to speak to mankind about himself? We believe that He did indeed speak to mankind in many ways, and his most complete and reliable method was through the Bible. The Bible says a lot about God's communication to mankind and in Hebrews 1:1 the Bible clearly says that,

#### Hebrews 1:1 (NASB-U)

God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways...

Here and in hundreds of other places in the Bible, God is said to have spoken to certain nations and people individually or to mankind as a whole. If that is true, that God spoke to the world, then wouldn't it be wise to listen to what he had to say, and to determine if the letter in which He corresponded was indeed really His communication to us and not some human forgery? That's what this lesson is all about. We want to introduce you to the Bible and prove that every word in it is from God Himself. In the process, you will discover that there really is a God, and that the evidence for His existence is to be found right inside the pages of this marvelous book we call the Bible.

### Little Known Facts About the Bible

Do you know what the word Bible means? On most covers of the Bible are the words "Holy Bible." *Holy* means "**coming** from God."<sup>1</sup> The word Bible simply means **book** and it comes from the word biblia in Latin and biblos in Greek. So the words Holy Bible mean this is a book that comes from God, and since it comes from God, that means that when it was originally written it had to be perfect in every way. A Holy God could not give us an imperfect book.

<sup>1</sup> Webster's New Universal Dictionary, 1976, definition #1.

before they were fulfilled?

Josh McDowell in his book, *Evidence that Demands a Verdict*,<sup>2</sup> illustrates the probabilities according to the modern science of probabilities. For this illustration they (the scientists Josh quotes from, namely Peter Stoner in the book *Science Speaks*) used eight prophecies (we used only four), but remember, there are 300 prophecies of Jesus predicted in the Old Testament and fulfilled in the New Testament. Here is what he says.

We find that the chance that any man might have lived down to the present time and fulfilled all eight prophecies is 1 in 10<sup>17</sup>." That would be 1 in 100,000,000,000,000,000. To illustrate this probability, take 10<sup>17</sup> silver dollars and lay them on the face of Texas. They will cover all of the state two feet deep. Now mark one of these silver dollars and stir the whole mass thoroughly, all over the state. Blindfold a man and tell him he can travel as far as he wishes, but he must pick up one silver dollar and say this is the right one. What chance would he have of getting the right one? Just the same chance the prophets would have had of writing these eight prophecies and having them all come true in any one man, from their day to the present time, providing they wrote them in their own wisdom.

We know at this point that you have absorbed a lot of information and food for thought. A lot of people at this point find themselves at one of the following junctions. Could you tell us which junction you are at so that we might help you arrive at the destination you desire?

\_\_\_\_\_Junction 1: I am almost convinced the Bible is God's word, but I need just a little more proof. I would like a few more prophetic examples to show me that there is no doubt God wrote the Bible.

\_\_\_\_\_Junction 2: I am convinced that the Bible is God's word, but I'm not sure what I am supposed to do with it or where to go from here, and because of that I'm a little hesitant to step out blindly into the unknown.

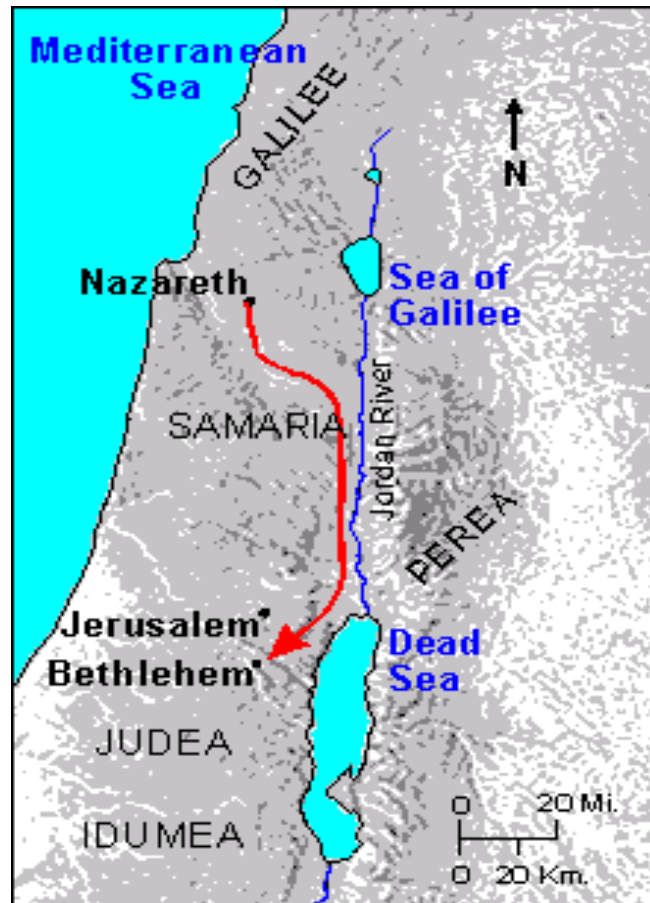
\_\_\_\_\_Junction 3: I am convinced that the Bible is God's word, and I'm ready to do whatever God tells me to do.

Thank you for telling us where you are at in this process of discovering more about God and his word. Your teacher will provide you with more supplemental material if that is necessary to help you progress to the next stop on our journey.

This ends our study of God's Letter, the Bible. Next week we will answer the questions, "Why do we need the Bible?" "What is the purpose of God found in the Bible?" and "What is the theme of the Bible?"

<sup>2</sup> Josh McDowell, *Evidence That Demands a Verdict*, Here's Life Publishers, San Bernadino, CA, 1979 p.





Caesar's decree for a census of the entire Roman empire made it necessary for Joseph and Mary to leave their hometown, Nazareth, and journey the 70 miles to the Judean village of Bethlehem.

One of the most detailed prophecies of Scripture concerning Jesus can be found in Psalm 22:14-18. After reading it aloud, can you guess what this passage is describing? Read Matthew 27:35 to verify the fulfillment of this prophecy given 1000 years earlier. There are several points worth explaining. The description of Jesus on the cross feeling like his bones were out of joint and his heart feeling so weak it felt like wax melting away would be exactly what a person being crucified would feel like according to doctors who have verified the kind of suffering Jesus experienced. By the way, a potsherd is a broken piece of pottery. The dogs referred to in verse sixteen, refer to evil men who pierced his hands and feet. In verse 17, David says that he can count all his bones. That is a Hebrew expression meaning simply that none of them are broken. Remember what the centurion did to the other criminals and why? He needed to speed up their death by breaking their legs which would cause them to suffocate sooner. Not so with Jesus, he was already dead. In verse 18, we read that the soldiers divided his garments and cast lots for his clothing. The soldiers took Jesus' outer robe and tore that into sections, but his inner undergarment, which was precious to Roman soldiers to keep them warm while on watch during long cold nights, was too valuable to be shredded. For that they cast lots, just as the apostles said they did.

Now all of this was predicted 1000 years before Christ was crucified. If David was having a really bad day, and thought that his enemies would someday get the better of him and have him executed, they would have either killed him with a sword, or they would have stoned him according to the Law. Never in a million years would David have dreamed up a method of execution like crucifixion that was not invented until 300 BC by the Romans. What are the odds that David would detail the Messiah's future crucifixion so accurately without outside help from God?

Just one more prophecy will be enough to prove our point. Isaiah 53 is filled with prophecies regarding Christ's death. We will examine only one, verse nine. In verse nine Isaiah accurately predicts that Jesus would be buried in a rich man's tomb. Read Matthew 27:57-60 to see the connection. Again, what would be the odds of all these prophecies coming true exactly as they were predicted 700 to 1000 years

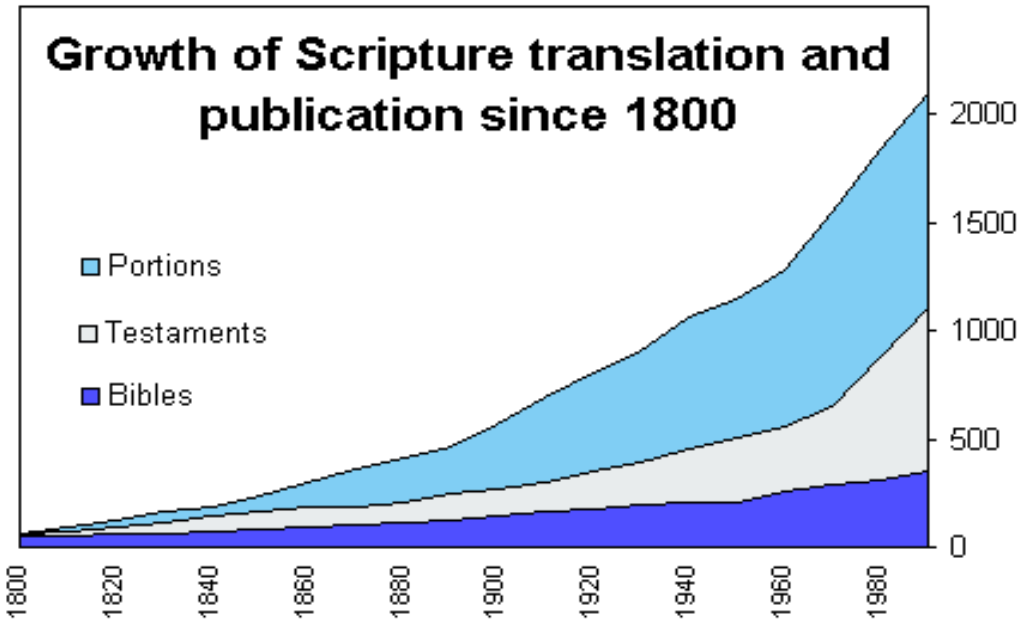
The Bible is over 3500 years old. Moses wrote the first five books of the Bible around 1450 BC. The Apostle John finished writing the book of Revelation in 96 AD. The letters B.C. mean "Before Christ" and the letters A.D. mean "Anno Domini" which is Latin for "in the year of the Lord" not "after death," as some imagine.

The Bible was not written originally in English. In fact, the first English translation of the Bible wasn't written until 1382 AD by John Wycliff. The Old Testament was mainly written in Hebrew, the language of the Israelites who trace their origins back to Abraham, and the New Testament was written in Greek which was the universal language of Jesus' day much like English is in our day. Small portions of the Old Testament, namely portions of Ezra and Daniel were written in Aramaic, which is the language Jesus and his disciples spoke most often.

Since most English speaking people do not know Hebrew or Greek or Aramaic, it would be very hard for them to read the Bible for themselves unless it were translated into English. As we mentioned, John Wycliffe was the first to translate the Bible into English, but the English language of the Fourteenth Century is very different than our English today. Since our language has changed so much since he translated the Bible in 1382 AD, and since it has changed so much even since the King James Translation was made in 1611 AD, we have been blessed by many new English translations of the Bible to help us understand it in today's language. The most common of those translations are: The King James Version (KJV) 1611 AD, the Revised Standard Version (RSV) 1946 & 1952, the New American Standard Bible 1971, updated (NASB-U) 1995, the New International Version (NIV) 1978, the New King James Version (NKJV) 1982, and one of the most recent translations, the English Standard Version (ESV) 2004. All of the above translations are reliable but the authors of this Bible study prefer the NASB-U and the ESV translations for their word for word accuracy and reliability.

If a person were to choose a Bible off a bookstore shelf, he may come across a paraphrase edition or two and there are many to choose from. The difference between a paraphrase and a translation is sometimes confusing. A translation translates from the original language to English either **word** for word (NASB-U & ESV) or **thought** for thought (NIV). A paraphrase is a **rewording** of a translation into common English to make it even easier to understand for younger readers, such as Ken Taylor's paraphrase called the Living Bible which was written so his children could understand the Bible better.

It is unusual for any book to be translated many times in other languages. Even more amazing is that the Bible has been translated more than any other book in history. Let's look at the progression. In 1800 there were fewer than 100 translations of the Bible into other languages. By the year 1940 the Bible had been translated into 1,000 languages and by the year 2000 that number had reached 2,000 languages. Bible translation work is continuing at such a rapid pace that today there is a portion of the Bible translated in a new language every 18 days!



### Proof That the Bible is God's Word

So far we have shared interesting facts about the Bible that show that it is a pretty amazing book. That still is not enough however, to make a doubter believe that the very God who sits on the throne in Heaven ruling over all the earth is the author of every word on every page. Critical skeptics would need more proof, and proof is what we have to offer you today. By the end of this section you will have to choose whether the Bible really is God's word, or against all the odds and evidence, that it is not. No one can remain neutral on this issue. Your decision will affect everything in your life, for God is very interested in how you respond to the information we are providing for you in these lessons, and He wants to change your life for the better. That's because he is a good God and has your best interests at heart.

To begin this section we want to start with a key verse that makes the claim that God is the author of every word on every page of your Bible. It is 2 Timothy 3:16.

2 Tim. 3:16 (ESV)

All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness,

Notice that the verse starts with the premise that all of Scripture is breathed out by God. The word Scripture is another word we use in English for the **Bible**. So, what this verse is saying is that all of the Bible even **every** word is breathed out by God. Some translations use the word "inspired" and say that all Scripture is inspired by God. We need to know exactly what that means. The word 'spire' in Latin means 'to breathe' as seen in the word perspire, (breathing out through the skin) or expire (breathing our last). The Greek word used in that passage was actually two words put together by the Apostle Paul and he coined a new word. It is the word *Theos* combined with the word *pneumas*. *Theos* is the Greek word for **God** (theology is the study of God) and *pneumas* is the Greek word for **breath** (pneumonia is a disease of our lungs making it hard to breathe). Put together, the two words say "God-breathed." Literally that means that all of Scripture is God-breathed, that every word was breathed out somehow to human agents and they put it on paper for us to read.

How that happened is explained for us by another verse of Scripture.

2 Peter 1:20-21 (ESV)

knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. [21] For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

What this verse is saying is that when God spoke to men in the Bible telling them to write down the words so that others may hear, these words did not come from someone's own imagination. The Greek word translated interpretation here means literally, "explanation." That indicates that no human receiver of God's word thought it up on his own so that it was his explanation of what was to happen in the future, or his explanation of what God wanted done. It all came from God. Verse 21 expands on that concept and explains that these utterances were not conjured up in the minds of the Biblical writers, but instead these men communicated what the Holy Spirit had put in their minds. The phrase "carried along" implies that these men were active participants of the process, but like a leaf blown in the wind they didn't have much control over where they went. The words that came to them came from the Holy Spirit, making the Holy Spirit the author of the Bible.

So far we have looked at two verses of Scripture that make wild claims that God is the author of the entire book. Either that is true, or it is not. So, according to these verses, the Bible makes the claim about itself, that every word on every page is literally the breath of God; the words He spoke to humans to communicate His message to us. Can these wild claims be backed up and proven to be true? The answer is YES!

For the purposes of these lessons, we will concentrate on only one line of evidence, although there are several. We will look at the evidence of fulfilled prophecy. Even then, it would take us hundreds of hours to study all of the prophecies (pre-written history) that are contained in the Bible that have already come true. These prophecies are so specific that it is impossible for them to be mistaken as chance fulfillments that could be applied to any number of people at any number of places and times. Since it would take too long to do that, we will concentrate on just four prophecies regarding the coming of the promised Messiah, our Savior Jesus Christ.

The first prophecy is found in Isaiah 7:14. Please turn in your Bibles to this passage and if you do not know where Isaiah is in your Bible (most people do not) then open your Bible to the Table of Contents and find the Old Testament page number for Isaiah.

In the book of Isaiah, chapter 7, verse 14, God in heaven made a prediction that the promised Messiah would someday be born from a virgin girl, an obvious supernatural miracle, therefore making this occurrence a sign. A sign was intended to get people's attention and a baby born from a virgin certainly qualifies. The fulfillment of this prophecy is found in Matthew 1:18-23. What are the odds that 700 years before Christ was born that any human being would predict accurately that the Messiah would be born of a virgin? They are astronomical.

In the book of Micah, chapter 5, verse 2, God in heaven makes another prediction. He predicts the birthplace of the Messiah to be the small little village of Bethlehem, and he makes this prediction 700 years before it happened! The fulfillment of that prophecy can be read in Luke 2:4, 6, & 7. Now let's think about this. If you knew that Jesus would be born to Joseph and Mary who lived in Nazareth some 70 miles north of Bethlehem, wouldn't you think that a safe bet would be to predict his place of birth to be Nazareth? God doesn't make bets; he makes things happen. In order to accomplish this fulfillment of prophecy, God had to get Joseph and Mary out of Nazareth and into Bethlehem in her ninth month of pregnancy (not a good time to travel). In order to do that he put the idea in Caesar's mind to take a census for tax purposes of the empire forcing Joseph and Mary to make the untimely trip. What are the odds that 700 years before Christ was born that Micah, all by himself, with no outside help from God, could accurately predict that Christ would be born in Bethlehem? They are astronomically astronomical.