

THE BIBLE YEAR

First Week: January 1-7

1. Gen. 1-3: Creation; sin; salvation.
2. Gen. 4-7: Enoch; Noah; the ark and the Flood.
3. Gen. 8-11: A new beginning; Babel.
4. Gen. 12-15: A man of faith; tithing; the covenant.
5. Gen. 16-19: Lot delivered; Sodom destroyed.
6. Gen. 20-22: Abraham's faith tested.
7. Gen. 23-25: Marriage of Isaac; Jacob and Esau.

How the Bible Received Its Name

The Bible is the literature of a race, - "the chosen literature of the chosen writers of the chosen nation." We are in the habit of thinking of the Bible as one book; but really it is a good-sized library, with sixty-six books, written by many different men, of varied degrees of education and widely divergent surroundings and occupations, during a time period extending from the days of Moses to near the close of the first century after Christ. However, the singular form of both the words "Bible" and "Scripture" "emphasizes the fact that, under the diversity of human authorship, there lies a wonderful unity, pointing to the operation of one directing Mind, which acted during more than a thousand consecutive years when these writings were being produced."

The name "Bible," meaning "the books," is found nowhere in the Scripture itself. It comes to us from the Latin *biblia* (books), which, in turn, came from the Greek *biblia*, the plural of *biblion*, which is the diminutive of *biblos*. The reason the Greeks called a book *biblos* (the singular form) was because the ancient books were written on material made from the *biblus*, or papyrus, reed. Just as we speak of the printed sheets of paper with the news printed on them as "the paper," so they spoke of a scroll of *biblus* sheets with writing on them as "the *biblos*," and a number of them would be *biblia* (plural).

It is thought that the Greek word for the name "Bible" was first applied to the sacred writings by John Chrysostom, patriarch of Constantinople from A. D. 398 to 404.

The Old Testament Canon

We find the name "Old Testament" first used in 2 Cor. 3: 14, where it refers to the old covenant given to Israel, and to the sacred

THE BIBLE YEAR

books connected with it. To Ezra and his associates is generally attributed the work of first collecting and arranging the books of the Old Testament canon, about 457 B. C. A few books may have been later.

It is interesting to note how the word “canon” came to be applied to the books of the Bible. Martin Anstey says: “The word ‘canon*’ means a rod, a rule, a standard, an authority. As applied to the books of the Old and New Testaments, it indicates that these writings and these alone constitute an exhaustive and an authoritative expression of the mind of God, an objective standard or rule of faith, and a final court of appeal, valid for all time in all matters pertaining to life and salvation. The word ‘canon’ as applied to the books of the Bible, indicates that these books are to be clearly distinguished, and definitely marked off, from all other literature as being of divine origin, and possessing divine authority.”

Great Versions of the Bible

The first copies of the Scriptures were, of course, in manuscript form, and written, for the most part, in the Hebrew. Three small portions were written in Aramaic.

The Septuagint. - The first complete translation of the Old Testament into another language is the Greek version, known as the Alexandrian Version, or the Septuagint. “Septuagint” is a Latin word meaning “seventy;” and the Greek translation was so called because, according to tradition, it was the work of seventy Jewish scholars at Alexandria, in Egypt. It was made sometime between the years 250 and 150 B. c, probably for the benefit of the thousands of Jews living away from Palestine, who had adopted the Greek, at that time the leading language of the world. Scholars agree that “this Greek translation is a very free one, departing in many cases from the original Hebrew text, to which the Jew held so tenaciously and with such reverent awe.”

The Vulgate. - England’s first Bible was the Vulgate. Sidney Collett says: “In the second century of the Christian era, Latin superseded Greek, and remained for many years the diplomatic language of Europe. At this time, a Latin translation was made in North Africa from the Septuagint Version of the Old Testament and the original Greek of the New, so that all Latin-speaking people might be able to read the word of God. It is known as the ‘Vulgate,’ which itself is a Latin word, meaning ‘to make common or public.’”

THE BIBLE YEAR

The Douay Bible. - In the fourth century A. D., the Vulgate was revised by Jerome, a Latin scholar who had access to ancient Hebrew manuscripts, long since lost. From it was made the Roman Catholic Bible now known as the Douay Version, but called, at first, the Douay-Rhemish Bible, for the reason that the Old Testament was translated at Douay, a university town in northern France, and the New Testament at Rheims. It was printed in English at Douay in 1609-10.

The First English Bible. - The Venerable Bede translated the Psalms and the Gospels into the Anglo-Saxon tongue in the eighth century, but it was not till 1382 that the first complete translation of the Bible in the English language was made. This translation, by John Wycliffe, was never printed; but many written copies were made and circulated, some of which are in existence to-day. To make a single copy required about ten months.

The First Printed English Bible. - In 1525, William Tyndale completed a translation of the New Testament, and despite almost insurmountable difficulties and severe persecution, had it published. This was the first printed New Testament. "In all, at least fifteen thousand copies were issued, which were secretly imported into England in bales of cloth, sacks of flour, etc." Many copies were seized and burned; and in October, 1536, Tyndale himself was strangled and burned at the stake. His work was carried on by Miles Coverdale, who in 1535 first gave to the world the whole Bible in printed form.

The Authorized Version. - The Authorized Version of the Bible, commonly in use at the present time, was made under the direction of King James I of England, and is often called the King James Version. The work of translation was done by fifty-four men, "including High Churchmen, Puritans, and the best scholars in the land," and was completed and published in 1611. "The beautiful and stately language of the Authorized Version so endeared itself to English-speaking people all over the world that it remained the Bible of the people for nearly three centuries." In this version, marginal references were used on a large scale for the first time.

The Revised Version. - There are two recent revisions of the Scriptures, the English Revised Version and the American Revised Version. The discovery of a number of ancient manuscripts, and a more accurate knowledge of the original texts, made a revision seem desirable; and in 1870, the work was undertaken by nearly one hundred men, the best who could be chosen for the purpose. In 1885, the English Revised Version was published, and the committee having that

THE BIBLE YEAR

work in charge was disbanded. The American committee continued its study; and in 1901, the American Standard Revised Bible was published.

A study of the different versions of the Bible, and of the sacred manuscripts still in existence, is fascinating. Read what is said about them in your Bible dictionary.

Second Week: January 8-14

8. Gen. 26, 27: Jacob deceives Isaac.

9. Gen. 28-30: Vision of angels; marriage of Jacob.

10. Gen. 31-33: A changed heart and a changed name.

11. Gen. 34-36: God's covenant renewed to Jacob.

12. Gen. 37-39: From sonship to slavery.

13. Gen. 40-42: From prison to palace.

14. Gen. 43-45: Sorrow turned to joy.

The Book of Genesis

By the Hebrews, this book was called by its first word, B'reshith, which means "in the beginning." The name "Genesis" is a Greek word, first used in the Septuagint, or Greek version of the Scriptures, and means creation, origin, beginning. Genesis is the Book of Beginnings. It tells of "the origin, (1) of the universe, including the earth and the human race; (2) of the fundamental human institutions, including the family, church, and government; (3) of human history, including sin and redemption; and (4) of the nations, including the chosen family and race." The book of Genesis "may therefore be considered as the historical foundation, without which the subsequent history of the covenant people would be incomplete and unintelligible."

We may think of Genesis as containing the histories of three families: Adam's (chapters 1-5); Noah's (6-11); and Abraham's (12-50).

Another simple plan for outlining the book calls chapters 1 to 11: 26 Primeval History, and the remainder Patriarchal History.

Still another divides the contents of the book into three parts, thus: Creation (1, 2); The Fall (3-11); Redemption (12-50).

It has also been suggested that the construction of the book of Genesis demands eleven chapters instead of fifty, each one, except the first, beginning, "These are the generations of." One great purpose of the book is to reveal a line of descendants from which the Messiah, the promised Seed, should spring. "That is one of the great things that unifies the Bible from Genesis to Revelation. It is a component cord of

blue and crimson that runs all through the Book, and binds together in a glorious necklace all the promises in God's word."

The first eleven chapters cover in a very brief way more than one third of the history of the world since creation. Then the history of the chosen people is taken up more in detail. "The plan of the writer was, evidently, to connect the history of Israel with the larger history of mankind; and the method followed was that of continually passing from a wider to a narrower field, until at last the history of Jacob-Israel was reached. Thus he passed from the universe (chapter 1) to mankind (Adam); from mankind to the line of Noah; from the sons of Noah to one line, Shem; from all the Shemites to the line of Terah-Abraham; from all of Abraham's line to that of Isaac; and from the story of Jacob and Esau (the line of Isaac) to that of Jacob alone."

The book of Genesis covers a time period of 2,369 years, or more than all the other books of the Bible put together. "Its fifty chapters would thus describe, on the average, the events of this world's history at the rate of about two chapters for each hundred years. Brief indeed is the record! It is as if two or three such chapters should cover the history of the world since the Revolution."

The book of Genesis has one supreme purpose, - to reveal God as the Creator, and His Son, the Seed, as the Saviour of mankind.

The Biographies of Genesis

The book of Genesis contains one of the most fascinating collections of biographies to be found anywhere. Some of these biographies are better known, and have more strongly influenced the world for good, than the lives of the greatest men of history outside the Bible record. The account of the life of Enoch, brief though it is, shows that evil surroundings need not hinder godly living. He is a type, too, of those who at the close of human history will live pure lives in a corrupt world, and who, like him, will not know death. Noah, a "preacher of righteousness," is an example of loyal steadfastness of purpose in giving an unpopular message to an unheeding, careless people. The faith of Abraham, "the friend of God," has been a strength to Christians in every age. The selfishness of Lot, and the destruction that overtook his worldly possessions, point the reader to the vanity of trusting in earthly riches. What character so stands for cunning as the crafty Jacob's? Or whose life so inspires confidence in God in the hour of trouble as that of this same man when his heart was changed, and he became a "prince with God"? Joseph has been the

THE BIBLE YEAR

model for purity, brotherly kindness, and filial affection, from the days of Moses. These biographies, so briefly told, are like stars shining in the darkness, and have guided many to the way of life.

As You Read

1. Meditate. The longer you think about what you read, the more clearly you will grasp it, and the more easily you will remember it.

2. Use Bible helps, - a Bible dictionary, Bible concordance, Bible commentaries, books about the Holy Land, *etc.* But always make the Bible first, remembering that “one drop of the essential tincture of the word of God is better than a sea full of our commentings and sermonizings.”

3. Use a notebook, and jot down helpful texts, promises, *etc.* It is said that every great truth of the Bible has its roots in Genesis. Make a list of such truths.

Third Week: January 15-21

15. Gen. 46,47: A joyful meeting.

16. Gen. 48-50: Death of Jacob and Joseph.

17. Ex. 1-4: Oppression; the call of Moses; Aaron.

18. Ex. 5-8: Warnings and plagues.

19. Ex. 9-11: Plagues.

20. Ex. 12,13: The first Passover; by fire and cloud.

21. Ex. 14,15: Through the Red Sea; a song of triumph.

Mastering the Books of the Bible

This week marks the completion of the reading of the first book. If it is possible, by all means reread it, in one or two sittings, reviewing the main facts. Turn the leaves one by one, and think through the chapters.

If you have time, read over the suggested outlines given last week, select the one that pleases you best, and outline the book accordingly, adding carefully-thought-out subtitles.

Bible Reading by Books

It seems a pity that so many persons never come to the place where they are willing to read the Bible a book at a time, as they would read any other book of the same length, in which they were absorbingly interested. Yet to read the Bible in this way, mastering book after book, “is to fill the mind with the great thoughts of God.”

THE BIBLE YEAR

Years ago, on a Pacific liner, a young woman was observed to bring her Bible to the deck morning after morning. She was reading it, a book at a time; and her conversation on the subject showed that she had discovered the satisfaction of reading the Bible, not as a hard, unpleasant duty, but as a privilege and a joy.

Dr. Gray tells the story of a man who went into the country one day to spend the Sabbath, taking with him a small copy of the epistle to the Ephesians. "In the afternoon, going out into the woods and lying down under a tree, he began to read it; he read it through at a single sitting, and finding his interest aroused, read it through again the same way, and, his interest increasing, again and again." In all, he read it through twelve or fifteen times; and, said he, "When I arose to go into the house, I was in possession of Ephesians; or, better yet, it was in possession of me; and I had been lifted up to sit in heavenly places in Jesus Christ in an experimental sense in which that had not been true in me before, and will never cease to be true in me again."

Almost every Bible reader knows that originally its books were not divided into chapters and verses. The division into chapters was made in the early part of the thirteenth century; and the division of the chapters into verses was made after the art of printing had been invented, about the middle of the sixteenth century.

While these divisions are very convenient for reference, they have doubtless in many cases served to obscure the meaning. The books of the Bible are like other books in that there is an introduction, a development, and a conclusion. "Every book of the Bible has an object, as well as a subject;" and in order really to get its message, one needs to read it through without reference to these artificial divisions. To stop at the end of a chapter or verse, often breaks the thought of the book, and hence obscures the meaning.

Topical study is to be commended after a comprehensive survey of the Bible as a whole has been made, and when such general study is continued; but topical study alone, without much study of the contexts from which the texts are taken, is very likely to lead to misinterpretations. The person who studies in this way only is likely to think of the Bible merely as a collection of texts to which he may go for blocks with which to build up a creed, or for ammunition with which to overthrow an enemy.

So while we give a place of honor to this method of study, recognizing that Jesus Himself used it, and that the special truths for this present time demand it, we must remember that the best

THE BIBLE YEAR

understanding of the Word cannot be obtained by making topical study the first or only method. It is possible that under exceptional conditions, the germ might be taken from the grain of corn, planted, and made to grow; but the all-wise Creator embedded it in the starch of the grain from which its early life should be nourished.

In view of these facts, we urge all who shall spend "a year with the Book" to read, whenever possible, a book at a time. The daily assignments are made as a matter of convenience for those who wish to follow this plan; they will also give the reader an idea whether or not he is keeping up with the reading. But those who read by subjects and by books, who read, reread, and read again, will obtain a new vision of God's unfolding revelation.

The Original Languages of the Bible

"The original languages of the Biblical books were Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek. Nearly all the Old Testament was composed in Hebrew, the language spoken by Israel in Canaan before the exile, but after the return gradually giving way - as the speech of common intercourse - to the Aramaic.... Parts of Daniel and Ezra and one verse of Jeremiah (10: 11) are in Aramaic. There is also an Aramaic coloring to many expressions scattered through the Old Testament. A dialect of Aramaic was the vernacular of Palestine in New Testament times, and it is probable that Jesus' teachings were spoken by Him in Aramaic, and later rendered into Greek by the teachers of the early apostolic church. Apart from this Aramaic basis of the Gospels, especially the first three, and of some material in Acts, the New Testament was composed entirely in Greek, the Greek of ordinary intercourse in the Hellenistic world."

What President Wilson Says About the Bible

Early in 1917, the Scripture Gift Mission asked President Wilson to write an inscription to be printed on the flyleaf of each book distributed by the mission. The President's reply, given below, shows that he knows the Book:

JULY 23, 1917.

THE WHITE HOUSE, WASHINGTON.

The Bible is the word of life. I beg that you will read it and find this out for yourselves - read, not little snatches here and there, but long passages that will really be the road to the heart of it. You will find it

THE BIBLE YEAR

full of real men and women not only, but also of the things you have wondered about and been troubled about all your life, as men have been always; and the more you read the more it will become plain to you what things are worthwhile and what are not, what things make men happy - loyalty, right dealing, speaking the truth, readiness to give everything for what they think their duty, and, most of all, the wish that they may have the real approval of the Christ, who gave everything for them - and the things that are guaranteed to make men unhappy - selfishness, cowardice, greed, and everything that is low and mean. When you have read the Bible, you will know that it is the word of God, because you will have found it the key to your own heart, your own happiness, and your own duty.

(Signed) WOODROW WILSON.

Fourth Week: January 22-28

22. Ex. 16,17: The Sabbath honored; victory over Amalek.

23. Ex. 18-20: Jethro; Sinai; the law spoken.

24. Ex. 21-23: Laws; warnings; promises.

25. Ex. 24-27: A willing offering; the sanctuary.

26. Ex. 28,29: The priesthood; offerings.

27. Ex. 30,31: The Sabbath a sign.

28. Ex. 32,33: Idolatry; punishment.

Exodus

In the Hebrew Bible, this book is called by its opening words, which mean, "and these are the names." The name "Exodus," given to the book in the Greek translation, signifies literally, "going out," or "departure," and refers to the going forth of Israel from Egypt.

Genesis closes with the family of Israel, comfortable and prosperous, pleasantly settled in Egypt. Exodus opens with that same family, grown "more and mightier" than the Egyptians, in bitter bondage and oppression. The book relates in detail the story of their great deliverance, and shows how they became a nation, with a thorough organization, efficient leadership, a complete code of laws, and an established form of worship.

The great purpose of the book is to relate the first steps in the fulfillment of God's covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Three far-reaching systems of laws are revealed in Exodus, - moral, ceremonial, and civil; and prominence is given to the essential truth of redemption by blood. The necessity of absolute obedience to the

THE BIBLE YEAR

commands of Jehovah, and of utter separation from the world - as individuals, by families, and even in business affairs - is clearly taught.

The life of Moses, from his romantic rescue from Egyptian malice in his infancy, through all the thrilling years of his wonderful experiences as the chosen leader of Israel, is of absorbing interest.

Outlining the Book of Exodus

Many plans are suggested for arranging this book by subjects. Here are a few:

1. History (1-18); Laws (19-24); Worship (25-40).
2. Historical (1-19); Legislative (20-40).
3. Slavery, Salvation, Sinai, Service.

Sinai

The peninsula of Sinai is a triangle whose western side extends along the Gulf of Suez for about one hundred and ninety miles, and whose eastern border is washed by the waters of the Gulf of Akabah. The peninsula contains about 11,500 square miles, being somewhat larger than the state of Vermont. "A rugged mass of granite mountains occupies the body of the peninsula, the eastern and western ranges meeting in an angle at the south."

"The Scripture use of the two names 'Sinai' and 'Horeb' ('dry') is such as to make it probable that 'Horeb' was the general name for the mountain group, and 'Sinai' the name of the special summit on which Jehovah descended in fire and 'talked with' Israel."

There has been considerable discussion as to which of the numerous peaks of the Sinai peninsula is the one from which the law was given. The general opinion, however, points to the northern peak of an isolated ridge, two miles long from northwest to southeast, and about a mile broad. This northern peak, Ras-es-Safsafah, rises "high above all other mountains near it, and in sight, and is so isolated from them by the plain and by the deep and steep ravines, that bounds might have been set. around it. At its very base lies the Wadi-er-Rahah ('rest'), a plain two miles long from southeast to northwest, and a half mile wide, containing two million square yards' available standing room, a space doubled by the valleys which open into it on the east."

The Law Given

One of the most noteworthy events of this world's history is found in our reading this week, - the giving of the Ten Commandments,

spoken by God Himself, in the hearing of His chosen people. "All eyes," says one writer, "may well be turned to Exodus 20, and the sublime event therein recorded."

This law is the foundation of God's government, and will endure forever. On this point, Mrs. E. G. White says, "The sun shining in the heaven, the solid earth upon which you dwell, are God's witnesses that His law is changeless and eternal."

Some of the reasons for the awe-inspiring and solemnizing material manifestations of God at Sinai are thus set forth by Rawlinson: "No revelation that God has made of Himself has ever been so terrible in its material accompaniments as that at Sinai, and no occasion can ever be conceived of as more needing the employment of solemn, startling, and impressive circumstances. Here was a people gross of heart, delighting in fleshpots, debased by slavery, careless of freedom, immoral, inclined to idolatry, which had to be elevated into God's living witness among the nations, the depository of His truth, the teacher of the rest of mankind for ages. Given the object of impressing such a nation permanently with the convictions that it had received a divine revelation, and that very dreadful consequences would follow the neglect of it, and the need of the thunders and other terrors of Sinai becomes manifest."

The Lesson of Reverence

The lesson of reverence is strongly emphasized by the preparations enjoined on the people at Sinai. The "mount of God" was made holy by the divine presence; the buildings dedicated to His service and worship to-day, where His people gather to hear His word, should likewise be regarded as sacred.

Fifth Week: January 29 to February 4

29. Ex. 34-36: Commandments rewritten; willing service.

30. Ex. 37, 38: Furniture of the tabernacle.

31. Ex. 39,40: The tabernacle finished and dedicated.

1. Lev. 1-4: Burnt, meal, peace, and sin offerings.

2. Lev. 5-7: Trespass offerings.

3. Lev. 8-10: Consecration; desecration.

4. Lev. 11,12: Clean and unclean.

THE BIBLE YEAR

Leviticus

This name is given to the third book of the Bible because it deals chiefly with the Levites and the priests, and their services and duties in connection with the sanctuary and its worship. It also sets forth the duties of the people in regard to worship, offerings, and sacrifices.

The time covered is very brief, being only the first month of the second year of the wilderness wandering. Three brief narratives are introduced.

The great theme of Leviticus is holiness, - a holy God, a holy priesthood, a holy people. The Hebrew word for holiness is said to occur 159 times in the book. "The holiness of God shines like a white, fearful light upon the whole book. It is in contrast with that holiness that the sin of man is seen and understood.... Leviticus speaks forevermore of the awfulness of sin in the light of the holiness of God, of the plenteous redemption springing from the love of God, of the possibility of holiness of life, created by communion with God."

The purpose of Leviticus "is to reveal God's method of dealing with sin. The entire book is fragrant of Christ. Every sacrifice, every garment, every ceremony points to Him."

Do not make the mistake of thinking that because this is a book of ancient laws, and rites, and ceremonies, therefore it is unimportant and may be lightly passed over. Read carefully chapter 16, dealing with the cleansing of the sanctuary; note what is said concerning talebearing, acceptable offerings, the sacredness of the tithe, etc.; especially notice how often, and in how many ways, the duty of loving our neighbor is enjoined.

Chapter Study

Try summarizing the contents of each chapter, after you have read it, according to some such outline as this: (1) Object; (2) Prominent Persons; (3) Reference to Christ; (4) Leading Lesson; (5) Personal Help.

Do not allow such study to become merely a matter of form. Properly carried out, it will "yield an accurate, detailed knowledge of the facts contained in each chapter of the Bible, a useful discipline for the will, and a fruitful quickening of the devotional life."

If You Have Time

Review the book of Exodus. Note its relation to Genesis and Leviticus. It is a history of rebellion and forgiveness, of murmuring and

THE BIBLE YEAR

mercy. Mark these divisions in your Bible. How has the reading of this book helped you?

Study the different offerings mentioned in your daily reading in Leviticus, till they are clearly defined in your mind. Note the restrictions given in regard to food. Read what the Bible dictionary says about lepers and leprosy. Note how often and how minutely the thought is brought out that God is particular about details.

Sixth Week: February 5-11

5. Lev. 13,14: Leprosy.

6. Lev. 15,16: Ceremonial purification; atonement.

7. Lev. 17-19: Instruction; warnings; laws.

8. Lev. 20-22: Various laws.

9. Lev. 23-25: The Sabbath; blasphemy; year of jubilee.

10. Lev. 26,27: Warnings and promises.

11. Num. 1-3: A census; order; redemption money.

The Pentateuch

The first five books of the Bible are called the Pentateuch, a word meaning "five books;" namely, Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. Like the name "Bible," the word "Pentateuch" is nowhere found in the Scripture itself. The Jews called these books, when speaking of them collectively, the law, the law of Moses, the book of Moses, the book of the law of Moses, the law of the Lord, the book of the law of God, and the book of the law of the Lord. They also called them by a special title which means "the five fifths of the law;" that is, the whole, the complete law. In Hebrew manuscripts, the five books are still considered as one, though the different books are called by the title of their opening words.

The five books comprising the Pentateuch were written, it is thought, during a period of about forty years, and they record the history of the world from the beginning to 1451 B. C.

Some Bible writers add the book of Joshua to the Pentateuch, and give the name "Hexateuch," or "six books," to the whole collection.

The Books of the Bible

There are sixty-six books in the Bible, thirty-nine in the Old Testament and twenty-seven in the New. The books of each Testament may be grouped under five heads, as follows:

THE BIBLE YEAR

OLD TESTAMENT	NEW TESTAMENT
Law books.....5	Gospels.....4
Historical books..12	Historical books.....1
Poetical books.....5	Pauline letters.....14 *1
Major prophets....5	General letters.....7
Minor prophets...12	Prophetical books....1
Total.....39	Total.....27

*1 Many authorities give the number of the Pauline epistles as 13, and place the book of Hebrews in the General Epistles.

It will be observed that these books are grouped largely according to their contents. Thus the law books form one group, the historical books another group, and so on. Someone has said that all the books of the Bible may be arranged around four words, - Precept, Practice, Principle, and Prophecy. The following table, arranged by Alexander Patterson, shows at a glance how the books of both the Old and the New Testament group themselves around these key words:

THE OLD TESTAMENT	THE NEW TESTAMENT
The Pentateuch	Books of Precept
The Gospels	The Acts
Historical Books	Books of Practice
The Epistles	Books of Principles
Prophetical Books	Books of Prophecy
	The Revelation

Be sure to learn the names of the books of the Bible, and drill yourself in saying them till they are as familiar to you as the letters of the alphabet. Then learn them by groups.

Words, Verses, Chapters

It seems strange to us to think that there ever was a time when the Bible was not divided into chapters and verses; stranger still to know that once even the words were written with no space between them; strangest of all, that in the ancient Hebrew language, in which most of the Old Testament was originally written, all the vowel characters were omitted, and only those which represented consonant sounds were written. It was as if we should write the first verse of the Old Testament thus:

NTHBGNNGGDCRDTTHHVNNDTHRTH.

THE BIBLE YEAR

Gradually changes in the way the writing was done took place. Words began to be separated from one another, it is said, in the days of Ezra; still there were no chapters marked, and no verses.

The division of the books of the Bible into chapters is attributed to two men, - a Spanish cardinal, Hugo, and an English archbishop, Stephen Langton. Both these men lived in the thirteenth century. This arrangement was soon adopted into the Vulgate, or Latin Bible, and was later transferred by a learned rabbi to the Hebrew Bible.

The division into chapters is purely arbitrary, and often breaks into the narrative or argument presented. However, it is a great convenience for reference, and has not been changed in the two great revisions made since it was introduced, - the King James, or Authorized Version, issued in 1611, and the Revised Version, completed in 1885.

About three hundred years after the division of the books of the Bible into chapters came into general use, another improvement was made. A Greek New Testament was published in 1551 by Robert Stephens, and in it the verses were marked. Mr. Stephens' son wrote afterward that the plan of dividing the chapters of the Bible into verses came to his father while he was on a lonely horseback ride from Paris to Lyons. The new form met with favor, was soon adopted into the Vulgate, and has been in constant use ever since.

Outline for Leviticus

Offerings (1-7); Priests (8-10); Purity (11-16); Holiness (17-22); Feasts (23); Laws (24-27).

A slightly fuller outline is the following: Law of Sacrifice (1-7); Consecration of Priesthood (8-10); Law of Clean and Unclean; Day of Atonement (11-16); Law of Holiness (17-27).

Seventh Week: February 12-18

12. Num. 4-6: Separated for service.

13. Num. 7, 8: Princely offerings.

14. Num. 9-11: Following the cloud; murmurings; punishment.

15. Num. 12-14: Jealousy punished; reward of unbelief.

16. Num. 15,16: Sin and punishment.

17. Num. 17-19: Aaron honored; support of priests and Levites.

18. Num. 20,21: Sin of Moses and Aaron; life for a look.

THE BIBLE YEAR

Numbers

This book takes its name from the fact that it contains two censuses, or numberings, of Israel, one at Sinai, the other in the plains of Moab, thirty-eight years later. In the Hebrew Bible, this book is called B'midhbar ("in the wilderness"), which is the fifth word of Num. 1: 1. This is a very fitting title, for it records the fortunes of Israel in the Sinaitic desert. In the first Greek translation of the Old Testament - the Septuagint - the book was called Arithmoi (from which comes our word "arithmetic"), and in the Latin Vulgate, Numeri. These words, like our English title, refer to the two censuses that were taken. The time covered by this book is about thirty-eight years.

Numbers has also been aptly called "The Book of Journeys." The first chapters are a continuation of Leviticus; but beginning with chapter 9, the narrative of Exodus, which left Israel encamped at Sinai, is resumed. Their main experiences on the way to Kadesh-barnea are quite fully recorded; but of the years in the wilderness, little is told save that the camp was moved from time to time.

"The book of Numbers is rich in fragments of ancient poetry, some of them of great beauty, and all throwing an interesting light on the times in which they were composed. Such, for instance, is the blessing of the high priest (6: 24-26). Such, too, are the chants which were a signal for the ark to move when the people journeyed, and for it to rest when they were about to encamp." The beautiful prophetic poems uttered by Balaam, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, appeal no less to the mind and the heart than to the ear, so lofty and musical are their cadences.

Life for a Look

The New Testament is interwoven with the Old; the Old Testament is the background of the New. The one supplements and completes the other. Long after the brazen serpent was lifted up in the wilderness, Jesus referred to the incident in the familiar words, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up." Of the serpent of brass it was said, "Every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live." To those bitten by the serpent of sin, Jesus gives the invitation, "Look unto Me, and be ye saved."

"We can understand why Christ should be represented by the innocent lamb and animals of like nature; but how can He be fitly represented by the serpent, the beast that is the symbol of Satan? We

see in this to what degree our Lord descended in order to rescue us. He was 'made a curse for us; ... cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.' Jesus experienced that which Paul said he could wish for himself - He was accursed for His brethren."

In later years, the children of Israel made an idol of this brazen image, and burned incense before it. It was destroyed by Hezekiah.

The Rosetta Stone

A hundred years ago the Old Testament "stood alone in an otherwise unknown age. It was the only known representative of the ten centuries preceding the rise of Greece and Rome. One hundred years ago there was not a single document contemporaneous with the Old Testament known to be in existence."

But a little over a hundred years ago the world's knowledge of Bible times began to be increased. In 1799, as one result of Napoleon's Egyptian campaign, the Rosetta Stone (so named because it was unearthed near Rosetta, at the mouth of the Nile) was discovered. This stone was of black granite, three feet nine inches high, two feet four and a half inches wide, and eleven inches thick. It is supposed to have been at least twelve inches higher, and to have had a rounded top at the time when it was set up, 195 B. C.

The smooth face of the stone was divided into three parts, one above another. On each of these appeared an inscription, - the upper one resembling the hieroglyphics seen everywhere on the monuments and obelisks in Egypt; the middle section covered with another kind of script; and the lower written in Greek. This last inscription was easily deciphered. It told the name of the man in whose honor the monument was erected, Ptolemy Epiphanes, and recited various creditable deeds attributed to him. Naturally the other two inscriptions were at once assumed to be a repetition of this story, and the value of the stone was immediately recognized. After copies of the writings had been made, the stone was carefully packed and sent to England. It is now one of the treasures of the British Museum.

In 1818, after years of painstaking study, a French scholar succeeded in deciphering the remaining inscriptions of the Rosetta Stone, and in so doing, "unlocked the old door to the civilization of the Nile valley.... The stately obelisks and majestic columns were still as the tomb; but their story now rings through the enlightened nations of the earth. Their designers and builders perished thousands of years ago;

THE BIBLE YEAR

... but their testimony abides, unchallenged, chiseled in imperishable rocks.”

In the great mass of material yielded by the Nile valley since the discovery of the Rosetta Stone and the deciphering of its inscriptions, the Christian world finds abundant testimony to the accuracy of the records and hints of the Old Testament regarding the character of the ancient Egyptians.”

Eighth Week: February 19-25

19. Num. 22-24: “The hire of wrongdoing.”

20. Num. 25-27: The second census; the new leader.

21. Num. 28-30: Offerings and vows.

22. Num. 31,32: Conquest of Midian.

23. Num. 33,34: Encampments; boundaries of Canaan.

24. Num. 35,36: Cities of refuge.

25. Deut. 1-3: Retrospect.

You May Do Wrong

Sometimes God allows men to have their own way - and often this is a part of the penalty for their disobedience. “When I was a young preacher,” said John A. Hutton, “I believed that if one transgressed the law something would rise up out of the ground and hit him. I’ve got hold of a new idea now. It is this: If you want to do wrong, you may. That is a more dreadful thought.”

Balaam wanted to do wrong. He knew the right, but he chose the evil. He had heard the voice of God; but he listened to the voice of flattery, and sold his soul for the wages of unrighteousness. Sad indeed was the end of this man, who had seen “the vision of the Almighty” and known “the knowledge of the Most High”!

The Key to the Cuneiform Inscriptions

The finding of the Rosetta Stone awakened a great desire among Bible students everywhere to explore the historical lands of southwestern Asia, in the hope of finding still further confirmation of the sacred record. All through the nineteenth century, and up to the present, the work of surveying, locating, excavating, collecting, and comparing has gone steadily forward. The great valley of the Euphrates and Tigris rivers has furnished a rich field for archaeological research. For centuries, travelers through this valley had noticed many strange ruins and artificial mounds. Some of these men “had noticed and

occasionally picked up, here and there, especially near the mounds, bits of burnt bricks, and fragments of tablets, upon which were found some peculiar, wedge-shaped characters. No one could determine whether they were writing, or simply a species of artistic ornamentation.” Between 1808 and 1820, an English traveler named Rich made a collection of these curiously inscribed little bricks, and sent them to the British Museum. But no one at that time could read their story.

In 1835, Henry C. Rawlinson, then a young English officer in the Persian army, found on Mount Behistun, in Persian Kurdistan, what is now known as the Behistun inscription.

The mountain that attracted the attention of the young officer was of limestone, “rising out of the plain to a height of seventeen hundred feet. One side of this mass was almost perpendicular in form. About three hundred and fifty feet above the base, on this perpendicular side, Rawlinson could see a large space which had been carefully hewn off and polished. Upon this prepared surface he could also descry a large bas-relief representing a king, before whom stood a long line of captives bound neck to neck with a rope. Adjacent to this group were several columns of cuneiform inscriptions.” The young officer determined to secure a copy of these; and finally, after working at the task at intervals for four years, in the face of almost insurmountable difficulties and often at the risk of his life, he completed the work.

The next thing was to find the hidden meaning. Seeing that the inscriptions were in three languages, he at once began to study Sanskrit, Zend, and Pahlavi. He was already familiar with the Persian. With incredible patience he toiled at his task. Finally success crowned his efforts, and five columns of old Persian cuneiform writing, nearly four hundred lines, yielded their hidden meaning. Hereafter the cuneiform inscriptions could be read.

It was found that this ancient inscription had been made by order of Darius I, king of Persia, about 515 B. C. It gave the history of various revolts, and contained other valuable information.

“On the supposition that the other two inscriptions told the same story, scholars began to attempt to read them. Very soon the second tongue, the Median, or Susian, began to yield its secrets. Then the third series of columns, the Babylonian, was forced to give up its hidden treasures. This Behistun group was found to sustain the same relation to the cuneiform languages of Babylonia that the Rosetta Stone sustained to the tongues of ancient Egypt. It was the key to its ancient life, people, and government.”