



Is the Bible a mystery to you
or do you think it is irrelevant?

Or are you a Christian,
but still feel you don't really understand
what the Bible says and what it means?

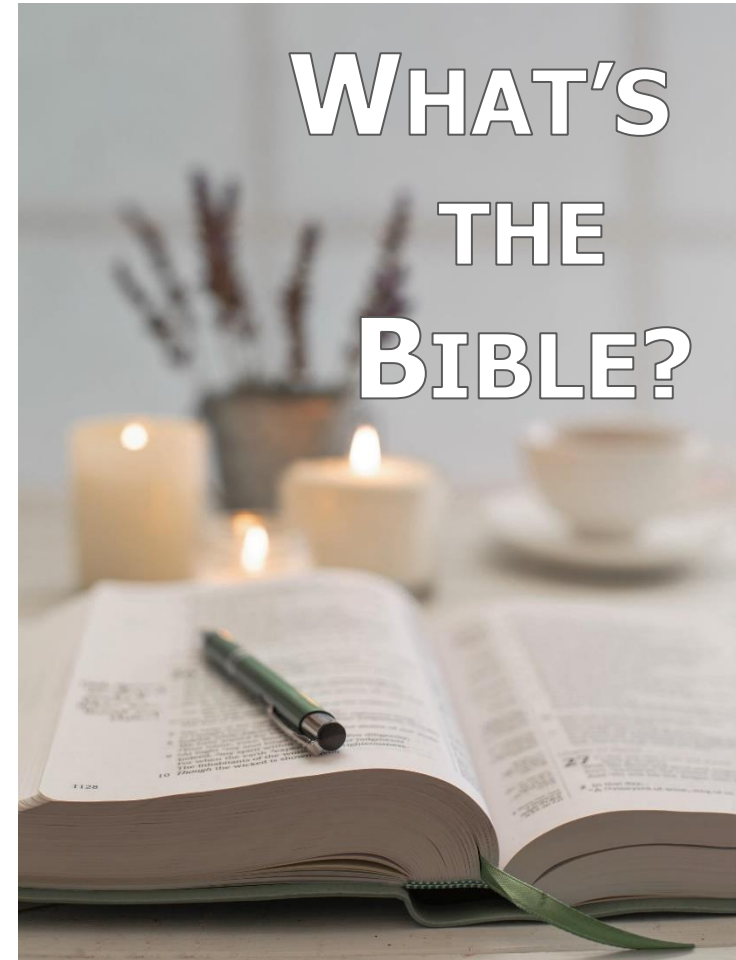
This booklet will help you understand what it is,
why it was written
and what a difference it can make to your life.



Katherine Hilditch has been teaching in local churches for many years. In 2013 she wrote her first booklet and since then has written many more. She created her website to make all the booklets freely available to everyone. They can be read online or printed out. Katherine's threefold purpose is to help people understand more about Jesus and all He has done and won for them, to encourage them to go deeper in their relationship with God and to provide material to help them share their faith with others. To read her story and find all the booklets go to –

Website: LifeinJesus.net

Email: contact@lifeinjesus.net



Katherine Hilditch

LifeinJesus.net

‘What’s the Bible?’
by
Katherine Hilditch

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Unless otherwise indicated
all Scripture quotations are taken from
the World English Bible British Edition (WEBBE)
(Any words in brackets are not in the original text
but are included to help understanding)

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So, How About It?

The Bible is full of promises, excitement, help, guidance, wisdom and hope. God so wants to communicate with you that He's given you His Word, kept pure through the ages, so you can trust it today and find Him in it.

Being Born-Again

When you acknowledge Jesus as God and decide to follow Him, you make Him your Lord. When you accept His sacrifice on the Cross for yourself personally, you make Him your Saviour. You are then born-again and have a new perfect spirit. God becomes your Father and you His child, and you can start to enjoy your personal love relationship with Him.

Romans 10:9 says – *'If you will confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.'* Tell God you are sorry for the wrong things you do, say and think. Choose to believe that Jesus is Lord, that He died for you and is now alive. Accept Him as your Lord and Saviour. Say it with your voice and believe it in your heart.

If you've done that sincerely, you are now born-again and Jesus has come to live in you. Everything you've ever done wrong or ever will do wrong is forgiven, and after this life is over, you'll live in peace and joy with your loving Father God for ever.

As a child of God, you now have a whole new family of brothers and sisters. Tell a trusted Christian that you are now born-again so they can help you in your new life in Jesus. And you have the Bible to help you understand and experience more of God's love for you and all Jesus has done and won for you. It will help you to live your life in the best possible way – His way.

WHAT'S THE BIBLE?

It is 'God's Word' to His people, and this is what many Christians call it. Before Jesus, God's people were the Israelites or Jews, but now, after Jesus, they are Christians. It is also called Scripture. God uses His Word to draw people to Himself - it's the main way in which He speaks. It's also a history book, telling how God led his people through history, but it's much more than that. It is 'His story'. 2 Timothy 3:16 says – *'Every Scripture is God-breathed.'* The Bible is a book written under God's direction and inspired by Him. It is literally 'God's Word'.

Why was the Bible Written?

God is not remote. He's a God of relationship. Right at the beginning, He walked with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. He still wants to communicate with people today and the Bible is the major way in which He does it. It encourages you, builds you up, shows you God's love, teaches you, shows you where you're going wrong, corrects you, and trains you to be more like Jesus. It also reveals Jesus, and how you can become born-again through the Cross and become God's child. (To read about being born-again, go to the end of this booklet.)

How to Find Your Way Round the Bible

The Bible is divided into two main sections – the Old and New Testaments. The Old Testament is the history of the world prior to Jesus. It tells of creation and of God calling and leading a nation, the Israelites or Jews, to be His chosen people. The New Testament tells of the birth of Jesus, His life, death, resurrection and ascension back to heaven. It continues with the story of the

early Christian church and includes a lot of teaching. The Old is divided into 39 books and the New into 27 books, 66 in all. Each book is divided into chapters and each chapter into verses.

To find something in the Bible you look at the reference. This tells you which book it's in, which chapter it's in, and which verse it is. So, to find John 3:16 you first go to the book of John, then find chapter 3, and finally find verse 16.

English Translations

Between 1522 and 1526 William Tyndale translated the New Testament and most of the Old directly from the original Hebrew and Greek manuscripts. He is thought to be the first Englishman to do so, and this was the first English Bible to be mass-produced. In 1604 King James I ordered a new translation of the Bible. It was finished in 1611. It became known as the Authorized Version, or the King James Version, and was quickly accepted as the standard Bible. It is still used today, especially in America.

The next main translation was 250 years later when the English Revised Version was produced in 1885. Quite a lot of translations were made during the 20th century, with the New International Version, which was produced in 1973, probably becoming the most used.

The 39 Books of the Old Testament

Genesis Exodus Leviticus Numbers Deuteronomy	These 5 books were written by Moses between 1440 and 1400 BC (Before Christ). They describe the creation of the world, and God setting a nation aside, the Israelites, as His special people and their journey to Canaan, the land He had chosen for them.
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to use this weapon – *‘throwing down imaginations and every high thing that is exalted against the knowledge of God and bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.’* When you have to deal with negativity, or wrong thoughts come into your mind, cast them down by speaking out God's Word. This is how Jesus defeated the devil when he tempted Him to turn away from God's plan. He spoke out God's Word and eventually the devil gave up. It's speaking God's Word out that will defeat the devil for you too. (For more details on this, see the booklet 'Renewing Your Mind'.)

It's Food!

Jesus said in Matthew 4:4 - *‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.’* As you read the Bible and take it on board in your mind and in your heart, it causes you to grow in your faith and in your understanding of God and in your relationship with Him.

It's Health!

God's Word is powerful enough to bring you health in mind and body as you believe it and stand on its truth. In Proverbs 4:20-22 God says – *‘attend to my words ... Keep them in the centre of your heart. For they are life to those who find them, and health to their whole body.’*

It's Jesus!

In John 1:14 it says – *‘The Word became flesh (Jesus).’* Jesus is God's Word! It means you can read it and know God Himself and Jesus are speaking directly to you and making it come alive.

The Bible's Alive!

Yes, the Bible is alive! This means that God can bring the words alive in your mind and your heart, so they mean something to you beyond understanding, and work for your good. God will help you in every way you let Him. He'll help you understand His Word. Hebrews 4:12 says – *'The word of God is living and active ... and is able to discern the thoughts and intentions of the heart.'* It helps you understand more of God and Jesus and of yourself.

The Bible is Powerful

God spoke the world into being! His words are that powerful. He created everything, except people, by saying "Let there be ..." Psalm 33:9 says – *'He spoke, and it was done.'*

It's Full of Promises

In the Bible God makes many promises to His people and when you're born-again they're true for you. But you have to believe them to experience their benefit. Here are two examples: Romans 8:1 – *'There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus'* And in Matthew 28:20 - Jesus said – *'Behold, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.'* God is completely faithful in everything He says. If it's in His Word, He will honour it. He will never go back on His promises. Believe them and they will be fulfilled in your life.

It's a Weapon!

Ephesians 6:17 tells you to - *'Take ... the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.'* And 2 Corinthians 10:5 tells you how

Joshua Judges	These two books cover the history of the Israelites from 1400 – 1000 BC.
Ruth	It is not known exactly when Ruth was written or the time in which the story takes place.
1 Samuel 2 Samuel 1 Kings 2 Kings 1 Chronicles 2 Chronicles	The lives of 3 Kings of the Israelites - Saul, David and Solomon, from 1000BC to 931 BC, are covered in these six books.
Ezra Nehemiah Esther	The Bible jumps in time to 516 – 400 BC for these three books.
Job	It is not known exactly when the story of Job took place.
Psalms Proverbs Ecclesiastes Song of Solomon	The Bible goes back in time again. Psalms was largely written by King David. Proverbs was mainly written by King Solomon. Ecclesiastes and the Song of Solomon were both written by Solomon.
Isaiah Jeremiah	The Bible then moves to the books of the prophets, starting with these two major ones.
Lamentations	This book tells of the Israelites in exile.
Ezekiel Daniel	These are the two other major prophets
Hosea Joel Amos Obadiah Jonah Micah Nahum Habakkuk Zephaniah Haggai Zechariah Malachi	The Old Testament concludes with the minor prophets, but not in chronological order. God spoke to the people through the prophets. Their books contain God's words along with some details of the prophets' lives. These are not called 'minor' because they were less important, but simply because the books are much shorter than the 'major' ones.

The 27 Books of the New Testament

Matthew Mark Luke John	The first 4 books of the New Testament are called the Gospels. They tell of Jesus's birth, life, death and resurrection.
Acts	Acts tells of the early Christian church.
Romans 1 Corinthians 2 Corinthians Galatians Ephesians Philippians Colossians 1 Thessalonians 2 Thessalonians 1 Timothy 2 Timothy Titus Philemon	All these books are letters written by a Christian called Paul to the churches which are in the title of the letter. For instance, Romans was written by Paul to the church in Rome.
Hebrews	The writer of this letter is unknown, but may be Paul.
James 1 Peter 2 Peter 1 John 2 John 3 John Jude	The titles of these books refer to the person who wrote them. Again, they are letters to Christians.
Revelation	This is a vision of the future given to John.

Is It Accurate?

Scholars have found that the Bible is more reliable than any other ancient documents. More than 5600 copies of the New Testament have survived whole or in part, far more than for any other ancient writing, with the earliest copy written 30 years

after the original, a very short time compared to others. The accuracy of the copies is 99.5%! To doubt the accuracy of the Bible, you have to doubt all other Greek and Roman writings first. You can completely trust the Bible. Its accuracy can be seen in the prophecies about Jesus in the Old Testament and how they were fulfilled in the New, 400 or more years later. The total number of them is in the hundreds. Many are very detailed, but all of them came to pass in every detail. Here are a few examples about Jesus's death in Psalm 22 with their fulfilment in the New Testament.

Psalm 22 verse	Fulfilled in Jesus
v1. My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from helping me, and from the words of my groaning?	Matthew 27:46 Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying ... "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"
v7-8. All those who see me mock me. They insult me with their lips. They shake their heads, saying, "He trusts in the LORD. Let him deliver him. Let him rescue him, since he delights in him."	Luke 23:35 The people stood watching. The rulers with them also scoffed at him, saying, "He saved others. Let him save himself, if this is the Christ of God, his chosen one!"
v16. They have pierced my hands and feet.	Mark 15:25 They crucified him.
v18. They divide my garments amongst them. They cast lots for my clothing.	John 19:23-24 Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments and made four parts, to every soldier a part; and also the coat. Now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout. Then they said to one another, "Let's not tear it, but cast lots for it to decide whose it will be,"