



Putting the Puzzle Pieces Together

First Series: "Setting the Corners"

Lesson #2: Character and Arrangement of the Bible

I. Corner #3: The Character of the Bible

A. The Bible reveals the nature of God

He is a spirit (John 4:24); He is a person with self-consciousness (Ex. 3:14), with intellect (Gen. 18:15), with volition (Gen. 3:15); He is the Creator (Acts 14:15), He exists in eternity (Gen. 21:33, Ps. 90:2), and He is infinite in space (Immense – 1 Kings 8:27)

B. The Bible clarifies how mankind should (but can not, without Christ) respond to God. Ps. 24:3-4: "Who may ascend the hill of the LORD? Who may stand in his holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up his soul to an idol or swear by what is false."

1. Sin separates mankind from God (Isa. 59:1-2)
2. The law outlines our need (Gal 3:23-25, Rom. 3:10-23)
3. Our sin "earns" us condemnation (Rom. 6:23)

C. The Bible declares God's plan for salvation. Rom. 5:8

1. It is found in the finished work of Christ and no one else (Acts 4:12, John 14:6)
2. Salvation is by faith (Eph. 2:8-9, Heb. 11:6)
3. Individually we must appropriate that free gift (Rom. 10:9-13)

D. The Bible is God breathed – it can be trusted!

2 Pet. 1:20-21 "Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit."

Gal. 1:11-12 "I want you to know, brothers, that the gospel I preached is not something that man made up. I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it; rather, I received it by revelation from Jesus Christ."

E. The Bible has a central figure – the Lord Jesus Christ

Jn. 3:16 ""For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."

1. See Christ in the Law.
Proto evangelism: Gen. 3:15
2. See Christ in the Prophets.

- a. Former prophet (books of History, Joshua, Judges, Samuel and Kings)
 - b. Latter prophets (major and minor)
 - c. All were fore shadowing the coming Messiah – see Isa. 9:6 and 53:5-6
3. See Christ in the writings.
- a. Ps. 22 – the suffering Savior

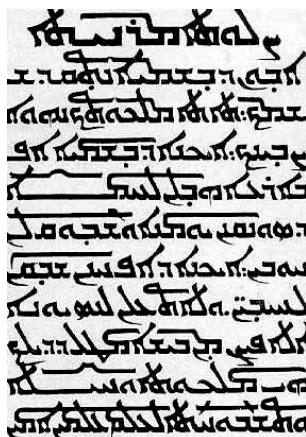
F. The Bible Communicates

1. What we should know
 - a. Records human history (with a spot light on Israel – Deut. 7:6-9)
 - b. Reveals prayers in poetic form
 - c. Delivers sermons as they were preached
 - d. Unfolds prediction
2. How we should live
 - a. In Christ: “In Him we live and move and have our being” Acts 17:28
 - b. By faith: “The righteous shall live by faith” Rom. 1:17
 - c. Expectant: “...live your lives as strangers here in reverent fear” 1 Pet. 1:17

II. Corner Piece #4: The Arrangement of the Bible

- A. The languages of the Bible: Hebrew (most of the Old Testament), Greek (New Testaments) and Aramaic (Dan. 2:4 – 7:28; Ezra 4:8-16; 18 and 7:12-26 and some New Testament terms “Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani” – Mark 15:34, “Abba” – Rom. 8:15)

HEBREW . כל בני האדם נולדו בני תורין ושוויים בערכם ובזכויותיהם.
 כולם חוננו בתבונה ובמצפון, לפיכך חובה עליהם לנהוג
 איש ברעהו ברוח של אחוה.



ARAMAIC

¹ Βίβλος γενέσεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ υἱοῦ Δαυὶδ υἱοῦ Ἀβραάμ.

GREEK

B. "Scripto Continua"

1. The Bible was originally written on papyrus (the inner skin of a papyrus reed, beaten, dried with crisscross layers and glued together for strength. Used from about 3100 BC until 100 AD), some clay tablets (cone shaped or flat) were also used as far back as 3000 BC. Parchment made of sheep or goat skin became popular around 200-100 BC.
2. Because parchment was not readily available, the earliest manuscripts of the Bible were written "scripto continua" or without any space between words or sentences.

C. Chapters of the Bible

1. The original manuscripts did not contain any chapter or verse divisions.
2. There were some paragraph divisions using the Hebrew alphabet (Isaiah). There were also some texts outlined in acrostic structure such as Ps. 119 and the Book of Lamentations.
3. Before the Babylonian captivity, the Books of the Law were divided into a 3 year reading cycle with 154 sections.
4. By the council of Nicea (325 AD), the New Testament has been divided into paragraphs as well.
5. A Paris Theology Professor, Stephen Langton, was the first to put the Bible into Chapters (1205 AD). In 1240 AD Hugo de Sancto Caro published the first Latin Bible with Chapter Divisions that we still use today.

D. Verses of the Bible

1. In the oldest (Masoretic) Hebrew manuscripts the Old Testament was divided into verses. The coding of a verse could be marked by a double point (:) and the number of verses would be noted at the end of each section. (This guarded the transmission of the text and added in memorization.)
2. Around 1440, Rabbi Isaac Nathan is credited with numbering the verses in essentially the same places we currently see in our Bibles.

"It may be worthwhile to note that the verse numbers in the Bibles are at times off by one or more verses from English verse numbers, because Christian Bible do not count introductory verses (for example the Hebrew Bible Ps. 20:2 is the same verse as Christian Bible Ps. 20:1)." (www.helpmewithbiblestudy.org)
3. In 1551, Robert Estienne (also known as Robert Stephanus) created a numbering system for the Greek New Testament. History says that he made the verse divisions on horse back as he was fleeing persecution in France. He used Langton's chapter division and in 1555 presented a Latin Bible with both divisions noted.
4. Estienne's work was used for the first English Bible, the Geneva New Testament of 1557. These divisions gained acceptance and are still used today.

E. Difficulties with the chapter and verse division.

Remember they are not inspired!

Examples: Genesis 2 and Acts 8

F. Approximation of the divisions in the Bible

	Old Testament	New Testament	Bible
Number of words	647,000	198,000	845,000
Number of verses	22,485	7,957	30,442
Number of chapters	929	260	1189
Number of books	39	27	66

III. So, what?

Understanding the character and arrangement of the Bible should not be an academic exercise. Knowing God's Word and what it means should produce a tangible result:

Ps. 119:11 "I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you."

Discussion Questions:

1. Why do you think the Bible can be trusted?
2. Give some examples from your reading and how Christ is foreshadowed in the Old Testament?
3. The Barna Group says that 90% of American homes have a Bible, but only 31% read it. Why do you think that is?