

## Homework for Lesson 20: The Bible not just a history book

Read: 2 Timothy 3:16-17

### **UMC Confession of Faith on the Bible:**

**This is the official statement of what we as Methodists believe about the Bible. Read it for yourself.**

*We believe the Holy Bible, Old and New Testaments, reveals the Word of God so far as it is necessary for our salvation. It is to be received through the Holy Spirit as the true rule and guide for faith and practice. Whatever is not revealed in or established by the Holy Scriptures is not to be made an article of faith nor is it to be taught as essential to salvation.*

### History of the Bible

For each of the four questions below rephrase our answer in your own words in the space provided.

#### 1. Where did the Bible come from?

What we call the Bible began as an oral tradition handed down from generation from generation. These stories were memorized and held as sacred. As communication advanced, the stories were written down and combined into books. These stories detail the experiences of God's people, the Israelites and the early Church, and the struggles they had trying to follow God. The Old Testament is filled with celebrations, exile and even songs that share humanity's ups and downs with God. During Jesus' time, God's people had the Old Testament or the Hebrew Bible. Priests were expected to have the whole of the Scriptures memorized! It was common to quote scripture as Jesus does many times in the Gospels.

## 2. What is the Torah?

The Torah or Pentateuch (5 scrolls or books) are the first 5 books in the Old Testament. These books are the foundational narrative of the Jewish faith. The stories in the Torah begin with the creation story and the early beginnings of the Jewish people. It details how they ended up in Egypt, and how they were set free. The Torah ends with the death of Moses right before the people of Israel reach the Promised Land. The word *Torah* means "Teachings" or "Guides." Most of what is found in the Books of Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy are early laws that created the identity of what would be the Jewish nation.

## 3. What is the New Testament?

The New Testament is made up of the four Gospels telling four distinct stories of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It also includes the accounts of the early church and the Apostles ministry in the Book of Acts. The New Testament includes Letters, written by the Apostle Paul and many others, sent to some of the earliest churches. It concludes with The Book of Revelation, a book of apocalyptic literature with the intent of being prophetic.

#### 4. What is Canon?

Canon are the collection of books our Church fathers and scholars agreed were divinely inspired by God. The Canon began about 200 hundred years before Jesus' life when the Torah was translated into Greek, a common language in the western world. The New Testament canon was added about 400 years after Jesus' resurrection, at the 3rd Synod or Council of Carthage (397A.D.) 27 books were included to make up the New Testament as we know it today. It wasn't until more that 1200 years later did the Roman Catholic church declare this canonization as doctrine at the Council of Trent (1545-1563A.D.).