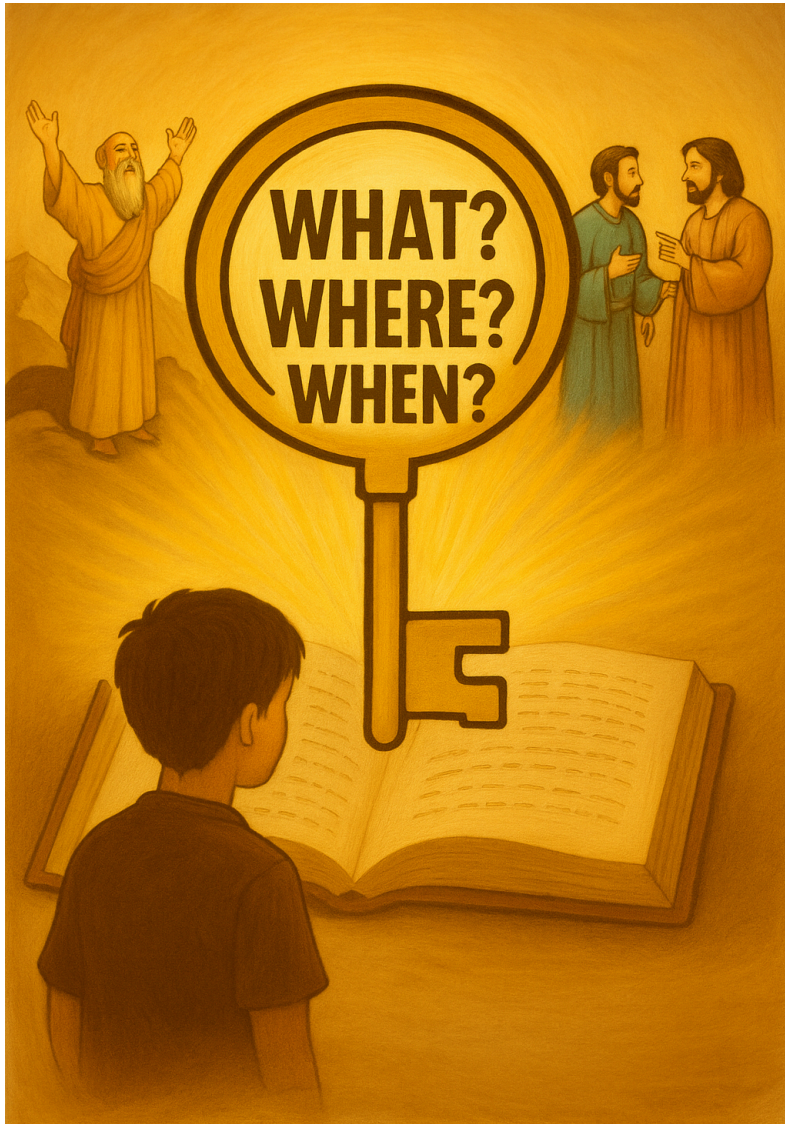




Lesson 1

What? Where? When? — Your Key to the Bible

1. Introduction

The Bible is not just a collection of ancient writings. It is the living Word of God, spoken to every generation—including ours. But to hear God's voice, we must do more than simply read; we must dig deeper.

Jesus Christ said: *"You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me"* (John 5:39). This is not an invitation to read casually, but to seek God personally through careful study.

Throughout history, God has spoken through His Word. The Bible is not a list of rules—it is a

map that leads us to the Source of life: Christ Himself. But to read this map correctly, we need to ask the right questions.

This lesson will help you:

- discover the depth of the text,
- recognize God's plan,
- and apply biblical truth wisely and faithfully in your life.

Goal of the Lesson

We want to show that studying the Bible is not only for theologians—it is a path for every believer.

By the end of this lesson, students should:

- understand why God calls us to study the Scriptures, not just read them;
- master the principle of three questions—*What? Where? When?*—to better understand any Bible text;
- learn to see deep meaning even in short biblical phrases;
- be inspired to study God’s Word personally for spiritual growth.

Biblical Context

- John 5:39 — Jesus spoke to religious leaders who knew Scripture by heart but failed to recognize Him as the Messiah. This shows that memorizing text without faith and understanding God’s plan can blind us. Christ revealed: the Scriptures point to Him, and in Him is eternal life.
- Genesis 1:1 — The opening verse of the Bible introduces not just creation but also the key to understanding time, place, and God’s action. It reminds us: God is the Beginning of all things, and history itself is His plan of salvation.

Genesis 1:1 also reflects three dimensions of our reality:

- “*In the beginning*” → When? (time)
 - “*God created the heavens*” → Where? (space)
 - “*and the earth*” → What? (matter, event, humanity)
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② God Calls Us to Study the Scriptures (John 5:39)

"You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me."

Through these words, Christ teaches:

- The Bible is not just rules—it reveals the Person of Jesus Christ, the Savior.
- Eternal life is not found in empty rituals but through truth revealed in God's Word.
- Faith must be conscious, deep, and reasonable—not shallow or blind.

By saying "search," the Lord invites us to ask the three key questions: *What? Where? When?* These questions are not only essential in studying Scripture but also in science and even criminal investigation.

👉 Why does this matter?

- God commands us to study—not as an option, but as our duty.
- Personal study helps us separate truth from lies, light from darkness, God's will from human traditions.
- Study strengthens our faith, making it firm and resistant to doubt.

③ Three Key Questions in Bible Study

The Bible is not a myth or legend. Its stories happened in real places with real people. Each account has a city, a land, and a time. That's why studying the Bible also means studying history.

"For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty." (2 Peter 1:16)

To understand God's Word and apply it to life, always ask:

✅ What?

- What happened? What event or action is described?
- Purpose: Helps identify the main message and God's plan.
- Example: What happened at Mount Sinai? God gave His law so His people could live by His commandments.

✓ Where?

- Where did it take place? What does the location mean?
- Purpose: Place explains culture, geography, and spiritual context.
- Example: Where did Jesus perform miracles? In Galilee, Samaria, Judea—each region had its own challenges.

✓ When?

- When did it happen? What was the historical background?
 - Purpose: Understanding time shows how God acted in history and proves His truths are timeless.
 - Example: When was Abraham called? During a time of pagan darkness—God began a new spiritual chapter through him.
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☀ Example from Genesis 1:1

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."

- *"In the beginning"* → When? God acted in a specific moment, creating time itself.
 - *"The heavens"* → Where? God created space, the stage for His creation.
 - *"The earth"* → What? The material world, where humanity would encounter God's plan of salvation.
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📌 Why This Is the Foundation of Bible Study

Whenever you open a Bible story—about Moses, David, Jesus, or the apostles—asking *What? Where? When?* helps you:

- understand the text in its real context;
 - connect ancient events to today's reality;
 - see God's plan in every detail and apply it to life.
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Applying This Principle

When you read a passage, ask:

- 👉 When did this happen? (During the kings, prophets, Jesus, or early church?)
- 👉 Where did it happen? (Check the map—why did God act there?)
- 👉 What happened? (Identify the main lesson, promise, or warning.)

Example: David and Goliath

- *When?* — In the time of King Saul, during Israel's war with the Philistines.
 - *Where?* — Valley of Elah, a key battlefield.
 - *What?* — God's power brought victory through humble David.
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Conclusion

📌 God gave us His Word not for shallow reading, but for deep study and faithful living.
📌 The principle of *What? Where? When?* is the key to understanding Scripture and building strong faith.

Practical Applications

1. Study, don't just read
Many read the Bible with their eyes but not their hearts.
 Turn reading into study—ask questions, connect it to your life.
2. Salvation comes through truth
Jesus said the Scriptures testify of Him.
 Look not only for facts, but for Christ in every passage.

3. Don't fear questions
Asking *What? Where? When?* is not doubt—it's discovery.
☒ Use your God-given mind to search and find truth.
4. Context protects from mistakes
Without historical or spiritual context, we risk misunderstanding.
☒ See the full picture and avoid deception.
5. God's Word is always relevant
Even ancient stories speak into today's struggles.
☒ Ask: What does this teach me here and now?
6. Start simple
Three questions are easy but powerful.
☒ Use them each time you read—and watch your growth.
7. Strengthen faith with knowledge
Study makes faith mature and unshakable.
☒ Keep diving deeper to stand firm in trials.
8. Recognize God's hand in history
Biblical events reveal His plan of salvation.
☒ Learn to see His hand not only in Scripture but in your life.
9. Apply immediately
Every revelation requires a response—faith, obedience, or repentance.
☒ Ask after reading: What must I change today?
10. Share with others
True knowledge inspires others.
☒ Tell a friend how these questions helped you understand the Bible better.

 Self-Check

1. What does it mean to “search the Scriptures”?
☒ To study deeply in order to know the truth and Christ.

2. What three questions help us understand any Bible text?
☒ What? Where? When?
3. Why is it important to know *where* events took place?
☒ To understand the historical, cultural, and spiritual context.
4. What happens if we read the Bible without context?
☒ We risk misunderstanding God's plan.
5. Which verse contains all three questions—What? Where? When?
☒ Genesis 1:1 — *"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."*

Homework

Choose a Bible story (e.g., Jesus and Zacchaeus, the Exodus, or the healing of the blind man). Write a short study using the three questions:

- What happened?
- Where did it take place?
- When did it happen?