

BIBLE CORRESPONDENCE FELLOWSHIP

UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLE



LESSON 1

Memory Verse: 2 TIMOTHY 3:16,17

Memorization is an important part of Bible study. Please memorize the above verses in conjunction with this lesson. You will be asked to write them out from memory at the conclusion of the lesson.

WHAT IS THE BIBLE? PART 1: THE OLD TESTAMENT

What is the Bible? Most simply, it is the Word of God to mankind. In the Bible, God explains Himself to us and teaches us about life, death and eternity. Those who believe the Bible and live by it, find peace and contentment; those who ignore it, struggle and wander.

Voltaire was a famous French philosopher and an atheist. He died in 1778. Before his death he said that the Bible

and the Christian faith would not be believed in 100 years. On the 100th anniversary of his statement, the Geneva Bible Society purchased Voltaire's printing press and house and started to print Bibles there. Two hundred six years after Voltaire, the President of the United States declared the year 1983 "the year of the Bible."

"The Bible has endured because it has answers to our needs. Millions of people are looking for a reliable voice of authority. They have found that they cannot trust treaties

between nations, they cannot trust the statements of scientists, and even the great religious leaders are often wrong. The Bible--the Word of God--is the only real authority we have. Proven across the years, the Bible sheds light on human nature, world problems and human suffering. But beyond that it clearly reveals the way to God."

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In this series of lessons, we will consider what the Bible contains, what the study of the Bible will accomplish in our lives, and several important principles to help us understand the Bible.

The Bible is a history book, but a very special one in that it is written by God Himself. Within the pages of scripture are the events of human history, from creation and ancient times through the age in which we live, and out into the future... all the way to eternity.

CREATION

1. (Gen. 1-2) Please read. _____(check)
2. (Gen. 1:3-2:3) For each day of creation, give the activity of God on that day.

Day 1 _____

Day 2 _____

Day 3 _____

Day 4 _____

Day 5 _____

Day 6 _____

Day 7 _____

3. (Gen. 2:18-24) Genesis chapter 1 gives the “big picture,” i.e., tells the whole story of creation in broad strokes. Gen. 2 puts a spotlight on certain parts of the creation event. Read Genesis 2:18-24 and answer the following questions:

(vs. 18) What problem did God see, and what did He determine to do about it? _____

(vs. 21,22) Describe the way woman was created. _____

THE SIN OF ADAM AND EVE

4. (Gen. 3) Please read. _____(check)

5. (Gen. 2:16,17) What command had God given to Adam? _____

6. (Gen. 3:4,5) What lie did the serpent tell Eve? _____

The suffering which now exists in the world is a result of the sin of Adam and Eve. Scripture holds us all guilty of this sin, see Romans 5:12. The explanation for this is that Adam was the head of the human race. As his descendants we were literally in him when he sinned. See Hebrews 7:9-10 and compare with Genesis 14:1-20.

7. (Gen. 3:14- 19) List several parts of the curse which God brought against creation

(vv 14-15) Against the serpent _____

(vv. 16) The woman _____

(vs. 17-19) Adam _____

Note: Our world today is suffering and is called by the Apostle Paul “a groaning creation” (Rom. 8:22) because of the entrance of sin and the resulting curse.

In Genesis 3:21 we see that God provided Adam and Eve with coats of skins to cover their nakedness. This shedding of animal blood became a way by which man could have, if he chose, a relationship with God. The story of Cain and Able in Genesis chapter 4 shows that some, like Abel, would obey God, while others, like Cain, would rebel.

8. (Gen. 4) Please read. _____(check)

THE GREAT FLOOD

9. (Gen. Ch. 6,7 and 8) Please read. _____(check)

10. (Gen. 6:5-7) Why was God sorry that He had made man, and what did He determine to do? _____

- 11.c (Gen. 6:14-16) A cubit is equal to 18”. On a separate piece of paper, sketch your Idea of what the ark might have looked like.

NOTE: Based on the great size of the ark, it has been calculated that this vessel could easily have carried the number of animals required, especially if some specimens were not full-grown.

12. (Gen. Ch. 9,10) Please read. _____(check)

13. (Gen. 8:21) What promise did God make after the flood? _____

(Gen. 9:11-13) What sign did He give of this promise? _____

14. (Gen. 9:1-6) What commands did God give to Noah?

(Gen. 9:1) _____

(Gen. 9:3-4) _____

(Gen. 9:5b-6) _____

THE TOWER OF BABEL

15. (Gen. Ch. 11) Please read. ____ (check)
16. (Gen. 11:1-4) God's command to Noah had been to multiply and fill the earth (Gen. 9:1). What did man do instead?

17. (Gen. 11:8,9) What judgment did God bring _____

Genesis 1-11 constitutes one major division of the Bible. This section overviews ancient history, from creation to about the year 2000 BC.. Many events are mentioned in very little space. God has given us the highlights in order that we might understand Him, ourselves and our world. In this section God was dealing with the whole world. While man, consistently demonstrated, his sinful nature and his inability to obey God.

Genesis 12 begins a new section of the Bible. With the call of Abram around 2000 BC, God began to form one special nation. He will bless this nation greatly and He will reveal many new things to them. They will be His chosen people. God will first bless them and then through them, He will bless the entire world. This people is the nation of Israel.

THE CALL OF ABRAHAM

18. (Gen. 12) ____ (check), (Gen. 15) ____ (check), (Gen. 17) ____ (check), Please read.
19. (Gen. 12:1-3) List any three of the promises God made to Abraham: 1) _____
2) _____ 3) _____
20. (Gen. 15) How does God describe the number of Abram's descendants? (v. 5) _____
(v. 6) What was Abrams' response to God's promise of many descendants? _____

(v. 18) Give the boundaries of the land promised to Abram. _____

THE NATION OF ISRAEL IS FORMED

The promises of God to Abraham were passed to his descendants. Abraham's son, Isaac, inherited the promises (called the "Abrahamic Covenant"). When Isaac died, his son, Jacob, inherited the Covenant.

21. (Gen. 28:10-17) Please read. _____ (Check)

(vs. 11,12) What did Jacob see in his dream? _____

(vs. 13-15) What promise did God make to Jacob? _____

22. (Gen. 32:22-28) Please read. _____ (check) What did Jacob's name become? _____

NOTE: The nation of Israel did not exist until this moment. Jacob became Israel. He had 12 sons. Ten of those sons and two of his grandsons became the 12 tribes of the nation of Israel. Thus, a nation was born.

THE OLD TESTAMENT: THE STORY OF ISRAEL

Most of the Old Testament records the history of Israel, from the call of Abraham to about 400 BC. This story can be expressed very simply; God chose out a nation and blessed them greatly. At times, they were obedient and God used them mightily. In the overall analysis, however the nation failed God through disobedience and was judged.

23. (Exodus 19:5,6) What did God promise Israel if they would obey Him? _____

24. (Deut. 28:1-68) Please read. (vs. 1-14) _____ (check), (vs. 15-68) _____ (check)

This chapter helps us to understand the entire Old Testament. Here, Israel was promised blessing for obedience, or a curse if she disobeyed. The Old Testament records that Israel disobeyed and came under the curses prescribed in the Law.

The history of Old Testament Israel draws to a close with the book of Malachi. The prophet Malachi, whose name means "my messenger," wrote around 425 BC. He calls attention to the sins of the people, predicts judgment and also gives a message of hope: the Messiah, who will purify the nation and return it to glory, is coming.

25. (Malachi Ch. 3,4) Please read. _____ (check)

26. (Malachi 3:1) This verse speaks of a messenger who will come to prepare the way. After this messenger, who will come? _____ This is one of many references to the Messiah

in the Old Testament, the Anointed One who will save Israel from sin and restore her to world supremacy.

27. (Isaiah 9:6,7) List any three names given to the Messiah. 1) _____
2) _____ 3) _____

28. (Isaiah 11:6-8) In your own words what will some of the conditions be like on earth when the Messiah rules? _____

29. (Isaiah 53:1-12) Please read. _____ (check)
This is a prophetic portion of scripture because when Isaiah wrote it, he was speaking of a future event (vs. 4-6).

According to verse 5, why was the One spoken, of to be wounded (pierced-NIV)? _____
_____ Stricken (Crushed-NIV)? _____
(vs. 6) What would God lay on Him? _____

30. (1 Pet. 2:24-25) What did Christ do on the cross? (v. 24) _____

31. (1 Cor. 15:3,4) Why, according to Paul, was Christ crucified? _____

The Old Testament is the story of man's failure to obey God because of his sinful nature. There are some bright spots and there are godly men and women in the Old Testament; but in the overall picture, we see a dismal record of sin, failure and judgment. Through the gloom in the Old Testament, however, shines a ray of hope in the many prophecies of a coming Messiah. This one would bear our sins, and through Him we would find forgiveness and eternal life.

The New Testament is the story of the coming of this Messiah and the forgiveness and life which He brings. The next lesson will cover the New Testament and conclude this "bird's-eye view" of the Bible.

32. (2 Tim. 3:16,17) Please write out memory verses for this lesson.

Use the space below for any questions or comments:

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