

# Know Your Bible

## Correspondence Course

### Lesson 1

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As Edited by Ashley Goosen for use with the NASB

## I. UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLE

Many believe that the Bible cannot be understood, but God has given us the Bible for this very purpose. *"So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is."* (Ephesians 5:17). Even children can understand something of God's Word: *"and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus."* (2 Timothy 3:15).

The fact that you have enrolled in this course is evidence of your desire to know more about the Bible. We commend you for such a desire and encourage you to complete all six lessons. Your reward will be a greater knowledge of God's will. Since it is the Bible that will judge us in the last day, we need to know as much of it as we can. (John 12:48; Romans 2:16).

## II. BECOMING ACQUAINTED WITH THE BIBLE

Let us begin our study in a simple way by noticing the two major parts of our Bible. They are: 1) The Old Testament, 2) The New Testament. A consideration of these divisions and the differences that exist between them will be a primary aim in this first lesson. The Bible consists of 66 books: 39 of these are found in the Old Testament and 27 in the New Testament. The books of the Old Testament may be divided into four parts:

**Law - 5 Books    History - 12 Books    Poetry (Wisdom Literature) - 5 Books    Prophets - 17 Books.**

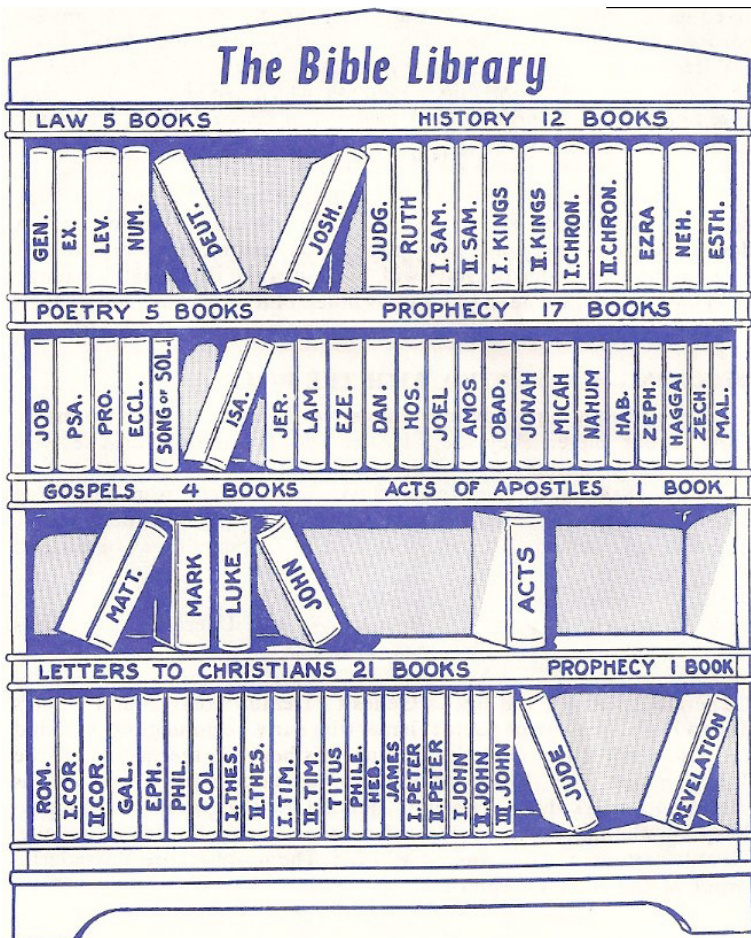
Generally speaking, the Books Genesis - Deuteronomy contain God's **law** to His old covenant people, Israel (the early beginnings of mankind are also recorded in Genesis). Joshua - Esther tells the **history** of the Jewish nation. Job - Song of Solomon contain inspired instructions relative to man's daily problems: hence, **wisdom literature**. Isaiah - Malachi contain **prophecies** of the future - regarding the Jewish people, Gentile nations, and the coming Messiah. The prophets are a wonderful proof of the Bible's inspiration!

The 27 books of the New Testament may also be divided into four parts:

**Biography - 4 Books    History - 1 Book    Letters - 21 Books  
Prophecy - 1 Book.**

Matthew - John are four gospels telling of Christ's life, His mission and sufferings. These inspired **biographies** tell us just about everything we know concerning Jesus' life and teachings. Acts is the **history** of the early church. This book tells us how people become Christians and how the church of Christ was begun, organized and spread. Romans - Jude are **letters** to Christians giving instructions on how to live and serve God.

Revelation, the New Testament book of **prophecy**, tells of events which John said "must shortly come to pass." In Revelation, we see the triumph of God's people over every evil, even Satan himself!





## QUESTIONS ON SECTION 1

### YES or NO

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Does God want us to understand the Bible?
2. \_\_\_\_\_ Can man understand the Bible?
3. \_\_\_\_\_ The New Testament has more books than the Old Testament.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ The New Testament contains the history of the Jewish nation.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ We read of the life of Jesus in the New Testament.

### FILL IN THE BLANKS

1. The \_\_\_\_\_ shall judge us in the last day.
2. There are two major parts to our Bible. They are the \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ and the \_\_\_\_\_.
3. There are \_\_\_\_\_ books in the Bible; \_\_\_\_\_ books in the Old Testament and \_\_\_\_\_ books in the New Testament.
4. The first five books of the Old Testament may be called books of \_\_\_\_\_.
5. The book of Genesis deals with the \_\_\_\_\_ of mankind.
6. \_\_\_\_\_ through \_\_\_\_\_ are the 12 books of history in the Old Testament.
7. Job - Song of Solomon are called \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_.
8. There are \_\_\_\_\_ books of prophecy in the Old Testament.
9. The \_\_\_\_\_ are a wonderful proof of the Bible's inspiration.
10. The life of Christ may be found in \_\_\_\_\_ books of our New Testament.
11. The history of the early church may be found in the book of \_\_\_\_\_.
12. Twenty-one letters were written to \_\_\_\_\_, telling them how to live.
13. The book of \_\_\_\_\_ shows the triumph of God's people over evil.

## II. THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE OLD AND THE NEW TESTAMENTS

"When He said: *"A New Covenant, He has made the first obsolete."*  
*Hebrews 8:13.*

We have thus far noticed that our Bible consists of an Old and a New Testament. Note also that the Old Testament law was given to the Jews, whereas the New Testament commands were given to all nations.

Another important difference to be noted is that the New Testament succeeded the Old Testament. God's people today are not under the Old Testament but the New. Let us be clearly understood:

God has given us the entire Bible, both Testaments, but the first He intended to be temporary, the second permanent. As an example, consider the man with a wife and child who decides to make a will. He leaves all his estate to them. As the years go by several other children are born into the family. Being a good father, he has planned to provide for these children as well. So, he writes a new will, changing it in some respects, and includes benefits for all of his family. Finally, he dies.

Which will do you think would come into effect? The last one. Even so, God has had two wills; one for part of his children, a later one for all of his family. When Christ came to earth the first will was still in effect. He came to bring a better will, the New Testament. When he died on the cross the first one was taken out of the way that the second will might come into force. Notice that this is exactly what the Book of Hebrews teaches us in chapter 9:15-17 (please read).

Now let us consider some other scriptures that deal with the same subject.

### **HEBREWS 8:6-13**

In this passage, we are told that Christ had obtained a more excellent ministry than the previous Levitical priesthood, inasmuch as He was bringing a better covenant, based on better promises. God found fault with the first covenant and decided to make a new one with Israel and Judah. This new covenant would be different from the former. It would be a spiritual law, placed in the minds of the people, it would be personal, for all would know the Lord; it would be merciful, as God would remember their sins no more. Inasmuch as a new covenant was coming into being, the old covenant was growing old, becoming obsolete, and ready to disappear.

## OLD TESTAMENT

1. Mediator - Moses
2. Made nothing perfect - Hebrews 7:19
3. God found fault
4. Written on tables of stone - 2 Corinthians 3:7
5. Had to be taught: "**know the Lord,**"
6. No actual forgiveness.
7. Ready to vanish away.

## NEW TESTAMENT

1. Mediator - Christ
2. Better covenant: Better promises - Hebrews 8:6
3. Faultless.
4. Written in their hearts.
5. All would know God
6. Forgiveness of sins.
7. Abiding

## **ROMANS 7:4**

In this passage we are again taught that God's people are no longer under the law of Moses. This the apostle Paul does, by mentioning the well-known laws of marriage. How many husbands may a wife have, according to the Bible?

Clearly, "only one." If her husband dies. only then may she be found guiltless in marrying another. In verse four the application is then made:

"Therefore, my brethren, you also were made to die to the Law through the body of Christ,"

What could be clearer than Paul's illustration? One can no more be "married" to the law of Moses and to Christ at the same time. than to two husbands at the same time. Such would be spiritual adultery! Christians are dead to Moses and the law; they are "married" to Christ who died for them.

### Marriage

1. Wife bound to husband "while he is living".
2. At death - "she is free from the law concerning her husband.
3. May marry another.
4. If married to two - an "adulteress."

### Spiritual Relationship

1. God's people once married to the Law.
2. Loosed from the law by Christ's death.
3. Now married to Christ.
4. If trying to be married to both - "adultery."

The student may also wish to read the following passages:

2 Corinthians 3; Colossians 2:13-17.

## QUESTIONS ON SECTION II.

### TRUE OR FALSE (Circle correct answer)

1. T F God has had two Testaments.
2. T F Christ is the mediator of the New Testament.
3. T F The New Testament came into force after Christ's death.
4. T F The first covenant was faultless.
5. T F Under the new covenant sins would be remembered no more.
6. T F Under the old covenant people had to be taught to "know the Lord."
7. T F "When He said, a new covenant, he has made the first obsolete."
8. T F It is lawful for a woman to be married to two husbands at the same time.
9. T F Christians have become dead to the law.
10. T F Christians are married to Christ.

### FILL IN THE CORRECT WORDS

1. "For where a \_\_\_\_\_ is, there must also of necessity be the \_\_\_\_\_ of the testator."
2. The \_\_\_\_\_ followed the Old Testament.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ is the mediator of the New Testament.
4. The New Covenant is a covenant, established upon \_\_\_\_\_ promises.
5. Concerning the new covenant God said, "I will put my laws into their \_\_\_\_\_ and write them in their \_\_\_\_\_"
6. A woman, married to another man while her husband yet lives, is called an \_\_\_\_\_.
7. Therefore, my brethren, you also were made to \_\_\_\_\_ to the \_\_\_\_\_ through the body of \_\_\_\_\_, that you might be \_\_\_\_\_ to another, to Him who was \_\_\_\_\_ from the dead, that we might bear \_\_\_\_\_ for God.

It is our pleasure to become acquainted with you through this course. We hope that we can serve you and become even better acquainted as time goes along.

Our only purpose in these lessons is to help the student gain a better understanding of God's word and to encourage obedience to the Gospel.

We ask you to determine now to complete each lesson of the course. Call on us if we can help you.



### III. THE PURPOSE OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

Only one question presents itself to us now: Since the law has been abolished, is there any value in studying the Old Testament? Yes. In Romans 15:4 we read, *"For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope"*.

Again, I Corinthians 10:11 says, *"Now these things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come."* As we read of Noah, Abraham and David let us take notice of their faithful lives and how God rewarded them. As we read of Cain, Esau and Jezebel let us note their infidelity and God's punishment for their sins. Though God's laws are different for us today, His attitude toward obedience and disobedience remains the same.

#### CONCLUSIONS FROM OUR FIRST LESSON

Christians live under the New Testament of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Nothing should be practiced in religion today that was not practiced by the early church.

A failure to distinguish between the two covenants has caused much religious division and the teaching of many "unauthorized" practices. Many denominations are doing what they ought not and leaving undone what the Lord has said they ought to do.

#### QUESTIONS ON SECTION III

##### YES or NO

1. \_\_\_\_ Has the Law of Moses been taken away?
2. \_\_\_\_ Can we learn anything from things written in earlier times?
3. \_\_\_\_ Examples of wickedness in the Old Testament should serve as warnings to Christians.
4. \_\_\_\_ Are Old Testament worship and New Testament worship identical in practice?
5. \_\_\_\_ Must Christians practice only those things authorized in the New Testament?

##### FILL IN THE BLANKS

1. A failure to distinguish between the two \_\_\_\_\_ has caused, much religious \_\_\_\_\_ and the teaching of many \_\_\_\_\_ practices.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ should be practiced in religion today that was not practiced by the \_\_\_\_\_.

### **A QUESTION FOR DILIGENT STUDENTS:**

In view of our present study this question may present itself, "Have the Ten Commandments also been replaced by New Testament Laws?" To help the student find the correct answer we direct your answer to the words of Jesus recorded in Matthew 5. There in verses 21 and 27 we find the sixth and seventh commandments introduced by these words, "*You have heard that the ancients were told,*" (see also vss. 31, 33, 38, 43). Christ then follows by saying, "*But I say to you.*"

Question?

Did Christ present a new moral code or simply repeat the old Ten Commandment code? (put an X in correct block)

new code

same code

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