

12. T F Without faith we can still be pleasing to God. Hebrews 11:6.
13. T F I must repent of sins before I can be saved. Acts 17:30,31
14. T F Baptism is necessary for the remission of sins. Acts 2:38; 22:16
15. T F We are allowed to think beyond what is written. 1 Corinthians 4:6; 2 John 9

Part D: Look up the following verses and match them with their main thoughts.

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|----------------------|---|
| 1. 2 Timothy 3:16,17 | a. Men spoke as moved by the Holy Spirit. |
| 2. 2 Peter 1:20 | b. Scriptures are able |
| 3. Galatians 3:27 | to make us complete. |
| 4. Romans 6:23 | c. God promised eternal life. |
| 5. Titus 1:2 | d. Put on Christ in baptism. |
| | e. Wages of sin is death. |

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Know The Truth



Correspondence Course

Mike Hughes

Lesson #1

Overview And Theme Of The Bible

Know The Truth Correspondence Course Lesson #1

Overview And Theme Of The Bible

Overview of the Bible

The word "Bible" means "Book." The Bible is a collection of 66 books. At least 40 men took part in writing of it over a period of about 1600 years. The Old Testament was written mainly in the Hebrew language, with parts of Daniel in Aramaic. The New Testament was written in the common Greek language of the time. By the first century A.D. when Christ lived, the Old Testament had already been compiled, and the same books that are accepted as our Old Testament today were accepted then as Scripture. The New Testament of course was being written and compiled during the first century.

The Bible is a remarkable Book. From a human standpoint, there is much to be amazed at in the writing and compilation of the Bible. But there is another factor involved. The Bible claims to be the word of God, not just a collection of books written by men. The Bible did not originate with man at all. In fact, God used men by inspiring them by His Holy Spirit to write the things that He wanted us to know (2 Peter 1:20,21; I Corinthians 2:9-16). Thus, God is the author of the Bible, and it was by His oversight and direction that we now have the collection of 66 books that make up the Bible. There is much evidence available to us that should convince us that the Bible is the word of God and that it is trustworthy. The harmony of Scripture, prophecy, and its survival are but a few irrefutable evidences that the Bible is really what it claims to be, the word of God.

The Bible is the complete revelation of God. It is profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction, instruction in righteousness, and making one complete for every good work (2 Timothy 3:16,17). The Bible is

the objective standard by which we will be judged (John 12:48). Thus, all of our appeals must be from the Bible, for this is the only way that we can know that we are pleasing to God; and it is the only way that we can have the unity that God desires (I Corinthians 1:10-13; Ephesians 4:1-6). We must not think beyond the Scriptures, nor transgress the doctrine of Christ (2 John 9; I Corinthians 4:6). Everything that we teach, believe, and practice must be found in God's inspired word. This is the first major premise upon which we will build all of our lessons in this series. Otherwise, we will be groping in man's insufficiencies (Proverbs 14:12; Jeremiah 10:23).

Theme of the Bible

Even though the Bible is made up of 66 books, it is not a disjointed collection of myths and fables. It is true and accurate. Furthermore, it has a flow to it, a beginning and an end, and it all goes together as one whole story. For instances, the book of Exodus picks right up where Genesis left off, Leviticus picks up where Exodus left off, and Numbers goes from there. Likewise, the New Testament books pick up and carry the same theme that the Old Testament does. In fact, one cannot fully grasp the New Testament without some understanding of the Old. This just points out the fact that the Bible is complete and whole, and needs to be taken as a unit. We cannot pick and choose which books we like best and disregard the rest. They are all vitally important to our understanding of the will of God.

The Bible has a purpose. It is communication from God to man, and God has something very important to say to us. "God, who at various times

and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son . . ." (Hebrews 1:1,2). This points to our great need to listen to the word of God so that we can gain the faith we need to be saved (Romans 10:17). The Bible has one main theme throughout its pages, both in the Old and New Testaments. That theme is *God's plan for man's salvation*.

The book of Genesis opens with the creation of the world. The first two chapters go into detail of the creation, with chapter two focusing in on man. At that time, Adam and Eve lived in the garden of Eden, which was literally paradise on earth. There was no corruption, no death, and no evil. However, chapter three marks a sad day for mankind. Adam and Eve sinned, which resulted in spiritual death, separation from God and from the garden. It also resulted in physical death, which was to come to them a few years later. God has revealed that "*the wages of sin is death*" (Romans 6:23). Thus, Adam and Eve were the first sinners, and since then no one (except Jesus Christ) has succeeded in living without sin (Romans 3:23; 5:12). This is not because sin is inherited from generation to generation, but because man has since then always made the choice to rebel against God.

It is not God's will that any should perish in their sins (2 Peter 3:9). Thus, from Genesis three on through the rest of the Bible, God reveals His plan to save mankind from their sins. This plan is centered on One who would come down from heaven, live a sinless life, and die for the sins of the world, tasting death for every man in order to pay the price for sin (Hebrews 2:9; 2 Corinthians 5:21). This One is known as Jesus Christ. He is the central theme in both the Old and New Testaments. Even in Genesis three, God gives a glimpse of hope to those in sin (3:15). Then He promises to Abraham that from his seed all the nations of the earth would be blessed (Genesis 12:3). He was speaking of Jesus (Acts 3:25,26). The Old Testament then follows the descendants of Abraham through whom the Christ would come. These descendants became known as the children of Israel, the Hebrews, or the Jews. God took these people, set them apart and gave them a Law to follow. This Law is known as the "Law of Moses," and it began with the Ten Commandments as

first given in Exodus 20. During the years that the children of Israel lived in the land of Canaan, they were to be looking for the Christ who would deliver them from sin. The prophets (books of Isaiah through Malachi), prophesied often of the Christ. Unfortunately, the children of Israel ultimately rebelled against God and they lost their land and power as a nation. Yet, God kept His promise and sent the Savior into the world. This is where the New Testament begins. The first four books, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, give us biographical accounts of the life of Jesus Christ. They show conclusively that Jesus was the fulfillment of Old Testament promises and prophecies. He indeed is the Savior of the world, and by His life and death, offers salvation to everyone who will believe and obey His word (Romans 1:16; Hebrews 5:9).

The book of Acts gives the history and growth of the early church of Christ. Jesus had promised to build His church (Matthew 16:18), and Acts 2 gives the account of its establishment. The word "church" simply means "called out" and it refers to God's people who have been called out of sin and darkness into the kingdom of God's dear son (2 Thessalonians 2:14; Colossians 1:13). The rest of the New Testament (Romans through Revelation) are epistles (letters) written to churches and individual Christians instructing them further in the way of God.

Can I Be Saved?

Jesus Christ sacrificed Himself on a cross in order to die for the sins of the world. This includes all of us; and God our Savior "*desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth*" (1 Timothy 2:4). Thus, you can be saved from your sins and enjoy the promised hope of eternal life in heaven (1 John 2:25; Titus 1:5). In order for you to be saved from sins and have this hope, you must comply with the conditions that God has set down in His word. Remember, the only way that we know that we are right is if we follow exactly what God says. The only way that we can know that we are saved is by looking to His word. "*These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of*

the Son of God." (1 John 5:13). We cannot know we are saved based on our own feelings, but only by God's word. How? We find out what God says, do that, and we have the promise of eternal life. It's that simple. The problem is that there are too many who don't want to do what God says. As a result, there are many who will be lost, even though they thought they were saved (Matthew 7:21-23; Luke 6:46). We must realize that Jesus taught that the way to heaven is narrow and there are few who find it, but the way to hell is wide, and there are many who find it (Matthew 7:13,14). If you want to be among the few who find the narrow way, then you must obey all that God says to do.

What Must I Do?

This is the question the Jews asked Peter in Acts 2:37. They were convicted of their sins and wanted to know how to be saved. We will here briefly outline what God commands us to do to be saved:

1. Upon hearing the word of God, we must believe the gospel (Romans 1:16; 10:17). "*Without faith, it is impossible to please God. . .*" (Hebrews 11:6).
2. We must repent of and turn from our sins (Acts 17:30,31). We cannot continue living in our sins if we want to go to heaven (Romans 6:1,2).
3. We must confess Jesus Christ as Lord with our mouths (Romans 10:9,10; Matthew 10:32,33).
4. We must be buried in water (baptized) for the remission of our sins (Acts 2:38; 22:16; Romans 6:3,4). When we do this, we crucify ourselves, bury the old man, put on Christ, and rise to walk in newness of life (Galatians 5:24; 3:27).

After we have done what God says in order to be saved, we must then continue to abide in His word (John 8:31). We must be faithful unto death in order to receive the crown of life (Revelation 2:10).

Jesus Christ is the way, the truth, and the life (John 14:6). Only through Him can we be saved (Acts 4:12). You must be convinced of this and act accordingly.

Please answer the following Questions, then cut out this panel and mail it back.

Part A: Fill-in

1. How many books make up the Bible? _____
2. The Scriptures are profitable for _____, re-
proff, _____, and instruction in righteous-
ness. 2 Timothy 3:16,17.
3. The wages of sin is _____. Romans 6:23
4. All have _____ and fallen short of the
glory of God. Romans 3:23
5. The way that leads to destruction is _____
and there are _____ who go in by it, but the
way to life is _____ and there are
_____ who find it. Matthew 7:13,14)

Part B: Multiple Choice (circle one)

6. How did Holy men of God speak? 2 Peter 1:21
 - a. From themselves
 - b. As they were moved by the Holy Spirit.
 - c. As they were told from other men.
7. What is the standard by which we will be judged? John 12:48
 - a. How good we are in comparison to others.
 - b. Our own feelings.
 - c. The word of God.
8. What did Christ do for every man? Hebrews 2:9
 - a. Tasted death.
 - b. Provided entertainment.
 - c. Promised health and wealth.
9. Salvation is offered to everyone who will do what? Romans 1:16; Hebrews 5:9; Matthew 7:21
 - a. Be good citizens.
 - b. Say "Lord, Lord."
 - c. Believe and obey.

Part C: True or False (circle one)

10. T F The theme of the Bible is God's plan for man's salvation.
11. T F God wants everyone to perish and reject the truth. 2 Peter 3:9; 1 Timothy 2:4