

GOD HAS SPOKEN – LESSON 2

By Jon Quinn

Sir Isaac Newton: *"There are more sure marks of authenticity in the Bible than in any profane history."*

George Washington: *"It is impossible to rightly govern the world without God and the Bible."*

Abraham Lincoln: *"I believe the Bible is the best gift God has ever given to man. All the good from the Savior of the world is communicated to us through this book."*

Daniel Webster: *"If there is anything in my thoughts or style to commend, the credit is due to my parents for instilling in me an early love of the Scriptures."*

You are in good company if you respect the Bible. The Bible's greatness, however, does not depend upon what men may say about it, good or bad. It is the greatest of books because of its author and its important message.

THE SOURCE OF THE BIBLE

The Bible is a product of God's mind. The writers were instruments through whom God revealed His message.

Exodus 24:3-4-*So Moses came and told the people all the words of the LORD and all the judgments. And all the people answered with one voice and said, "All the words which the LORD has said we will do."* 4 *And Moses wrote all the words of the LORD. And he rose early in the morning and built an altar at the foot of the mountain, and twelve pillars according to the twelve tribes of Israel.*

2 Timothy 3:16-17-*All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.*

2 Peter 1:20-21-*knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, 21 for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.*

The word "inspiration" means "inbreathed". God "breathed" the words into the writers. In fact, much of the Bible could never have been written by man alone! There are hundreds of prophecies made generations before they were fulfilled. Not one failed! Examples include that the Messiah would be born in the tiny town of Bethlehem (Micah 5:2) and a very vivid account of the crucifixion (Psalm 22:6-18). Also, there are the early, somewhat casual statements of natural facts which were yet to be discovered by science. Examples of this include the earth's roundness (Isaiah 40:22), the ever-expanding nature of the universe (Genesis 1:8) and that the earth does not rest on any visible base (Job 26:7).

Concerning the New Testament, Jesus planned for its occurrence. He sent the Holy Spirit to guide the apostles. It is easy to trace how Jesus' plan unfolded thus building our confidence in the Bible as God's word.

John 14:26-But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.

Acts 1:5-for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."

Acts 1:8-But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

Acts 2:4-And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

Galatians 1:11-But I make known to you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man.

1 Thessalonians 2:13-For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe.

1 Thessalonians 4:1-2-Finally then, brethren, we urge and exhort in the Lord Jesus that you should abound more and more, just as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God; 2 for you know what commandments we gave you through the Lord Jesus.

THE HISTORY OF THE BIBLE

The Old Testament was originally written in Hebrew and the New Testament in Greek. Many copies of the originals were made and circulated. We have complete manuscripts of the New Testament dating back to about 350 A.D. We have many fragments of the New Testament dating back to about 120 A.D. just 20 years after its writer, the apostle John, died.

There are also abundant early manuscripts of the Old Testament dating back several centuries before Christ. The most famous of these are the Dead Sea Scrolls. The importance of this is that when we compare our translations with these early works, we find that we have reliable Bibles. We do not have to worry that errors have crept in over the centuries. God has seen to it that His Word has been preserved for us today.

1 Peter 1:24-25-because "All flesh is as grass, And all the glory of man as the flower of the grass. The grass withers, And its flower falls away, but the word of the LORD endures forever." Now this is the word which by the gospel was preached to you.

SHORT SURVEY

The Bible has two main divisions: The Old and New Testaments. The 39 books of the Old Testament contain 5 books of law, 12 books of history, 5 poetical books and 17 books of prophecy. The 27 books of the New Testament contain 4

gospels (accounts of Jesus' life), 1 book of history, 21 epistles and 1 book of prophecy in that order.

The Old Testament deals with the early history of man from the creation to Abraham, and then focuses on Abraham and his descendants as the people through whom the Messiah would come and bless all nations (Genesis 12:1-3).

The New Testament deals with how the promise of the Messiah is fulfilled in Jesus and reveals that eternal hope exists only in Him.

Acts 4:12-Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."

COVENANTS

A testament is a covenant or contract. We have mentioned two: Old and New. Jesus did not destroy the first one, but rather He fulfilled it thus taking it out of the way. Its obligations have been met and it is no longer valid.

Matthew 5:17-Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill.

Galatians 3:24-27-Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. 25 But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor. 26 For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. 27 For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

Colossians 2:13-17-And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, 14 having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. 15 Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it. 16 So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, 17 which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ.

In the place of the first Jesus established a second covenant. When one becomes a Christian, he recognizes and accepts that he is in a contract with God. There are blessings as well as responsibilities in this relationship.

Romans 7:4-Therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ, that you may be married to another-- to Him who was raised from the dead, that we should bear fruit to God.

Hebrews 8:6-7-But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, inasmuch as He is also Mediator of a better covenant, which was established on better promises. 7 For if that first covenant had been faultless, then no place would have been sought for a second.

Hebrews 8:13-In that He says, "A new covenant," He has made the first obsolete. Now what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away.

Hebrews 9:15-17-*And for this reason He is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance. 16 For where there is a testament, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. 17 For a testament is in force after men are dead, since it has no power at all while the testator lives.*

Though the first covenant is no longer binding today, it is still useful to the Christian in learning about faith, God's character and in receiving encouragement.

Romans 15:4-*For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.*

UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLE

God is our Maker. He created us with the ability to communicate with our fellow human beings through language. He has chosen to communicate with us, not through some mysterious language of angels, but through human language so that He might be understood by us. The best way to understand the Bible is to use the same rules by which we understand any human speech. The Bible uses words and sentences to express ideas and can be understood.

Deuteronomy 30:11-14-*For this commandment which I command you today, it is not too mysterious for you, nor is it far off. 12 It is not in heaven, that you should say, 'Who will ascend into heaven for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?' 13 Nor is it beyond the sea, that you should say, 'Who will go over the sea for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?' 14 But the word is very near you, in your mouth and in your heart, that you may do it.*

Romans 10:6-10-*But the righteousness of faith speaks in this way, "Do not say in your heart, 'Who will ascend into heaven?' " (that is, to bring Christ down from above) 7 or, " 'Who will descend into the abyss?' " (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). 8 But what does it say? "The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart" (that is, the word of faith which we preach): 9 that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.*

It must be admitted that there are some things more difficult to understand than others. One should begin with simple concepts and then build upon them as he progresses to the more difficult.

Hebrews 5:11-14-*of whom we have much to say, and hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing. 12 For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food. 13 For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a*

babe. 14 But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

1 Peter 2:1-3-Therefore, laying aside all malice, all guile, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking, 2 as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby, 3 if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is gracious.

2 Peter 3:15-17-and account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation--as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you, 16 as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures. 17 You therefore, beloved, since you know this beforehand, beware lest you also fall from your own steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked.

Also, one must have a proper attitude. This means putting away preconceived ideas and having faith that one can understand God's message.

Proverbs 2:1-5-My son, if you receive my words, And treasure my commands within you, 2 So that you incline your ear to wisdom, And apply your heart to understanding; 3 Yes, if you cry out for discernment, And lift up your voice for understanding, 4 If you seek her as silver, And search for her as for hidden treasures; 5 Then you will understand the fear of the LORD, And find the knowledge of God.

Matthew 13:14-16-And in them the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled, which says: 'Hearing you will hear and shall not understand, And seeing you will see and not perceive; 15 For the hearts of this people have grown dull. Their ears are hard of hearing, And their eyes they have closed, Lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, Lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, So that I should heal them.' 16 "But blessed are your eyes for they see, and your ears for they hear;

Diligence in Bible study is also a requirement if one is to understand. The Bible commends those who have enough interest in His word to investigate its truths.

Acts 17:11-These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so.

Ephesians 5:17-Therefore do not be unwise but understand what the will of the Lord is.

2 Timothy 2:15-Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

CONCLUSION

Jesus promised that truth that is known can make one free (John 8:32). This shows that God's truth can be understood and used beneficially. The fact that you are taking this course shows that you have a certain interest in these things. May God richly bless you in accordance with His will.

LESSON #3 deals with the question of "WHAT IS MAN?" It will consider what it means to be "created in the image of God" and what a human being's ultimate purpose is.

QUESTIONS FOR LESSON TWO

THE SOURCE OF THE BIBLE

Who's words did Moses write down (Exodus 24:3-4)? _____

What does the word "inspiration" mean? _____

THE HISTORY OF THE BIBLE

In what language was the Old Testament written? _____ The New Testament? _____

How long will the word of God continue to abide according to 1 Peter 1:24-25?

SHORT SURVEY

What are the two main divisions of the Bible? _____

What is the New Testament message concerning the Messiah? _____

COVENANTS

What did Jesus come to do regarding the Old Law? (Matthew 5:17)? _____

Are we still bound by the Old Law (Galatians 3:24-27)? _____

Of what use is the Old Testament to the Christian today (Romans 15:4)? _____

UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLE

Why do some not understand Jesus' message (Matthew 13:14-16)? _____

Why were the people at Berea commended (Acts 17:11)? _____

Can the Lord's Will be understood (Ephesians 5:17)? _____