



INTRODUCTION TO THE OLD TESTAMENT

AND THE DAYS OF CREATION

INTO THE WORD

LESSON 2

- WHAT YOU WILL LEARN IN THIS LESSON:
 - The order and basic themes of the Books of the Old Testament
 - The Inspiration, Infallibility, and Authenticity of the Bible
 - The Creative Power of God's Word displayed in Creation
- BIBLICAL THEMES:
 - God's Word is Preserved
 - The Word of God is our Judge
 - Faith is born in our hearts by the Word of God
- SCRIPTURAL REFERENCES:
 - Inspired by God written by men (II Peter 1:21; II Tim 3:16)
 - God's Word is Preserved (Ps 119:89; Is 40:8; Matt 5:18; Deut 4:2)
 - The Word of God is our Judge (John 12:48; Rev 20:11-15; Rev 22:19)
 - Faith and the Word (Hebrews 11:1-3, Romans 10:17)
- FOR FURTHER STUDY:
 1. What is the most important book we will ever read? Why?
 2. The Bible was inspired by _____? What does that mean?
 3. What will judge us in the last day? (John 12:48, Rev. 22:12)
 4. What is faith and how do we attain it?
 5. How did God create the universe?

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LESSON 2

INTRODUCTION TO THE OLD TESTAMENT AND THE DAYS OF CREATION

Introduction:

The Old Testament, although an ancient text, is neither irrelevant nor distant to our lives today. It is packed full of compelling stories, civic, martial, and political history, poetry, and prophecy. It is also the foundation of the New Testament. An understanding of the Old Testament and its principles and laws will greatly enrich your understanding of the New Testament. You will begin to see startling connections and patterns that exemplify the beautiful symmetry of the Word of God! God is a God of order, and this will become more apparent as you dive into the Old Testament.

Into the Word:

1. The Basic Breakdown of the Old Testament

- The Old Testament contains 39 books
How do I remember this? There are 3 letters in old, and 9 in testament!
- We can classify the Old Testament in 4 sections:
 1. The Law (Pentateuch) - 5 Books - Genesis to Deuteronomy
 2. History - 12 Books - Joshua to Esther
 3. Poetry - 5 Books - Job to Song of Solomon
 4. Prophets - 17 Books
 - a. Major Prophets - 5 Books - Isaiah to Daniel
 - b. Minor Prophets - 12 Books - Hosea to Malachi
- These books are not always in chronological order. For example, the prophets wrote at various times covered by the historical books. The distinction between major and minor prophets relates to their length, not their importance.
- There are 32 writers of the Old Testament, but all books are inspired by God. It was written by prophets, kings, and shepherds, yet it was written in perfect harmony, because all these different writers are inspired by the same author: the Lord God. Read the following scripture:
 - 2 Peter 1:21 (NKJV)
²¹For prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke *as they were* moved by the Holy Spirit.

- The Old Testament records over 3,600 years of man's history and was written over a period of 1,500 years.
- The Old Testament can be broken down into 4 time periods in which God dealt with man in a particular way:
 1. Innocence – Creation to the fall
 2. Conscience – Fall to Abraham (Patriarchs)
 3. Abraham to Moses - Law and the Prophets
 4. Moses to Christ

2. Divine Authorship: The Infallibility of the Word of God

The Word of God is without fault. It is to be taken as a whole, and each scripture is to be measured against other scriptures. It is divinely inspired and reflects the truth of its one author; although it was penned by many men: one conductor, many instruments. Read the following scripture:

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

The Bible's Claim of Inspiration

- According to the Bible, in the final analysis, its author is God Himself. "All scripture is given by the inspiration of God" (2 Timothy 3:16). In this verse, "inspiration of God" is translated from the Greek word *theopneustos*, which literally means "God-breathed." The picture is of God breathing out the words from His mouth (Matthew 4:4), creating Scripture similar to the way He created the universe (Psalm 33:6). In other words, the Bible emanated from God. It is God's communication to humanity. (David Bernard, God's Infallible Word, "The Bible is God's Word", 27, 1992).

Content and Holiness

- The Bible teaches us about God, human nature, sin, salvation, judgment, and eternity. It deals with humanity's deepest spiritual questions and aspirations. Certainly we would expect the Word of God to handle such subjects, and the Bible does so in an exalted fashion unequalled by any other book.
- "The Bible teaches us about holiness, morality, love, justice, truth, grace, and mercy in a way that no other book does. No other book or religion so totally identifies God with love. No other ancient book or religion of Bible times has the Bible's unique emphasis on strict monotheism and on ethical conduct. The Bible contains the highest moral teachings of any book in the world. And the world's most moral book would not proclaim what would be the world's biggest lie; if it were not the Word of God it would not claim to be such." (Bernard, 12)

- “The prophets and apostles who wrote the Scriptures testified that they spoke not of themselves but by the Spirit of God. The people of God in every age accepted earlier biblical books as divinely inspired. For example, Israel’s kings and prophets accepted the books of Moses as the Word of God, and the New Testament writers accepted the Old Testament as Scripture.” (Bernard, 11)

The Preservation of the Word

- The Bible states on numerous occasions that God's Word is to be preserved through all generations. Consider the following scriptures:
 - Psalm 119:89 (NLT)
⁸⁹Your eternal word, O LORD, stands firm in heaven.
 - Isaiah 40:8 (NLT)
⁸The grass withers and the flowers fade, but the word of our God stands forever.
 - Matthew 5:17-18 (NLT)
¹⁷“Don’t misunderstand why I have come. I did not come to abolish the law of Moses or the writings of the prophets. No, I came to accomplish their purpose. ¹⁸I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not even the smallest detail of God’s law will disappear until its purpose is achieved.
 - Matthew 24:35 (NLT)
³⁵Heaven and earth will disappear, but my words will never disappear.
 - Luke 16:17 (NKJV)
¹⁷And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away, than one tittle of the law to fail.
 - Psalms 12:6-7 (NKJV)
⁶The words of the LORD are pure words, like silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. ⁷You shall keep them, O LORD, you shall preserve them from this generation forever.

Historic and Scientific Verification

- The Bible has stood the test of time. Archeological finds and the fulfillment of prophecy point out the Truth of the Bible.
- Research has confirmed numerous historical accounts in the Scriptures, from the Patriarchal Period, to the Israelites in Egypt, to the conquest of Canaan, to the kingdom of Solomon, to the Babylonian captivity, to Palestine in New Testament times.
- Ancient traditions from many lands agree with the biblical account of Noah’s flood. Archives of ancient Egypt, Assyria, and Babylonia have verified biblical incidents as well as biblical names of kings, generals, pharaohs, and emperors. Archaeologists have long used the Bible to locate lost cities and wells in the Middle East.
- Archaeology has proved the accuracy of biblical details such as the antiquity and genuineness of proper names in Genesis (verified by the Ebla tablets); legal and social customs of the patriarchs in Genesis (verified by the Nuzi tablets); customs of the ancient Egyptians in the story of Joseph; the water tunnel David used to conquer Jerusalem (II Samuel 5:8); the war between Israel and Moab in II Kings 3 (mentioned by a Moabite stone inscription);

Hezekiah's aqueduct (II Kings 20:20); the military campaign of Nebuchadnezzar against Judah in 597 B.C., his capture of Judah, and his replacing King Jehoiachin with Zedekiah (II Kings 24); the judgment seat where Jesus was tried (John 19:13); the accuracy of Luke and Acts in historical, geographical, political, and social matters; the temple of Diana at Ephesus (Acts 19:27); and much more.

- Of course, archaeology itself cannot prove that the Bible is the Word of God, but it has the potential either to corroborate or discredit historical accounts in the Bible. In this regard, Time magazine acknowledged, "Archaeological digging continues to turn up new evidence that the Bible is often surprisingly accurate in historical particulars, more so than earlier generations of scholars ever suspected."
- William F. Albright, perhaps the leading biblical archaeologist of the twentieth century, moved from a somewhat skeptical view of the historical accuracy of Scripture to a relatively conservative one as a result of his own discoveries. He concluded, "There can be no doubt that archaeology has confirmed the substantial historicity of Old Testament tradition."
- The conclusion of Nelson Glueck, a leading Reformed Jewish archaeologist, is particularly noteworthy: "It may be stated categorically that no archaeological discovery has ever controverted a Biblical reference."
- For further discussion of biblical archaeology, see J. A. Thompson, [The Bible and Archaeology](#).
- Consider the following examples of archeological finds and prophetic scriptures:
 - a. Chariot wheels in the bottom of the Red Sea:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lzb4ekyX1kc>
 - b. Images of Mount Sinai scorched at the top
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K-eSRcrgCWw>
 - c. The Jew is the testament to the historical accuracy of the Bible
 - d. The story of Cyrus who invaded Babylon without a battle, was prophesied in Isaiah 44, 150 years before Cyrus' birth. Names and places were given, and it is called out that Cyrus, being a pagan non-Jew, "did not know me." Upon Cyrus invasion, Daniel was one of the wise leaders. It is possible that Daniel may have in fact show this prophecy to Cyrus. Could this have led liberation of Jews back to rebuild their temple Jerusalem decreed by Cyrus?
<http://www.cyrusgreat.com/content/view/12/2/>
 - e. Archeologist believe they may have found the tomb of James. It is very unusual to mark someone's brother, but the inscription read, James brother of Jesus' son of Joseph).
 - f. Psalm 22 and Isaiah 53 read like the New Testament, yet they were written hundreds of years earlier (see excerpts below).

○ Psalm 22 (NKJV)

My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?

*Why are You so far from helping Me,
And from the words of My groaning?*

¹⁴ I am poured out like water,
And all My bones are out of joint;
My heart is like wax;
It has melted within Me.

¹⁵ My strength is dried up like a potsherd,
And My tongue clings to My jaws;
You have brought Me to the dust of death.

¹⁶ For dogs have surrounded Me;
The congregation of the wicked has enclosed Me.
They pierced My hands and My feet;

¹⁷ I can count all My bones.
They look *and* stare at Me.

¹⁸ They divide My garments among them,
And for My clothing they cast lots.

○ Isaiah 53 (NKJV)

¹Who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed? ²For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, And as a root out of dry ground. He has no form or comeliness; And when we see Him, *There is no beauty that we should desire Him.* ³He is despised and rejected by men, A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, *our* faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him. ⁴Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; Yet we esteemed Him stricken, Smitten by God, and afflicted. ⁵But He *was* wounded for our transgressions, *He was* bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace *was* upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed. ⁶All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all. ⁷He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, And as a sheep before its shearers is silent, So He opened not His mouth. ⁸He was taken from prison and from judgment, And who will declare His generation? For He was cut off from the land of the living; For the transgressions of My people He was stricken. ⁹And they made His grave with the wicked— But with the rich at His death, Because He had done no violence, Nor *was any* deceit in His mouth. ¹⁰Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise Him; He has put *Him* to grief. When You make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see *His* seed, He shall prolong *His* days, And the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in His hand.

¹¹He shall see the labor of His soul, *and* be satisfied. By His knowledge My righteous Servant shall justify many, For He shall bear their iniquities.

¹²Therefore I will divide Him a portion with the great, And He shall divide the spoil with the strong, Because He poured out His soul unto death, And He was numbered with the transgressors, And He bore the sin of many, And made intercession for the transgressors.



Scripture Reading Response and Analysis

- How is it possible for the Bible to have many disparate authors yet sound the same message?

- What is the significance of the above prophetic scriptures? What does their specific accuracy tell you about the Word of God in general?

3. The Word of God is our Judge

Once we have settled the infallibility of the Word of God in our minds, we must understand that the Word of God will judge our lives. We live in a country that celebrates religious freedom and access to the Bible is unlimited. We must apply ourselves to studying and learning the Word. In the end, “opinion” and “conjecture” will be meaningless, and cultures will shift and change, but it is the Word of God that will finally adjudicate our lives. It is the ultimate authority.

However, this does not mean that we should be fearful of the Word of God. The Word of God brings life. It is full of instruction and blessing. It is for our eternal benefit and wellbeing, and it will bring blessings untold.

Read the following scriptures:

- John 12:47-48 (NLT)
⁴⁷ I will not judge those who hear me but don't obey me, for I have come to save the world and not to judge it. ⁴⁸ But all who reject me and my message will be judged on the day of judgment by the truth I have spoken.
- Revelation 20:11-15 (NLT)
¹¹ And I saw a great white throne and the one sitting on it. The earth and sky fled from his presence, but they found no place to hide. ¹² I saw the dead, both great and small, standing before God's throne. And the books were opened, including the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to what they had done, as recorded in the books. ¹³ The sea gave up its dead, and death and the grave gave up their dead. And all were judged according to their deeds. ¹⁴ Then death and the grave were thrown into the lake of fire. This lake of fire is the second death. ¹⁵ And anyone whose name was not found recorded in the Book of Life was thrown into the lake of fire.

- Revelation 22:19 (NKJV)
¹⁹And if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the Book of Life, from the holy city, and *from* the things which are written in this book.
- Hebrews 4:12 (NKJV)
¹²For the word of God *is* living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.



Scripture Reading Response and Analysis

- Jesus came to save the world, but who or what did he say would judge us?

- Why is it important to find out what the Word of God says?

4. Faith is Born in our Hearts by the Word of God

The more we hear and study the Word of God, the more our faith will increase. It is not unlike a physical work-out. The more you exercise, the stronger your body will become. In a similar way, the more truth you discover, the hungrier you will become. You will develop a love for truth. When we become disciplined about a healthy diet, we eventually develop a taste for healthy food. We realize how good it is for our body and well-being. Reading and loving the Word of God is the healthiest spiritual discipline we can establish. It will strengthen our spiritual person.

Read the following scriptures:

- Hebrews 11:1-3 (NLT)
¹Faith is the confidence that what we hope for will actually happen; it gives us assurance about things we cannot see. ²Through their faith, the people in days of old earned a good reputation.³By faith we understand that the entire universe was formed at God's command, that what we now see did not come from anything that can be seen.
- Romans 10:17 (NKJV)
¹⁷So then faith *comes* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.



Scripture Reading Response and Analysis

- What is faith and how do we attain it?

- Earlier we discussed how history and archeology reinforces the truth of God's Word, discuss how history, archeology, and faith work together.

5. The Word of God Holds Creative Power

We have discovered that the Word of God is infallible, that it brings life, and that it judges our behavior and that it develops faith. The Word of God is also the most creative power in the universe. Through the Word, God spoke our world into existence.

The creative power of the Word of God is displayed in Creation:

1. *First Day: Creation of Light (Genesis 1:1-5)*
 - In the Hebrew, the phrase "Be Light" is repeated, "Be Light"... God speaks and the Light responds with an "Amen!" God's word always brings a positive response.
2. *Second Day: Created firmament called skies; waters divided (Genesis 1:6-8)*
3. *Third Day: Waters and Earth divided; Earth commanded to bring forth grass, plants, and fruit-bearing trees (Genesis 1:9-13)*
4. *Fourth Day: Separation of light and darkness; seasons, days, and years; Sun, Moon, and stars (Genesis 1:14-19)*
5. *Fifth Day: Creation of birds and sea creatures (Genesis 1:20-23)*
6. *Sixth Day: Creation of living creatures on land; Man created in the image of God (Genesis 1:23-31)*
7. *Seventh Day: God rested (Genesis 2:1-3)*

