

ties the sixty-six books of scripture together to form *one* consistent and cohesive larger book.

The book of Genesis – The Foundation of a Christian Worldview

The relevance of the Old Testament to the Christian cannot be overestimated. In fact, it is in the first eleven chapters of the book of Genesis that we find the foundation for the Christian's entire worldview.

1. _____ Gen _____
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
 - d.
 - e.

2. _____ (The Fall of Man) Gen _____
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
 - d.

3. _____ (The Flood) Gen _____
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
 - d.
 - e.

How to Understand the Word of God


4

Learning to Live the New Life


In this week's study we are going to look at some very practical and basic facts regarding the word of God. We have already established that the New Life cannot be lived successfully without a daily quiet time with the Lord. This quiet time features a sincere time of Bible reading and prayer. This week we are going to learn some things that will help us to better understand the Bible during this quiet time.

We must Accept it's Authority

Before we begin to read or study the word of God we must first acknowledge that it is authoritative in all areas of life.


 2 Peter 1:20-21. **Q.** How did scripture *not* come to us?


Q. How were *holy men* given the words of scripture to write?


 2 Tim 3:16. **Q.** How was *all* scripture given?

Q. What is all scripture *profitable* for? _____, _____
_____, _____.

All scripture has been given to us by God, through men. This is what is meant by *inspiration*. God supernaturally provided the words of scripture to be written and he used men to physically pen them down. Although there is much historical, archaeological, and scientific evidence to prove the authority and divine authorship of the Bible it must ultimately be accepted by faith.

 John 17:17. **Q.** How did Jesus refer to the words of God? _____.

 Luke 4:4. **Q.** And Jesus answered him, saying, It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by _____.

 Mt 12:3,5; 19:4; 22:31; Mark 12:10,26; Luke 6:3. **Q.** There is a phrase that Jesus repeats in each of these verses, what does this phrase tell you about His view of Scripture?

Jesus himself taught that every *word* of Scripture was essential for our growth. We can trust that when we read the Bible we are reading the very words of God. We are not reading the Bible to pick and choose portions that appeal to us. But we are reading it in *meekness* (James 1:21), submitted to it's authority.

We Must Study It's Structure

The Structure of the Old Testament

Next, from a very practical standpoint, in order to understand the Bible we must first look at it's structure.

Use the Table of Contents in your Bible to fill in the following blanks.

1. The Bible is one book made up of _____ smaller books.
2. These smaller books are divided into _____ major sections.
3. These major sections are called the Old and New _____
4. There are _____ books in the Old Testament and _____ in the New.

The word *testament* can be thought of as a *promise* or *covenant*. Therefore the first division of scripture deals with God's initial covenant with mankind, and the second division deals with his new covenant with mankind. The birth of Jesus Christ was the climax of the of the Old Testament and the beginning of the New Testament.

The Bible is not entirely in *chronological* order, but it is rather divided into sections based on the type of literature found in each book. Within the Old Testament we find books of History, Poetry and Prophecy. See the chart on page five to get an idea of how the Old Testament books relate to each other chronologically.

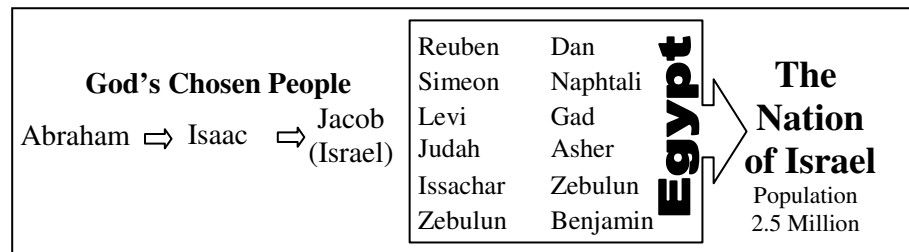
The Old Testament (39 Books)		
History	Poetry	Prophecy
Genesis - Esther	Job – Song of Solomon	Isaiah-Malachi

A Short History of Israel

When you hear news reports today referring to the nation of Israel in the middle east, you should think immediately of the Old Testament scriptures. For it is in the Old Testament that we find the birth of Israel as a nation. Below is a very basic history of Israel.

God first made a covenant with a man named Abraham (Gen 15:18), God confirmed this covenant to Abraham's son Isaac (Gen 17:19), and to his grandson Jacob (Gen 28:13-16), whose name God later changed to *Israel*. Jacob and his twelve sons became captive in Egypt where they and their families reproduced for over 400 years. When God sent Moses to deliver the descendants of Jacob out of this slavery in Egypt they were quite possibly

numbered at over two million people. After their escape from slavery in Egypt, God delivered *the law* to Moses, by which he commanded the children of Israel to govern themselves. It was at this point that the children of Israel emerged as the *nation of Israel*.



The law which God gave to Israel was intended to teach Israel that they could not in fact please God by their own effort. The law taught them that they were utterly sinful and that God was ultimately holy. This lesson was necessary in order for Israel to realize their need for a saviour. God promised the nation of Israel that one day he would send this saviour, who would redeem them, once and for all from sin. (Gen 49:10, Isa 9:7, Mic 5:2, Isa 7:14). God's promise to Israel was fulfilled when Jesus Christ was born in Bethlehem.

The Old Testament deals primarily with the nation of Israel but it was written for all people of all generations. Through it we learn who God is, what he requires of man, and how we might be saved.

Romans 15:4. **Q.** What purpose do you think the Old Testament scriptures serve for us today?

1 Cor 10:11 Now all these things happened unto them for _____: and they are written for our _____, upon whom the ends of the world are come.

So although the Old Testament was not written *to* us, it is definitely *for* us. According to the verses above, the record of God's dealings with Israel serve for our learning, comfort, hope, admonition, and example. It is through the Old Testament that we learn of man's fall and his need for a redeemer. The common theme throughout the Bible, starting in it's first book, is that man is in need of a saviour and that he cannot save himself. Without the Old Testament it would be difficult to understand why it was necessary for Jesus to die on the cross. All of God's interactions with Israel throughout the Old Testament – the giving of the law, the institution of sacrifices, the building of the tabernacle and so on, were his way of preparing mankind to accept his Son as Lord and Saviour (John 5:39, Luke 24:25-27). It is this common theme that

4. _____ (or The Tower of Babel/Nations)

a.

b.

5. _____

a.

6. _____

a.

7. _____ (or The New Heaven and New Earth)

a.

b.

c.