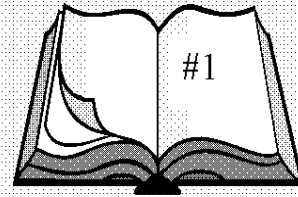


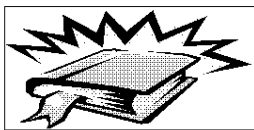
BIBLETALK

A Correspondence Study

The Bible



The Bible is the most important book ever written. It is the only book which is or ever has been inspired by God. The Bible is the mind of God revealed to mankind (*1 Corinthians 2:9-13*). It is the only book that will tell us how to live so we can go to heaven. This lesson will highlight that importance.



The Inspiration of the Bible

The Bible is a direct revealing of God's mind to mankind. In the Bible, God has told us exactly how He wants us to live and what He wants us to do religiously.

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

The Authority of Jesus

Christ declared Himself to have "all authority in heaven and on earth" (*Matthew 28:18*). That authority, given to Him by God, is expressed in the Bible. See also *Matthew 7:28-29*.

Notice these verses that speak of the authority of Christ and His word.

"Far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come. And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all" (Ephesians 1:21-23).

Please read *John 12:48* and *Hebrews 1:1-2*.

It is Understandable

It is vital that we realize that God did not inspire the Bible in such a way that man could not understand it. He did not tell us we will be judged by the Bible and then make it so difficult that only a select few could interpret it correctly. Notice these passages.

"How that by revelation He made known to me the mystery (as I wrote before in a few words, by which, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ), which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets" (Ephesians 3:3-5).

"Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is" (Ephesians 5:17).

See also *John 8:32*.

It is Not Outdated

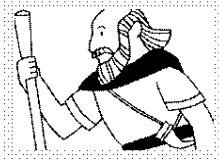
Some people have the idea that the Bible is an outdated book that has no application to modern man. Nothing could be further from the truth. The Bible is relevant, up to date and speaks to every need of modern man. While some conveniences have changed, man, in his nature, is still the same. *“For the 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” (Hebrews 4:12).*

God’s Law for Man Today

The Bible contains two major sections – the Old Testament and the New Testament. It is important to understand clearly the difference between these covenants between God and man. *“Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Timothy 2:15).* Let’s notice how to divide and understand God’s word correctly.

During the course of human history, there have been three major dispensations or periods of time.

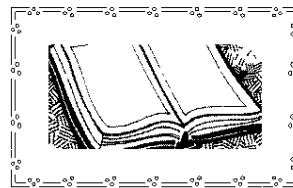
The Patriarchal Period



This dispensation is so-called because during this period of time, God spoke directly to the father of families (the patriarch) with instructions for that specific family. This was what many have referred

The Bible

This book contains the mind of God, the state of man, the way of salvation, the doom of sinners, and the happiness of believers. Its doctrines are holy, its precepts are binding, its histories are true, and its decisions are immutable. Read it to be wise, believe it to be safe, and practice it to be holy. It contains light to direct you, food to support you, and comfort to cheer you. It is the traveler’s map, the pilgrim’s staff, the pilot’s compass, the soldier’s sword, heaven opened, and the gates of hell disclosed. Christ is its grand object, our good its design, and the glory of God its end. It should fill the memory, rule the heart, and guide the feet. Read it slowly, frequently, and prayerfully. It is a mine of wealth, a paradise of glory, and a river of pleasure. It is given to you in life, will be opened in judgment, and be remembered forever. It involves the highest responsibilities, will reward the greatest labor, and will condemn all who trifle with its sacred contents.



to as a family religion.

Notice these occasions (among many) in which God spoke directly to the heads of families.

*To Adam – **Genesis 1:28-30**

*To Noah – **Genesis 6:13-22**

*To Abram – **Genesis 12:1-3**

The Patriarchal Dispensation lasted from Adam to Mt. Sinai, a period of approximately 2500 years.

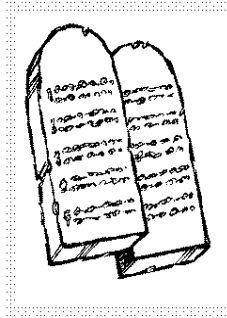
This was a time of verbal instruction, not written teaching. There is no evidence that, at the time, any of these patriarchs wrote down the directions that God gave them. Later, Moses recorded, by inspiration, a few of the highlights of this period of human history. The one exception would be the book of Job. Job is believed to have lived during the patriarchal period. He was most likely a contemporary of Abraham. The events of his book would have, therefore, occurred during this age. Notice, for example, that Job offered sacrifices for his entire family (**Job 1:5**), rather than each person being accountable for his own sacrifices.

The Mosaical Period

Also called the Jewish Age, this is the time in history when God separated the children of Israel (descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob) from among the other nations and made them His own special people.

This dispensation lasted from Mt. Sinai to the death of Christ, a period of approximately 1500 years.

It is called the Mosaical Age because God



gave His law to Israel through His inspired spokesman, Moses. The Ten Commandments were given in Exodus 20. Other detailed instructions were given to the people in the rest of Exodus and Leviticus.

It is important to understand that, while God had a special purpose and law for Israel, He did not abandon the other nations. He continued to deal with faithful Gentiles (there were not many of those) in the same direct way He always had. In discussing the purpose and duration of the Law of Moses, the apostle Paul said this: *“What purpose then does the law serve? It was added because of transgressions, till the Seed should come to whom the promise was made...”* (*Galatians 3:19*). Note that the law is not said to have replaced the patriarchal system, but to have been “added” to it. Cornelius is an example of a Gentile, who continued to serve God faithfully during the Mosaical Age (*Acts 10:1-2*).

The Old Testament encompasses both the Patriarchal Dispensation and the Mosaical Age. However, the Old Testament predicts its own demise and replacement with the New Testament. Read *Jeremiah 31:31-34*; also quoted in *Hebrews 8:8-13*.

The Christian Period

This is also called the “Gospel Age.” It began at the death of Christ on the cross and will continue until the end of time. That is why this period is often called *“the last days”* (see *Acts 2:17*; *Hebrews 1:1-2*).

