

STUDIES IN THE BIBLE

Lesson 2

Rightly Dividing the World

“Do your best to win full approval in God's sight, as a worker who is not ashamed of his work, one who correctly teaches the message of God's truth. (2 Tim. 2:15.) In This lesson we shall try to “rightly divide” the Bible in order to know how to better use it.

Divisions of the Bible

The 66 books of the Bible have two major divisions called the Old Testament and New Testament. The Old Testament explains God’s relationship with man before the coming of Jesus Christ while the New Testament tells us about the life of Christ and how God deals with us today. It is important for us to realise that we must go to the New Testament rather than to the Old if we wish to find out how to become Christians and how to live the Christian life.

In Luke 24:44, Jesus mentions three divisions of the Old Testament when he speaks of the Law of Moses, the prophets and the psalms. For the purpose of our study we shall divide the Old Testament into five major divisions – the law, Jewish history, poetry, the

Major Prophets, and Minor Prophets. The New Testament will be divided into

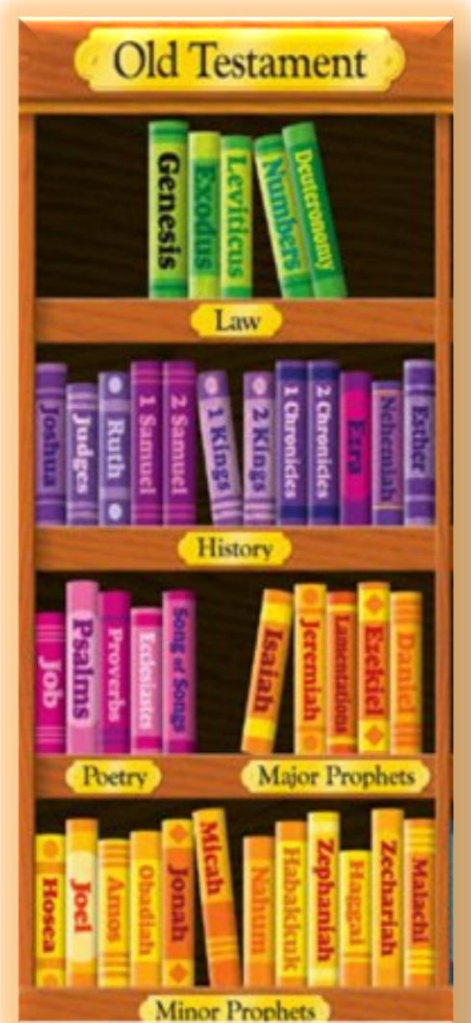


the gospels, history, the epistles (Letters) of Paul, the general epistles (Letters) and prophecy.

Old Testament Books

The first five books of the Old Testament are known as the books of the law and are sometimes called the Pentateuch (meaning five books). Written by Moses, they trace the history of man during his first 2500 years of existence. Genesis tells the story of the creation and fall of man, the flood, and the events of the Patriarchal Age. This was the period from creation to the giving of the Law of Moses in which there was no written divine law. It is called the Patriarchal Age or dispensation because worship of God was conducted by each father for his family. After the Law of Moses was given, there was an organized system of worship on the national scale. The book of exodus relates the story of the

deliverance of the children of Israel (later called the Jews) from the land of Egypt, and account of their forty-year wandering in the wilderness. Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy give more of the history of this wandering and also recorded the law of Moses which governed God’s chosen people, the Israelites, from that time until the death of Christ. The period from Moses to Christ is called the Mosaic Age.



The Law of Moses applied to the Jews and was never intended for Christians. It was brought to an end when Christ died on the cross.

There are 12 books of history which follow next and record the story of the Jewish nation. This includes the account of how Israel became a great people, how they sinned and were carried to a far country in captivity, and finally how a part of them eventually returned home. These books are Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 and 2 Samuel, 1 and 2 Kings, 1 and 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther. The authors of some of these are unknown.

The five books of poetry are primarily books of devotion and exhortation. They may not seem too poetic to us because some of the poetic form has been lost in translation, but in many ways they are among the best loved books of the Bible. They include Job (author unknown), the Psalms or songs of praise, written chiefly by David, and Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Solomon, all written by Solomon. Probably the best known piece of writing in the world is the 23rd Psalm. You could not find greater words of wisdom in our day than the words of Solomon. The book of Job is an account of a rich man who lost all he had, remained faithful to God in spite of it, and was doubly rewarded for his faithfulness.

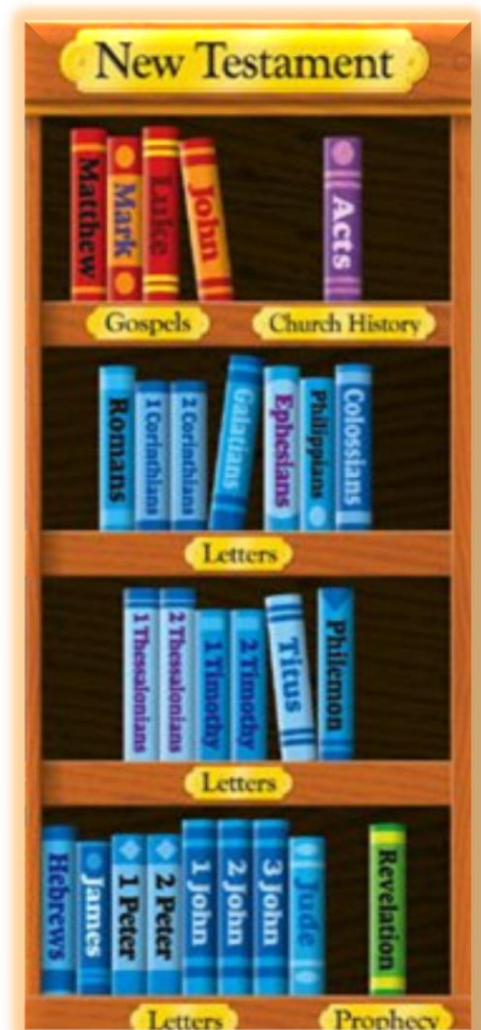
The prophetic books are usually divided into the Major Prophets and Minor Prophets because the Major Prophets are much greater in length. With the exception of Lamentations, written by Jeremiah, all of the books of prophecy were penned by the men whose names they bear. The five books of major prophecy are Isaiah, Jeremiah,

Lamentations, Ezekiel and Daniel. While the Minor prophets are Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi. Isaiah is often called the Messianic prophet because he prophesies more than any other of the coming of Christ. Daniel includes, besides prophecy, some very interesting events occurring during the captivity of the Jews in Babylon. Many of these books also deal with things which were soon to happen to the Jews and their neighbours.

New Testament Books

With Malachi, the Old Testament ends. The first four books of the New Testament (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John) are written by the men whose names they bear. They are known as the four gospels. The word gospel means “good news” and these books tell us the good news of the coming of the Christ to save mankind. Actually, each is a biography of Jesus. While they all record some of the same events, each also contains things not found in the other three. Together they give us a very complete story of the life, death and resurrection of Christ.

With the death of Jesus came the end of the Mosaic Age and the beginning of the Christian Age which will last until the end of time. The book of Acts, written by Luke, is a book of history. It tells how Christ’s church was

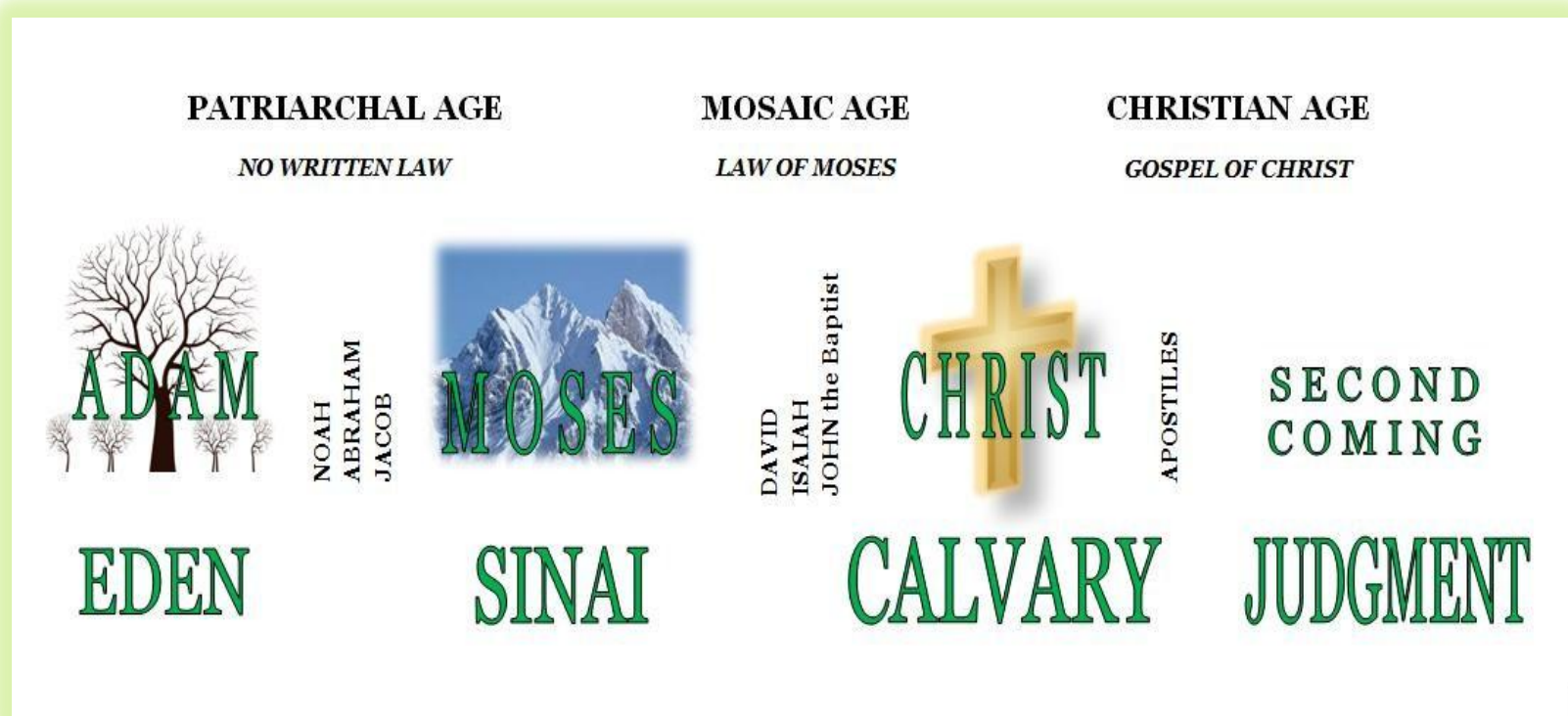


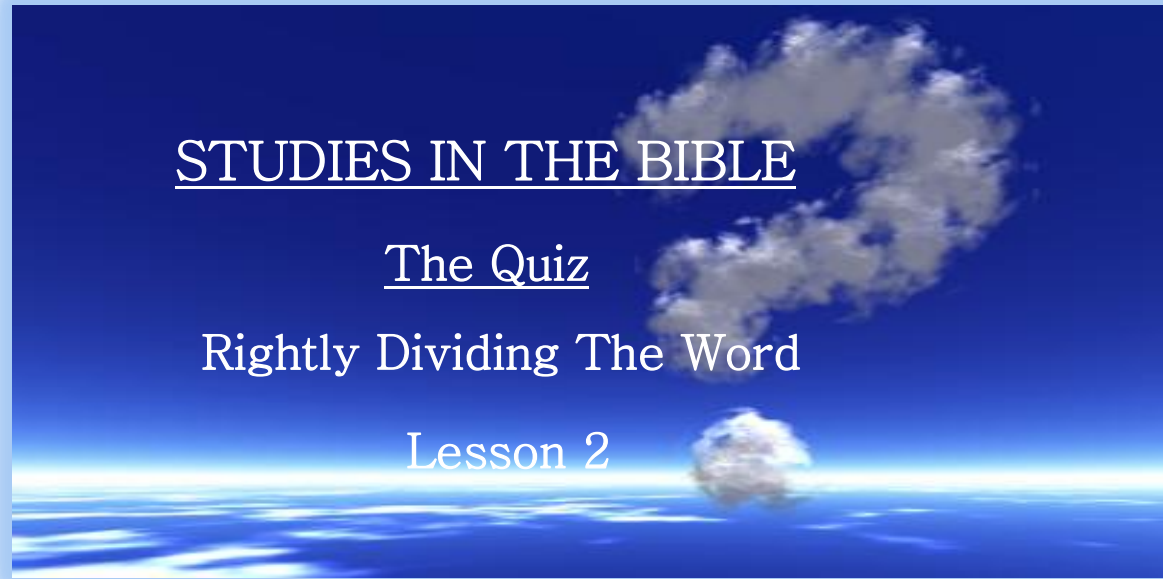
established and gives a record of the activities of some of the apostles and much of the history of the early church. It is also called the book of conversions because it is the chief book to which we must go to find out how people became Christian in those days.

The next 21 books are epistles (Letters) telling Christians how to live. Some were written to individuals and others to various congregations. The first 14, written by Paul, are known as Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon, and Hebrews. The other seven letters are often called the general epistles (Letters) to distinguish them from the writings of Paul. They are James, 1 and 2 Peter, 1, 2 and 3 John, and Jude. All were written by the men for whom they are named.

The last book of the Bible is Revelations, a book of prophecy written by John. It tells us about things which were to “happen very soon” (Rev.1:1.) Although parts of this book are difficult to understand, it is a very valuable book and worthy of our study.

So, we have divided the Bible into its proper divisions. The New Testament is much more valuable for us today than the Old because it tells us how we should live, while the law given in the Old Testament applied to those who lived before Christ. For this reason, in this course, we shall give more emphasis to the New Testament than to the Old.





“Seek And Ye Shall Find”

In the blank after each of the following write O.T. or N.T to tell whether the book is in the Old Testament or New Testament:

- | | | | |
|---------------|-------|-------------|-------|
| 1. Genesis | _____ | 9. Malachi | _____ |
| 2. James | _____ | 10. Titus | _____ |
| 3. Acts | _____ | 11. Judges | _____ |
| 4. Isaiah | _____ | 12. Romans | _____ |
| 5. Revelation | _____ | 13. Matthew | _____ |
| 6. Ezra | _____ | 14. 2 John | _____ |
| 7. John | _____ | 15. Job | _____ |
| 8. Psalms | _____ | | |

Fill in the Blanks:

1. The four books called the gospels are _____, _____, _____, and _____.
2. The last book of the Bible is _____.
3. The three books written by Solomon are _____, _____, and _____.

4. Five major divisions of the Old Testament are _____,
_____, _____, _____, and _____.
5. Five major divisions of the New Testament are _____,
_____, _____, _____, and _____.
6. The five books written by Moses, called the Pentateuch, are
_____, _____, _____, _____, and
_____.
7. The number of books written by Paul is _____.
8. The book of _____ has often been called the book of
conversions because it tells us how to become Christians.

Answer the questions yes or no:

1. Are we living today during the Patriarchal Age? _____
2. Was the book of Lamentations written by Jeremiah? _____
3. Do the first four books of the New Testament tell us of Christ?

4. Is Jonah often called the Messianic prophet because he prophesies
the coming of Christ more than any other? _____
5. Were there only three books of Jewish history? _____
6. Do the 21 epistles of the New Testament tell Christians how to live?

7. Do Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy tell us about the law of
Moses? _____
8. Did Paul write the book of Psalms? _____
9. Can a person find out how to become a Christian by reading the New
Testament? _____
10. Is the story of the establishment of Christ's church found in the
book of 2 Chronicles? _____

You have now completed the quiz; continue onto the next page to view the answers.

THE ANSWERS

“Seek and You Shall Find”

1. Genesis	<u>O.T.</u>	9. Malachi	<u>O.T.</u>
2. James	<u>N.T.</u>	10. Titus	<u>N.T.</u>
3. Acts	<u>N.T.</u>	11. Judges	<u>O.T.</u>
4. Isaiah	<u>O.T.</u>	12. Romans	<u>N.T.</u>
5. Revelation	<u>N.T.</u>	13. Matthew	<u>N.T.</u>
6. Ezra	<u>O.T.</u>	14. 2 John	<u>N.T.</u>
7. John	<u>N.T.</u>	15. Job	<u>O.T.</u>
8. Psalms	<u>O.T.</u>		

Fill in the Blanks:

1. The four books called the gospels are Matthew , Mark ,
Luke , and John .
2. The last book of the Bible is Revelations .
3. The three books written by Solomon are Proverbs , Ecclesiastes
, and Songs of Solomon .

4. Five major divisions of the Old Testament are The Law ,
Historical , Poetic , Major Prophets , and Minor Prophets .
5. Five major divisions of the New Testament are Gospels ,
History , Epistles , General Epistles ,and Prophecy .
6. The five books written by Moses, called the Pentateuch, are
Genesis , Exodus , Leviticus , Numbers , and
Deuteronomy .
7. The number of books written by Paul is 14 .
8. The book of Acts has often been called the book of conversions because it tells us how to become Christians.

Answer the questions yes or no:

1. Are we living today during the Patriarchal Age? No
2. Was the book of Lamentations written by Jeremiah? Yes
3. Do the first four books of the New Testament tell us of Christ?
Yes
4. Is Jonah often called the Messianic prophet because he prophesies the coming of Christ more than any other? No
5. Were there only three books of Jewish history? No
6. Do the 21 epistles of the New Testament tell Christians how to live?
Yes
7. Do Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy tell us about the law of Moses? Yes
8. Did Paul write the book of Psalms? No
9. Can a person find out how to become a Christian by reading the New Testament? Yes
10. Is the story of the establishment of Christ's church found in the book of 2 Chronicles? No

Congratulations, you have now completed the lesson. If you have any questions about this lesson, please send us an email with your name and email address and we'll get back to you.