



LINE UPON LINE

studying our pure Bible...

LESSON ONE — THE BIBLE IS IMPORTANT

¶ Introduction

Christians are instructed to study the Bible because it is a book filled with the words of God. If it was just the words of men and nothing more, it would be a waste of time. But the Bible is filled with vital information about how to be saved and how to live a life pleasing to God. It is at the foundation of true Christianity.

The Bible is the Word of God. Millions upon millions of people have believed it. People have even died for the Word of God.



Cranmer's martyrdom

The Bible has been treasured by the poor and by the rich. It is the most loved and the most hated book on the Earth. It has shaped the destiny of nations, so that kings and queens have sworn to uphold it. Others have treated it with spite, and have done everything in their power to destroy it. But it cannot be destroyed.



Queen Elizabeth II's coronation

"Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth." (John 17:17).

When Jesus prayed that believers would be sanctified (made holy), He knew that it could only happen by the Word. It would have to be a present Word. There is no way a non-existing, hidden or far away Word could change a person's life. God's intention must be to get His Word to believers.

If the Word has power to sanctify, and is true, it cannot have any errors in it. It must be inerrant. It cannot have any failings in it. It must tell the full truth. It must be infallible. It has to be clean and pure if it has the power to make holy.

"Thy word is very pure: therefore thy servant loveth it." (Psalm 119:140).

The Bible, which contains the holy Scripture, is fully pure. It should not be hard to love it, because it is pure and reliable. Everything it says is right, and we should want to live it out.

¶ God's revealed will

"So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper *in the thing* whereto I sent it." (Isaiah 55:11).

God has not hidden His will. He has not kept the knowledge of salvation from the world. It is right there in the Bible. His Word has all that is necessary or sufficient for salvation.

The Bible does not show all knowledge, but it shows what God intends to show.

If God could not do what He said, He would be weak. But if God does what He says, He is showing that He is almighty.

And God would not give His Word, only to have His Word lost or only half come to pass in the Earth. If He gave it, He fully intended that it would come to all men before the end of the world, and that it would be able to fully change the lives of people anywhere.

"For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received *it* not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe." (1 Thessalonians 2:13).

If God has given His Word, then men must receive it. They must accept it.

The Bible is a divine book. It cannot be treated as anything else.

Some people might not like the rules of the Bible, because they go against the world. But God's words are right. And people have an inward witness, their conscience, which indicates that the Bible is right.

¶ Study the Word

The Bible has some easy parts, and some parts which are deep. God does not want us to just know Bible stories, or about the Bible, but to grow in our knowledge of His Word.

"As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby" (1 Peter 2:2).

There are certainly some things which are dark in the Bible.



"A wise *man* will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels: To understand a proverb, and the interpretation; the words of the wise, and their dark sayings." (Proverbs 1:5, 6).

As we apply ourselves to the Word of God, and pray for God's help, and listen to and read good teachings, we are going to find great wisdom. The Spirit of God will illuminate our understanding.

"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." (2 Timothy 2:15).

There are so many passages of Scripture which show how important it is for us to learn it. If we do not learn, we will stumble about, or have wrong ideas. God wants us to know His truth, He wants us to walk on in His way. This means that we should regularly read the Bible and also take heed of proper preaching and teaching.

"Thy word *is* a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." (Psalm 119:105).

¶ No Bible contradictions

Some people say that there are contradictions in the Bible. But they say this because they have not studied it properly, and often because they want to believe lies.

Here is one example, where two verses appear to give different information.

"Two and twenty years old *was* Ahaziah when he began to reign;

and he reigned one year in Jerusalem. And his mother's name *was* Athaliah, the daughter of Omri king of Israel." (2 Kings 8:26).

"Forty and two years old *was* Ahaziah when he began to reign, and he reigned one year in Jerusalem. His mother's name also *was* Athaliah the daughter of Omri." (2 Chronicles 22:2).

The question is, if Ahaziah reigned for one year, why does one verse say that he was 22 and the other that he was 42 years old?

The answer is that the people of Jerusalem made Ahaziah king with his father when he was twenty-two, and only reigned independently as a king for one year when he was forty-two years old.

This diagram shows Ahaziah's life, and when he was reigning for twenty years as a regent under his father and under the control of the people of Jerusalem, and when he then reigned on his own for one year.



In the first passage, a semi-colon ";" divides the information, "Two and twenty years old *was* Ahaziah when he began to reign; and he reigned one year in Jerusalem." Just because it does not mention the twenty years does not mean that it is wrong. What we find is complementary not contradictory information.

Most accusations are a lot easier than this to refute.

¶ Bible prophecy

The Bible contains many prophecies about things which have proved to be very accurate.

It is astonishing how many prophecies about Jesus appear in the Old Testament which were fulfilled in the New Testament.

If these are right, and many other prophecies have also been fulfilled, then we should be confident that other things which the Bible says shall occur in the future are going to come to pass also.

“For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.” (Romans 15:4).

There is a purpose in what was written in the Bible. We must see that God has written the Bible for us today. It was not just for people living in the days Moses or in the days of David or in the days of the Apostles. It was not just for Christians hundreds of years ago. It is a sure Word of prophecy which has come to us.

There is no way that the prophets could have made up where Jesus would be born, or at what time, or all the things He would do. But if the prophets were speaking from God, and were writing the truth, then the Bible must be exactly what it claims to be.

Some people try and say that the Bible was written after events, or was tampered with so that the prophecies would fit events. But the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls

that were preserved in desert caves containing documents which date from before the time of Christ, shows that the writings of the prophets are really from ancient times.



¶ Further study

Psalm 119 talks about the Word of God. It shows that it is not a book of suggestions, but law which must be obeyed. It is God's law.

There are words which the Bible uses to describe God's law which you might not fully understand. Read the surrounding passage to find the meaning. Then you may look up the word in the Oxford English Dictionary (which is the best record of words).

“Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.” (Psalm 119:11).

The Word of God does not only exist in a book, but it should be put into the heart. The heart means the inner man, our soul and our spirit, which includes our mind.

We should take the time to read and hear the Scripture, think about it and also memorize some verses. After all, it is God's Word, and it makes us wise. Of course, it is only good if we actually obey God and do it.