

LESSON 3: LAYING THE FOUNDATION FOR YOUR GROWTH

1. Pause now and reflect on the two previous lessons in this series. In the first part of Lesson 1, you reviewed the steps leading to your conversion. In the latter part of that lesson, you studied the meaning of commitment to aid you in living the Christian life. Then in Lesson 2, you studied your new relationship to God and man. Lesson 3 shifts to a new area of interest.

2. The purpose of this Lesson 3 is to lay the foundation of your growth by studying and understanding the place and purpose of the Old Testament in God's scheme of redemption. Since you have already studied about the fall of man and promise of a redeemer (Gen. 3:15) in Lesson 2, the story will be continued from that point.

(Question):

- A. The foundation for your growth is to be laid by the study of God's scheme of redemption. **True or False**
- B. The foundation for your growth is to be laid by studying and understanding the Old Testament. **True or False**

3. Paul, in writing to Romans, explains the purpose of the Old Testament as follows: "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).

(Question):

- A. The Old Testament was given for our learning. **True or False**
- B. The Old Testament was given for our hope. **True or False**

4. Paul gives further instructions concerning the purpose of the Old Testament in 1 Cor. 10:11: "Now all these things happened unto them for examples; and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come." This statement was made concerning the Jews who lived under the law.

(Question):

- A. According to this passage, the Old Testament was given for an example. **True or False**
- B. According to this passage, the Old Testament was given for our salvation. **True or False**

5. As a Christian, you should look upon the Old Testament as a tutor to bring you to Christ. Paul wrote the following words to the Galatians concerning this: "Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us into Christ, that we might be justified by faith" (Gal. 3:24).

(Question):

- A. The Old Testament is binding on you. **True or False**

6. Even though the Old Law does not bind you, this lesson is of great importance to you because a full understanding of the New Testament can't be had until you have knowledge of the Old. This is not to say, however, that you must have a detailed understanding of the Old Testament. Rather your ultimate aim should be an understanding of the New Testament, which is binding on you, by gaining a working knowledge of the Old Testament.

(Question):

LESSON 3: LAYING THE FOUNDATION FOR YOUR GROWTH

- A. This lesson is important because you need to understand the New Testament. **True or False**
- B. This lesson is important because you need a working knowledge of the Old Testament. **True or False**

7. Perhaps it is wise for you to study some of the important facts about the Bible before going on with the specific study of the Old Testament. The Bible is actually a library of sixty-six books. Thirty-nine of these books comprise the Old Testament and twenty-seven comprise the New Testament.

(Question):

- A. How many books in the Bible? 27, 39 or 66

8. These books vary greatly in content and design. Some are history books, some poetry and some prophecy. Some are letters on Christian living; some relate the story of Jesus; and some contain the Acts of the Apostles.

(Question):

- A. The books of Bible vary greatly in content and design of purpose. **True or False**

9. About forty men wrote these books as they were moved by the Holy Spirit (2 Pet. 1:21). Many of these writers did not know each other personally since the writings took place over a period of approximately 1600 years.

(Question):

- A. About _____ men wrote the Bible over a period of _____ years as they were moved by the _____.

10. The number of writers of the Bible and the time span over which they wrote coupled with the fact that the Bible contains no contradictions should prove to you that God is the author and preserver of His Word. Man without guidance from God is incapable of such accomplishment!

(Question):

- A. The Bible is inspired of God. **True or False**

11. Though the books of the Bible vary in many respects, there is an underlying theme or thread interwoven in each of them. This theme is the story of Jesus Christ, the redeemer of mankind. Sometimes the theme is alluded to in prophecy, at other times it is referred to openly.

(Question):

- A. What is the underlying theme of the Bible?

12. To fully understand and properly divide the Bible as commanded in 2 Timothy 2:15, you must study it keeping in mind the three dispensations of time – Patriarchal, Mosaic and Christian. The laws of God vary depending on the dispensation under consideration; thus it is important to determine the dispensation under which the Biblical event occurred.

(Question):

- A. Name the three dispensations of time.
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LESSON 3: LAYING THE FOUNDATION FOR YOUR GROWTH

13. The Patriarchal period of history is the first one recorded in the Bible. It began with the creation and lasted until the children of Israel (the Jews) were delivered out of Egyptian bondage, a period of approximately 2500 years.

(Question):

- A. With what event did the Patriarchal Age begin?
Creation or Deliverance of Israelites.

14. During this period of time God spoke to man through the fathers of the families. You can read of the great patriarchs, Adam, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in Genesis 1 – 50 and Exodus 1 – 19.

(Question):

- A. In what characteristic way did God deal with His people in the Patriarchal age – spoke through the fathers. **True or False.**
B. Gave His written word to use as a guide. **True or False.**

15. The Mosaic Age is the second period of history recorded in the Bible. It began with the Jews at Mt. Sinai as they fled from Egyptians and continued until the death of Christ, a period of approximately 1500 years.

(Question):

- A. How long did the Mosaic Age last. **2500 years or 1500 years.**

16. God gave Moses a law for the Jewish nation on Mt. Sinai. Thus, God deals with His people through Moses, the lawgiver, during this period or time. The events of this period of Bible history are recorded beginning with Exodus 20

through the remainder of the O.T. and continuing through the first four books of the N.T.

(Question):

- A. In what characteristic way did God deal with His people in the Mosaic Age – Gave them commands through the patriarchs. **True or False.**
B. Gave them a law through Moses. **True or False**

17. The third period of Bible history, the Christian Age, is of prime importance because you live under this dispensation. This age began with the death of Christ on the cross and will continue until He returns.

(Question):

Under what dispensation do you live –

- A. Mosaic. **True or False**
B. Christian. **True or False**

18. During this period of time God speaks to us through His word. Instructions concerning this period of Bible history are recorded in the book of Acts and throughout the rest of the Bible.

(Question):

In what characteristic way does God deal with you in the Christian Age?

- A. Through the written word. **True or False**
B. Through Moses and the Patriarchs. **True or False**

19. Now, to review the three periods of Bible history, match the period listed below on the left to the correct characteristic shown on the right.

LESSON 3: LAYING THE FOUNDATION FOR YOUR GROWTH

- (1) Mosaic a. Longest period of O.T. history (2500 yrs)
(2) Christian b. Shortest period of O.T. history (1500 yrs)
(3) Patriarchal c. The period of most importance to you.

20. To further aid you in laying a proper foundation for effective Bible study, two tabulations are given at the end of this lesson. One of these gives the fifteen natural divisions or periods of the Bible, the other shows the proper classification of the books of the Bible. These will be helpful as reference material after you have completed this study.

21. With this introduction to the Bible, you are ready to begin a general study of the O.T. In Lesson 2, you studied about the fall of man (Gen 1-3). The fact that man fell implies a need for being uplifted or redeemed. Then in Gen. 3:15, you studied the promise of a Messiah. This is the beginning of the thread or theme spoken of earlier in this lesson.

(Question):

Genesis 1-3 establishes –

- A. the desires for redemption. **True or False**
- B. the need for redemption. **True or False**

22. God chose Seth, a son of Adam, to head this Messianic line. You might say the rest of the Old Testament is a long story of this Messianic line.

23. Seth, you recall, was born after Cain slew Abel out of jealousy. This jealousy resulted because God accepted Abel's animal sacrifice and rejected Cain's fruit. God should not be blamed for the jealousy, however because he had properly instructed both these sons concerning worship. The Hebrew writer points this out in Hebrews 11:4.

(Question):

- A. Why did God refuse Cain's sacrifice?

24. Man continued to degenerate until "every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually," Gen. 6:5. It repented God that he made man so He determined to destroy man whom he had created. But Noah found grace in the eyes of God because of his obedience and righteousness and was chosen to preserve the Messianic line.

(Question):

- A. Why did God bring the flood upon man?

25. Noah, together with his wife, his three sons, their wives, were saved from the flood. These were the only ones saved – only ones left as a hope for the Messiah. Of the three sons, Shem was chosen to head the Messianic line and continue toward the fulfillment of the theme of the Bible.

(Question):

- A. Why was Noah saved in the flood?

26. Later Abraham was selected as the head of a nation, the Messianic nation (or Jewish nation as it later came to be known) to carry on with preparation to fulfill Gen. 3:15. To him, God gave a covenant that becomes very important in your study of the Bible from this point on.

(Question):

- A. Who was selected to head the Messianic nation?

27. The covenant made with Abraham involved three areas – land, nation and seed. Thus, it is through this nation that the promised redeemer is to come.

LESSON 3: LAYING THE FOUNDATION FOR YOUR GROWTH

(Question):

- A. The thread or theme of the Bible rests now in a nation. **True or False**

28. It should be obvious to you that the promise made to Abraham is vitally connected with the promise of one to bruise the head of the serpent in Gen. 3:15. As the story of this Abrahamic covenant begins to unfold, note that Isaac, the son of Abraham's old age, is selected at the direction of God.

(Question):

- A. Whom did Abraham choose, at God's direction, to continue the preparations for Christ's coming?
Ishmael or Isaac

29. Through Isaac you are introduced to Jacob who becomes the father of twelve sons – the progenitors or ancestors of the twelve tribes. Out of these twelve tribes came a nation – the Messianic or Israelite nation – and so part of the Abrahamic covenant is fulfilled. (Jacob's name was changed to Israel, hence the term Israelites).

(Question):

- A. How many tribes constituted the Messianic nation?

30. A son of Jacob, Joseph, was selected to carry on these national plans and the one who would preserve the Israelites. He was sold by his brothers to a band of wanderers who carried him into Egypt.

(Question):

- A. Which son of Jacob was selected to carry on the national plans?

31. Joseph, with the help of God, did well in this foreign country. Soon the famine came in Canaan and the remainder of Joseph's family was forced into Egypt. Here the nation of Israel really formed.

(Question):

- A. Joseph prospered while in Egypt because he was independent and brilliant. **True or False**

32. After Joseph's death, a king arose which forgot Joseph and his good deeds and subjected the Israelites to bondage. The people cried to God for relief so He rose up Moses to deliver them. Moses accomplished this task for the Lord after proper training.

(Question):

- A. When did God help the Israelites?

33. Moses led the chosen nation of God, Israel, to Mt. Sinai and gave them the law: which he received from God. This event, which happened about 1500 years before Christ was born, marks the end of the Patriarchal Age as far as the Jews were concerned. (The Gentiles continued under the Patriarchal law until Christ died).

(Question):

- A. Who gave the Law on Mt. Sinai?

34. Keep in mind that God had promised Abraham earlier that through him a nation would come (Jews); that all nations of the earth should be blessed (Christ); and a land would be given to them (Canaan). All of these promises were fulfilled during the Mosaic Age.

LESSON 3: LAYING THE FOUNDATION FOR YOUR GROWTH

(Question):

- A. When were the promises made to Abraham fulfilled?

35. The law received by Moses at Sinai contained instructions not only for living, but also worshipping. Directions were given on how to build the tabernacle or place of worship and how to live with their fellow man.

(Question):

- A. God clearly instructed the Jews concerning their manner of living? **True or False**

36. After a period of encampment at Sinai, the Jewish nation set out, under the direction of God, for the Promised Land. However, they were detoured and condemned to wander in the desert for about forty years because of their lack of faith; they would not go in and conquer the land as God hoped.

(Question):

- A. Why did the Jews wander in the wilderness for forty years?

37. Eventually the Jews entered into Canaan. This occurred though only after a period of severe fighting. Joshua led God's people in these battles to conquer the land. You have noted previously that the nation and land promises made to Abraham were fulfilled. Thus, the only promise not fulfilled at this time is the coming of Christ, the Savior of the world.

38. God stipulated the conditions under which the Israelites could remain in the Promised Land. As long as they remained

faithful, God promised to bless them; if they disobeyed, He promised to drive them from the land.

(Question):

- A. The dwelling of the Israelites in Canaan was conditional. **True or False**

39. During the leadership of Joshua, Israel remained true to Jehovah. After that, however, they lapsed into idolatry. As a result, God permitted them to be oppressed by the idolatrous nations whose gods they served. To deliver His wayward people, God raised up men called judges. Some of the more prominent judges are (1) Deborah and Barak, (2) Gideon, (3) Othniel, (4) Samson and (5) Samuel.

(Question):

- A. Why were judges raised up?

40. The Israelites became discontented and began to clamor for a king like the nations around them. Samuel, the last judge, reluctantly appointed a king for the chosen nation at the direction of God. Thus, the people were refusing the leadership of God and were taking the government of the nation into their hands. This was not God's original plan but he allowed the wishes of the people to prevail.

(Question):

- A. Why did the Israelites desire a king?

41. The clamor of a king came at the close of the period of the judges (which lasted approx. 356 years). Samuel appointed Saul to be first king of the Israelites. This event marked the beginning of a 12 year period in the history of the chosen nation.

LESSON 3: LAYING THE FOUNDATION FOR YOUR GROWTH

(Question):

A. How long did the judges reign over the Israelites?

42. Two kings that followed Saul on the throne were David and Solomon. Each of these kings reigned for a period of forty years. The great temple was constructed during the reign of Solomon to supplant the tabernacle.

(Question):

A. List the three kings who reigned over Israel.

43. After Solomon died, his son, Rehoboam, became king. Jeroboam, the son Nebat (1 King 11:26), had been exiled for insurrection before Solomon's death. When Rehoboam would not reduce taxes, Jeroboam returned and led ten of the twelve tribes in rebellion against the king.

(Question):

A. What problem precipitated the division of the united kingdom?

44. Up until this time, the nation was united; now it is being split asunder. The ten tribes became known as the Northern Kingdom while the two remaining tribes were classified as the Southern Kingdom.

(Question):

A. After the kingdom divided into two portions, by what designations were they known?

45. In this divided state, the nation (North and South) became very corrupt. God raised up prophets to try to bring them back. Some of these prophets are probably familiar to you: Isaiah, Joel, Jeremiah, Hosea, Jonah, Micah, Elijah, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Daniel

(Question):

A. Both the Northern and Southern Kingdom became corrupt. **True or False**

46. The chosen people would not hearken to the call of God's men for an appreciable time. Thus, in 722 B.C., the Assyrians defeated the Northern Kingdom and carried it away into captivity (where it lost its identity). The people mixed with their oppressors and became progenitors of the Samaritans mentioned in time of Christ.

(Question):

A. The Northern Kingdom was led away into captivity by the Assyrians _____ or Babylonians _____.

47. About 130 years later, Nebuchadnezzar captured and destroyed the city of Jerusalem. After this destruction, he led king Zedekiah and the Israelites (Southern Kingdom) away in chains to Babylon. This captivity was prophesied earlier and is a fulfillment of God's promise that if they followed other gods, they would be driven from the land.

(Question)

A. The Southern Kingdom was led away into captivity by the Assyrians _____ or Babylonians _____.

48. Stop for a moment and consider the situation of God's people while keeping in mind the promise or covenant that God

LESSON 3: LAYING THE FOUNDATION FOR YOUR GROWTH

made with Abraham many years before. The Northern Kingdom as lost its identity and will never be known as a nation again. The Southern Kindom is in Babylon captivity approximately 700 miles from the Promised Land. Jerusalem is in ruins. From where can the Christ or Savior of man come? The situation is very bleak.

49. Yet God, even before the captivity, had promised through Jeremiah and others that a remnant of Judah (Southern Kingdom) would return to Jerusalem. This was prophesied to transpire after seventy years.

(Question):

A. This prophecy shows that God did not forget His promise. **True or False**

50. During this captivity, the Medes and Persians conquered the Babylonian empire. Cyrus, a Persian king, permitted a contingent of Jews to the Promised Land.

(Question):

A. Who permitted the return of the Jews to the Promised Land?

51. Zerubbabel led this contingent, which had as its primary purpose the rebuilding of the temple. The temple was first destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar. The rebuilding of the temple marks a great event in the history of God's people.

(Question):

A. The primary purpose of the first contingent of the Jews that returned to Jerusalem was rebuilding of the temple marks a great event in the history of God's people. **True or False**

52. A second expedition to Jerusalem was led by Ezra with the primary aim of restoring the spiritual life of the Israelite nation. Secondarily, this expedition was to correct certain corruptions and false beliefs of the people.

(Question):

A. Who led the second expedition to Jerusalem?

53. A third expedition was led by Nehemiah. The primary purpose of this expedition was complete the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem.

(Question):

A. What was the purpose of the third expedition?

54. This work had been interrupted several years by remnants of the Northern Kingdom (Samaritans) who desired to participate in the work. When refused such permission, they prevented progress on reconstruction of the walls. Nehemiah, however, instilled a will to work in the Jews and they rebuilt the wall with one hand in fifty-two days while holding a sword in the other.

(Question):

A. Why did the Jews rebuild the wall with a sword in one hand?

55. Thus, the remnant of Judah has been returned to Jerusalem to establish again the worship of the true God. Malachi brings the Old Testament history to a close by pointing to things to come 400 years later. He says that God will send Elijah (John the Baptist) prior to the sending of His son, Jesus.

LESSON 3: LAYING THE FOUNDATION FOR YOUR GROWTH

(Question):

A. What kingdom survived the captivities?

56 So, God has things prepared or set in order to fulfill the promise made to Abraham that through him all the nations of the earth would be blessed. Truly this blessing came when Christ was born.

57. The first four books of the New Testament relate to you the highlights of your Savior. The books of Acts related the history of the church and its growth. You will study the importance of the church in Lesson 4.

(Question):

A. The first four books of the Bible record events that occurred under the Old ____ or New ____ Law.

58. The remainder of the New Testament (excluding Revelation, which is a book of prophecy) is devoted to instructing you how to live the Christian life. Twenty-one books are filled with principles of Christian living.

(Question):

A. How many books of the New Testament instruct you how to live the Christian life?

59. The importance of your gaining a working knowledge of the Old Testament can't be overstressed. If you don't have these general facts in mind, it would be wise for you to review this lesson before proceeding with subsequent lessons. Once you gain these basic facts, the foundation for your Christian growth has been laid.

(Question):

A. Why is a working knowledge of the Old Testament so important to your growth?

60. It will take you a lifetime to master the details of God's scheme for redeeming fallen man, but a working knowledge of the plan will greatly expedite your comprehension of the will of God. These facts should provide the basis for great spiritual growth and appreciation for the love of God.