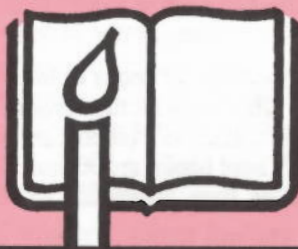


# STUDIES IN THE BIBLE



## Rightly Dividing the Word

### Lesson 2

“Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.” (2 Timothy 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 have two major divisions called the Old and New Testaments. The Old Testament explains God’s relationship with man before the coming of 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 realize 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 letters of Paul, the general epistles, and prophecy.

### Old Testament Books

The first five books are the books of the law, sometimes called the Pentateuch (meaning five books). The Jews call them the Torah. Written by Moses, they trace the history of man during his earliest 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 the father provided the family spiritual leadership. After the Law of Moses was given, there was an organized system of worship on a national scale. Exodus relates the deliverance of the children of Israel (later called the Jews) from Egypt, and an account of their forty-year wandering in the wilderness. Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy give more of the history of this wandering and also record the Law of Moses which governed God’s chosen people, the Israelites, from then until Christ’s death. From Moses to Christ is 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 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.

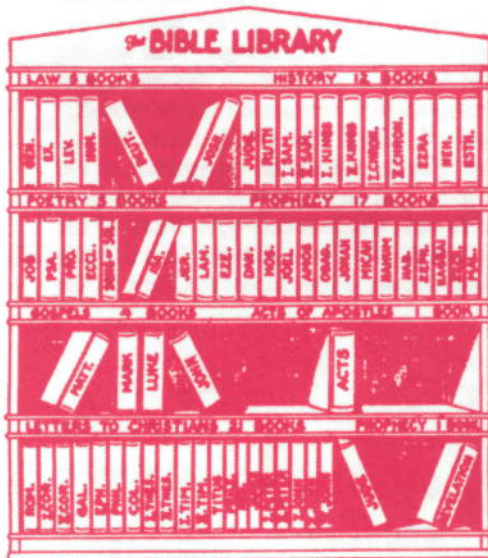
The five books of poetry are books of devotion and exhortation. They may not seem poetic to us because some poetic form has been lost in translation. In many ways they are among the best loved books of the Bible. They include Job (author unknown), the Psalms or songs of praise, partially written by David, and Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Solomon, all written by Solomon. Probably the best known piece of writing in the world is the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm. One could not find greater words of wisdom in our day than the admonitions of Solomon. 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 longer. 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 events which were soon to happen to the Jews and their neighbors.

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 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 complete story of the ministry, 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 Christians in those days.



The next 21 books are epistles telling Christians how to live. Some were written to individuals and others to various congregations. The first 14, attributed to Paul, are Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon, and Hebrews. Paul's authorship of Hebrews is uncertain. The other seven letters are often called the general epistles 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 Revelation, a book of prophecy written by John. It tells us about things which were to "shortly come to pass." (Rev. 1:1.) Although parts of this book are difficult to understand, it is a very valuable book and worthy of our study.

Thus we have divided the Bible into its proper divisions. The New Testament is much more relevant 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 will emphasize the New Testament more than 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 attributed to 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 by 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?

Name..... Grade.....

Address..... Date.....

City..... By.....

**STUDIES IN THE BIBLE – LESSON 2**