

GREAT BIBLE THEMES

With this lesson you are beginning a topical study of the word of God. Twenty-five (25) "Great Bible Themes" have been selected, each of which should have a vital bearing upon a proper understanding of man's place in God's universe, and the interest and love he has shown by making provision for our welfare.

In order for you to get the most from your study, we suggest, first of all, that you take plenty of time for each lesson. Do not rush through any of them. Your objective is not to see how quickly you can finish a lesson, but rather to see how much you can get out of each topic you study. After you have gone through a lesson carefully you can profit a great deal by re-reading it a number of times.

On page one of each lesson you will find several thought questions. These questions are for your own study. You do NOT have to send us your answers to these questions. The last page of each lesson is a test on the lesson. Fill out this page and mail it back to us. NOTE: The last page (test sheet) of each lesson is ALL you mail back to us.

Upon receipt of your answers, we will grade your paper and return it to you with the next lesson.

All references are to the King James or Authorized Version of the Bible. We assume that you are familiar enough with the books of the Bible to find references to any book readily.

This course was first prepared by the Bible Department of Harding College, Searcy, Arkansas with the exception of the test pages which were prepared by the writer of these pages.

It is the sincere prayer of all who have had a part in preparing and sending these lessons to you that they may be a blessing to you.

LESSON ONE

GREAT BIBLE THEMES

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE CLAIM FOR ITSELF?

It is very interesting to study what different men and groups of men think about the Bible. Some have declared it to be a book containing excellent moral instruction, still others claim it is the greatest book that man has been able to produce. This leads us to the following questions: . . .

1. Do all these claims fall short of what the Bible claims for itself?
2. Does the Bible claim to be more than the best that man has been able to produce?
3. Did Moses and the prophets of the Old Testament think of their writings as their own best work, or did they claim guidance from above for themselves?
4. We sometimes refer to the Bible as being an "inspired book." What is meant by this term? Does it mean more than is included within the statement some of us might make if we should say that we are feeling fine and feel "inspired" to do our best work today?
5. Did the writers of the New Testament write as good historians only or did they claim guidance from above?
6. Had they been promised such guidance?

shall he let them go, and with a strong hand shall he drive them out of his land. (AKJV) Exodus 9:8, And the Lord said unto Moses and unto Aaron, Take to you handfuls of ashes of the furnace, and let Moses sprinkle it toward the heaven in the sight of Pharaoh. (AKJV) Exodus 20:22, And the Lord said unto Moses, Thus thou shalt say unto the children of Israel, Ye have seen that I have talked with you from heaven. (AKJV) Numbers 2:1, And the Lord spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying, (AKJV). The expression is "_____". This expression or its equivalent is used more than five hundred times in the writings of Moses.

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A study of the Old Testament prophets will reveal that they claim that their messages were not their own, but that they came from God. Check the references given below and fill in the blanks. We are not concerned in this study about the particular things that each prophet said, but you will want to notice that in every blank you are copying a statement that shows that the authors of the books of the Old Testament definitely declared that they were giving the _____ to the people.

Isaiah 1:10 Hear the _____.

Isaiah 10:24 Therefore _____.

Jeremiah 1:7 But the _____
_____.

Jeremiah 2:1 Moreover the _____
_____.

Ezekiel 3:11 And speak unto them, and tell them, _____
_____.

Ezekiel 14:2 And the _____
_____.

Hosea 1:1 The _____
_____.

Amos 3:1 Hear this _____
_____ against you.

Obadiah 1:1 The vision of Obadiah. _____
_____ concerning Edom.

Zephaniah 1:1 The _____
_____.

David wrote many of the Psalms. Notice his claim to inspiration as given in 2 Samuel 23:2, "The _____
_____, and his _____
_____." According to P. P. Fitzwater, the expression, "Thus said the Lord," or an equivalent expression, occurs some two thousand times in the prophets of the Old Testament and about three hundred times in the Psalms.

Let us now notice two verses in the New Testament which tell us how we received the Old Testament prophecies and other scripture. The first is 2 Peter 1:21, "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake _____ ."
_____ ."
_____ ."
The second is 2 Timothy 3:16, "All scripture is given _____ ."
_____ ."
These two expressions simply mean that the scriptures have been "spirit-breathed" or "God-given."

The writers of the New Testament quoted from the Old Testament and referred to these books as being inspired of God. The first chapter of Matthew tells of the birth of Jesus. He said that his birth was in fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies. Notice too that he said that these prophecies were spoken by the Lord. (1:22) "Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was _____ by _____ ."

While Jesus was on earth he repeatedly assured his apostles that they would receive guidance from God. When he sent them on the limited commission to preach to the House of Israel only, he promised them, Matthew 10:19-20, "For it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the _____ ."
_____ ."
Before he ascended into heaven he further promised them the guidance of the Spirit of God. Notice John 14:26. Jesus promised them the comforter or Holy Ghost (Spirit), whom the Father was to send, and states that "he shall _____ ,
_____ , and bring all things _____ ,
_____ , whatsoever I have said unto you." See also John

16:13, "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will _____."

The first occasion in which we have these last promises fulfilled is recorded in the second chapter of Acts. Notice verse four: "And they were filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the _____."

Notice two statements from the writings of Paul in which he denies that his message came from man, but clearly declares that it was God given. The first is 1 Corinthians 2:13, "Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which _____."

The second reference is to Galatians 1:11-12, "But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is _____. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the _____ of _____."

Thus, we see what the writers of the Bible claim for the source of their writings. If we do not accept this testimony as true, we are forced to the conclusion that they have conspired together to pawn off on the human race the greatest deception the world has ever known. Who can believe that they deliberately misrepresented the truth in declaring that their message came from God. Such a possibility seems the more absurd when we recall that the Bible was written by about forty (40) different men over a period of about sixteen hundred (1,600) years. This would mean that Moses, who lived about fifteen hundred (1,500) years before Christ, began this deception and that others carried it on for the next sixteen (16) centuries. Who can believe this? Remember, the greatest question of all is, "What does it mean to

me to know what the Bible claims for itself.” Think on this question.

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Test

1. The first five books of the Old Testament are called books of Law or History. These five books were written by: (a) Joshua, (b) David, (c) Moses, (d) Noah. _____
2. Moses was an: (a) Egyptian, (b) Israelite, (c) Gentile, (d) heathen. _____
3. Paul said that his message came from man and was not inspired. (True or False) _____
4. "And the Lord said unto Moses" or its equivalent is used more than: (1) 15 times, (b) 5,000 times, (c) 150 times, (d) 500 times in Moses' writings. _____
5. "Inspiration" means: (a) from within, (b) from man, (c) God-given, (d) obtained by study. _____
6. The writers of the New Testament never referred to the Old Testament as inspired of God. (True or False) _____
7. The purpose of Jesus sending the Holy Ghost after his death to his disciples was to: (a) guide them into all truth, (b) guide them in a partial truth, (c) to assist them only in working miracles. _____
8. This teaching: "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy ghost," is found in: (a) 2 Samuel 23:2, (b) 2 Timothy 3:16, (c) Galatians 1:8-9, (d) 2 Peter 1:21

9. The things Paul preached were the teaching of: (a) the Holy Spirit, (b) angels, (c) man. _____

10. Do the writers of the Bible claim inspiration or divine guidance from God concerning their preaching and teaching? (Yes or No) _____