

WORLD VIDEO BIBLE SCHOOL

Fundamentals of the Faith

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LESSON #6 — THE BIBLE'S ORGANIZATION & WHICH TESTAMENT ARE WE UNDER?

That brings us to the next major point on our outline, Roman numeral 5, and that is the organization of the Bible. We want to study briefly about the organization of God's Word, the Bible. We need to do that so that we can help keep it in our minds properly, and keep it organized in our own minds. So let's take a look at some major points about the organization of the Bible.

First of all, the Bible is a book which consists of 66 smaller books. So we have a group of books that are put together as a whole by God, in His providence, and in the process of revealing His will. But those books are also further divided into two major parts. First of all, there is the Old Testament. The Old Testament, which consists of 39 books, Genesis through Malachi, showing God's dealings with the nation of Israel. And then the second major division of the Bible is the New Testament, which consists of 27 books, Matthew through the book of Revelation. So that gives us a brief, broad overview of the structure of God's Word, divided into Old Testament and New Testament.

Now we'd like to talk a little bit about some divisions of the Old Testament, and like to ask you to keep in mind that these divisions are not inspired. But they're a good way to help us keep the organization of the Bible in our mind. Now let's go to the board and look at those divisions given by men. That is, there are five books of law, that is containing Genesis through the book of Deuteronomy, in which we learn of the origin of man and the creation of the Universe by God, in six literal days as recorded in the book of Genesis, and the giving of the law to the nation of Israel from Mount Sinai, and God's dealings with Israel during that period.

Then the second major division of the Old Testament: there are 12 books of history, from Joshua to the book of Esther, and these 12 books of history contain much of the history of the nation of Israel. Then there are five books of poetry, and this contains some of the most beautiful literature ever known in the history of man. This contains Job through the Song of Solomon. Then there are 17 books of prophecy, Isaiah through Malachi. Prophecies given to the nation of Israel, and also after the divided kingdom, to Israel and Judah, and prophecies concerning the coming of Jesus the Christ and His Kingdom, as He was going to be the Messiah, the Savior of the world. Often times, we'll see these 17 books of prophecy further divided into what are called 5 major prophets, Isaiah through Daniel. Major, not from the standpoint that they're any more important than the other books of prophecy, but that generally they're longer than the other books of prophecy. Then there are 12, what are called Minor Prophets, Hosea through Malachi. So that's one way of dividing those 17 books of prophecy a little bit further.

Now let's go to the other side of the board and study some of the divisions of the New Testament. How is it that this book is divided logically by God? Well, first of all, we have four

accounts of the gospel. We believe it's best to say it that way, rather than four gospels, because there is one gospel message. There are four accounts of the gospel, and that is in Matthew through John. And that briefly tells us of the life and teachings of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. A beautiful part of God's Word.

A second major division of the New Testament, there is one book of history, telling of the history of the New Testament Church, its establishment, and it's beginning to do the things that the Lord commanded to be done. This is recorded in the Book of Acts, and it tells us how to become a Christian. There are many accounts of conversion found here, where people turn from their life of sin, to a life of obedience to the Lord, including their baptism into Christ for the forgiveness of their sins.

A third division of the New Testament: there are 21 epistles, or letters. And that is the book of Romans through the book of Jude. In this very practical section of the Word of God, God tells us how we can live the Christian life, after we become a Christian. How we can apply His Word to our lives, to be more pleasing to Him, and to grow the way that He wants us to.

And then the final division of the New Testament, one book of prophecy, that is the book of Revelation. Now, we've heard many stories about the book of Revelation, probably, some very fearful. But we believe the message of the book of Revelation is a beautiful message for the Christian. And that is, it tells us of the hope that is available to the faithful follower of Christ. For example, Jesus said in Revelation 2, verse 10, if we're faithful unto death, we'll receive the crown of life. So the book of Revelation contains a wonderful ray of hope, at the end of God's revelation of the New Testament of His Son, our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

So we hope that gives you a big picture, if you will, and then further dividing the Old and New Testaments into sections, so that when you need to refer to a particular item, when you need to answer a particular question, keep those divisions in your mind and it will help you to focus in on your study of the Word of God.

But a question which often comes up when we talk about the Old Testament and the New Testament is: Which Testament do we live under, and are we obligated to obey, today? Which Testament do we live under, and are we obligated to obey, today? Why is it important to discuss that question, and answer the question from the Bible?

Well, just look into the denominational world as it exists today. We have people who are teaching, very much, that we ought to keep the Sabbath day as a holy day, that is the seventh day of the week, Saturday, as they did in Old Testament times. And then there are others who teach that the 10 Commandments are binding upon us as Christians today as law. Well, we have to determine whether that is correct or not according to the standard that God has given us: His Word. If He tells us to worship Him on the Sabbath, then we better do it, if we want to be pleasing to Him. And so we need to search the Scriptures to determine the answer, whether such teachings are correct.

First of all, in doing that, we'd like to study several points about the Old Testament. Let's study some points about the Old Testament. What does God say in His Word about that Old Testament? Well, it was also called "The Law" (John 1, verse 17). And it was called "The Covenant" (Exodus, chapter 34, verse 27). It was made between God and Israel, after God brought the Israelites out of Egypt, from their suffering and bondage there, to Mount Sinai (Exodus 19, verses 1 through 5).

It was a national law, given only to the nation of Israel. Please consider the following Scriptures which show that point. First of all, in the book of Exodus, chapter 19, verse 3 and 6, this is addressed to the children of Israel. This is right when Moses went up to Mount Sinai to receive the law from God. Then, secondly, in Exodus chapter 34, verse 27, God refers to it as His covenant with Israel. And thirdly, in Deuteronomy, chapter 5, verse 1, Moses talks about how this was given to all Israel. So what do those passages teach us? That it was a national law given to the nation of Israel. It included, furthermore, the 10 commandments, as we see in Exodus, chapter 20, verses 3 through 17, and chapter 34, verse 28.

This next point is critically important. It was for a definite, limited time. And God said that that limited time was, quote, "Till the seed should come" (Galatians chapter 3, verse 19). And according to the Word of God, this seed was Jesus the Christ (Galatians chapter 3, verse 16). So it was for a definite limited time, until Jesus the Christ would come into the world. It was prophesied long ago, that it would be replaced by a new covenant. That's found in the book of Jeremiah, chapter 31, verses 31 and following. God said, that He would replace that Old Covenant, that old law, with a new covenant, with a new law. And this is quoted as fulfilled by the New Testament of Jesus Christ in Hebrews chapter 8, verses 6 through 13, and chapter 10, verses 16 and 17.

So God prophesied in the Old Testament, "I'm going to replace this Old Covenant with a New Covenant. And he said in the New Testament, the New Testament is the fulfillment of that prophecy. It is the replacement for that Old Testament law.

Then we read, Jesus came to fulfill it. In Matthew chapter 5, verse 17, Jesus said, "Do not think that I came to destroy the Law and the Prophets. I came not to destroy, but to fulfill." What did Jesus mean by that statement? Well, when we go to Luke's account of the gospel, we get some enlightenment from Jesus on that subject. Turn with me, if you would, to the book of Luke, and the 24th chapter. Luke chapter 24. First we'll read verses 25 through 27, Luke 24:25-27. "Then he said to them, 'O foolish ones and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken. Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory? And beginning at Moses, and all the prophets, he expounded to them in all the Scriptures, the things concerning himself.'" So Jesus was reprimanding, He was correcting His apostles, because they had not made the connection between the prophecies in the Old Testament and His coming to this earth to fulfill those prophecies. And He began at Moses, whom God used to reveal the first five books, the books of law, that we talked about, and went to the prophets, the things concerning Himself.

And then in this same chapter, beginning with verse 44, and going through verse 48. "Then he said to them, 'These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the Law of Moses and the prophets and the Psalms concerning Me.' And he opened their understanding that they might comprehend the scriptures. Then he said to them, 'Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem, and you are witnesses of these things.'" So Jesus said that all things must be fulfilled, which were written by Moses, in the law, in the prophets, and in the psalms concerning Him. There were amazing and

startling predictions, prophecies given by God in that Old Testament, and Jesus fulfilled all of them, as we referred to in an earlier class in our study.

Then the next point we need to consider concerning the Old Testament is that Jesus took it out of the way, and He nailed it to His cross. And we see that very graphically portrayed for us in the book of Colossians. Please turn with me to Colossians chapter 2, verses 14 through 16. Colossians chapter 2, we'll be reading verse 14 and verse 16. "Having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us, and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross." Then in verse 16, he says, "Therefore, let no one judge you in food, or in drink, or regarding a festival, or a new moon, or Sabbaths." So Jesus took away the handwriting of ordinances which was against mankind, which was contrary to mankind, which pointed out mankind's sin. And He took it away, and nailed it to the cross. In terms of its binding force as law, it is no longer binding as law. It was placed on the cross of Jesus by Himself. What law was Jesus talking about? He tells us in verse 16. The law that had regulations concerning clean and unclean, food and drinks, and festivals, and new moons, and Sabbaths. Which Testament is that? That's the Old Law, the Old Covenant, the Old Testament, including the obligation to keep the Sabbath: that has been nailed to the cross by our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. This is consistent with the fact that the New Testament of Jesus Christ went into effect at His death, thus replacing the Old (Hebrews 9:15-17).

Now we'd like to look at some points that the apostle Paul made in the book of Romans, where he said that Christians are not several things. First of all, in chapter six, verse 15, we are not under the Law. That's pretty clear. God tells us that Christians are not under the Law. Then in chapter 7, verse 4, he said, "We are dead to the law." And you might make a reference in your notes to Galatians 2, verse 19, which says that same thing: if we're dead to the Law, it no longer has binding power and force upon us. And then in chapter 7, verse 6, he said that Christians are delivered or discharged from the Law. Very clear statements then from the Apostle Paul, by the inspiration of God.

But what Law was Paul talking about in Romans chapter 7? Well, again, God gives us the answer to that question. In Romans, the seventh chapter, and verse 7. Remember, he said in verse 4, that Christians are not under the Law. Verse 6 that were delivered from the Law. So what Law is it that we're talking about? Well, he gives us the answer in verse 7. He says, "What shall we say then? Is the law sin? Certainly not. On the contrary, I would not have known sin, except through the Law. For I would not have known covetousness unless the Law had said, 'You shall not covet.'" Paul, by the inspiration of God, quotes from that Law, that he says that Christians are not under, or dead to, or delivered from. What Law was it? It was the Law, the Old Law, the Old Covenant, which contained the commandment, "Thou shalt not covet," "You shall not covet." So Christians are not under that Old Testament.

The First Testament, which we know was the Old, was taken away by Jesus, so that He could establish the Second, which is the New. Please turn with me to the book of Hebrews, the tenth chapter, verse 9 and 10, for confirmation of that fact. Hebrews 10, verse 9 and 10. "Then he said, 'Behold, I have come to do Your will, O God.' He takes away the first that he may establish the second. By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ, once for all." Here is a prophecy concerning Jesus, "I have come to do

Your will,” He says to the Father. And He talks about that that First was taken away so that the Second might be established. And in verse 10, He tells us that it's by that Second Will, the New Testament of Jesus, that Christians are sanctified, set apart from sin, and dedicated to God. They're sanctified by the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. Not by the offering of the body and blood of animals as in the Old Testament, but by the superior sacrifice, the offering of the body of Jesus Christ and His blood. That shows the superiority of the New Testament, and that it in fact replaced the Old.

Another point: Christ redeemed first century Christians from the curse of the Law (Galatians 3:13). And He did that by becoming a curse, by hanging on the tree, the cross of Calvary. Well, what conclusion can we draw, when we study all of those passages of Scripture? From these Scriptures, it is clear that the Old Testament or Covenant is not binding as law on us today. It has been replaced by the new testament of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, which we'll study about in a minute. But first, let's take a look at a brief summary of the points that we've studied concerning the Old Testament.

First of all, it was also called the Law and the Covenant. Secondly, it was between God and Israel when they were brought out of Egypt, by God. Thirdly, it was a national law given only to the nation of Israel. Fourth, it contained the 10 commandments. Fifth, It was for a limited time until the seed came, and the seed was Jesus the Christ. Next, it was prophesied even in the Old Testament that it would be replaced by a New Covenant. Our seventh point, Jesus came to fulfill it. Number eight, He nailed it to His cross, taking it out of the way. Number nine, it was replaced at His death by the New Testament. Number 10, Paul said in Romans that Christians are not under the Law, we're dead to it, and we're delivered from it. And number 11, the first, that is the Old Testament, was taken away, so that the Second could be established. Number 12, Christ redeemed first century Christians from that Old Law. That means, that they were not under that Old Law anymore, even though they had lived under it in the past. And our conclusion, the Old Testament is not binding upon us as law today. It has been replaced by the New Testament of Jesus the Christ.

May we thank God and praise Him, that He has dealt with man in this way. That He used the Old Testament to prepare mankind for the coming of a Messiah, of a Savior, of a King, the Christ. And that He might prepare mankind by showing the horribleness of sin, and how it's necessary for blood to be shed in order for the forgiveness of sins to occur. And then, coming into the New Testament times, as Galatians 4:4 says, “In the fullness of time, Christ came forth, born of a woman, born under the Law.” Fulfilled those prophecies. Gave His body and His blood for the forgiveness of our sins. And it's under His Testament that you and I live today. And that's the Testament that we're obligated to obey, as we go through our life of service to the Lord.