

SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES 1

What the Bible Says About Itself



The Bible, called also "The Scriptures", is the only word of God giving His message to the world. We read that *"all Scripture is given by inspiration of God"* (2 Timothy 3:16), meaning that God guided the men as they wrote. It is made up of 66 books - 39 in the Old Testament and 27 in the New Testament. The Lord Jesus Christ said, *"The scripture cannot be broken"* (John 10:35), so we must rate them as highly as He did. It is a book of facts, of miracles, of prophecy and poetry, and a book of moral and spiritual teaching. Some men over the years have hated the Bible and tried to destroy it. Yet it has stood firm as *"the Word of God that endureth forever"* (1 Peter 1:25).

THE OLD TESTAMENT

In Genesis, the first book of the Bible, we are told about the beginning of everything, except God. The beginning of the universe, of life, of man, of sin, of salvation, of marriage, of the home, of nations, of music, of literature, of science and, indeed, of everything that we know, is revealed to us in this exciting book. The sixteen books from Exodus to Esther record a good deal of Israel's history, while the five books from Job to Song of Solomon contain wonderful poetry and songs. The remaining seventeen books from Isaiah to Malachi contain many of God's messages to the Israelites and numerous prophecies concerning their future. The Old Testament also is vitally related to the New Testament.

THE NEW TESTAMENT

There are four main groups of books in the New Testament, namely the Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, the twenty-one Epistles (or Letters) and the Revelation. The Gospels - four in number - give an account of the life, death, resurrection and ascension of God's Son, Jesus Christ; Acts recounts the story of the early Christian Church; the Epistles contain great teachings of the Christian faith; Revelation gives a view of future events on the earth, in heaven and in hell.

CONCLUSION

The Bible is a *"lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path"* (Psalm 119:105). It is like a hammer that breaks the rocks (Jeremiah 23:29), seed to give life (1 Peter 1:23), and a sword that cuts (Hebrews 4:12). Let us, therefore, accept it as being the only word of God and then apply its teachings to our lives.

Whether you are doing these lessons from a Course Book or directly from the website, you can send in your answers to us using the Exam Form on the website menu.

EXAM 1

(Use EXAM FORM C on the website menu)

Enter the correct answer:

1. How many books in the Old Testament?
2. Which is the book of beginnings?
3. Which group of books contain poetry and songs?
4. In which book do we read the account of the early Christian Church?
5. How many epistles are there?

Enter 'True' or 'False' after each of the following statements:

6. The Holy Spirit said, "The Scriptures cannot be broken".
7. We should rate the Scriptures as highly as Christ did.
8. There are 29 books in the New Testament
9. The Gospels give an account of the life, death and resurrection of Christ.
10. The Revelation contains the great teachings of the Christian faith

SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES 2

What the Bible Says About God

The Scriptures assume the existence of God. He is the eternal, supreme Being, Creator of the universe. *"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth"* (Genesis 1:1). He is all-wise, all-powerful and present everywhere at the same time. The Scriptures also tell us that God is absolutely holy (1 Peter 1:15,16); that He is love (1 John 4:8); and that He can be trusted completely (1 Corinthians 10:13). An important command He has given to mankind is, *"You shall have no other gods before Me"* (Exodus 20:3). He is the One who should be worshipped, honoured and served.

THE TRIUNE GOD

There is only one God. *"For there is one God"* states 1 Timothy 2:5. However, we are also told that there are three persons of the Godhead - God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. In Matthew 28:19 these three persons are linked under one name. Other passages in the Scripture teach this. For instance, Matthew 3:16,17 reads: *"And Jesus, when He was baptized, went up immediately out of the water: and lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon Him: and lo, a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased"*. The three persons of the Godhead, though one, have different functions to perform.

GOD THE FATHER

A verse in the Bible that tells us that God the Father is in fact God, is Romans 1:7, *"Grace to you and peace from God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ"*. He is a Spirit (John 4:24) and is often referred to as the first person of the Trinity. Nevertheless, He is not more powerful or greater than either the Son or the Holy Spirit: all are co-equal. Numerous portions of the Word of God refer to Him as Father, e.g. the Lord's words in Matthew 6:9, *"Our Father who is in heaven, hallowed be Your name"*. He has a plan for the whole universe, including the human race, and has revealed Himself to us.

Moses, one of Israel's great leaders, prayed to Him, saying "O Lord God, You have begun to show Your servant Your greatness, and Your mighty hand; for what God is there in heaven or in earth, that can do according to Your works and according to Your might?" (Deuteronomy 3:24).

He is a God of love, of mercy, of kindness, of holiness, of justice and is the giver of all good things. The greatest of His gifts to us was His Son, Jesus Christ; For "God so loved the world, that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him will not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). Have you ever thanked God for this wonderful gift?

SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

EXAM 2

(Use EXAM FORM C on the website menu)

Enter the correct answer:

1. How many persons in the Godhead?
2. Who is referred to as the first person of the triune God?
3. Is God the Father a man, an angel, or a spirit?
4. God the Father and God the Son being two persons of the Godhead, who is the third?
5. Who prayed, "For what God is there in heaven or in earth that can do according to Your works...?"

Enter "True' or 'False' after each of the following statements.

6. The Scriptures assume the existence of God.
7. There are three Gods.
8. We can worship and serve any god we like.
9. God's plan for the universe includes the human race.
10. Christ was the greatest of all God's gifts to mankind.

SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES 3

What the Bible Says About God the Son

The Lord Jesus Christ is God the Son. He had no beginning but is eternal. "In the beginning was the Word (Christ), and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1). Let no one make the terrible mistake of saying that He was not or is not God! He is called "Emmanuel - God with us" (Matthew 1:23); "Christ the Lord" (Luke 2:11); "The Word" (John 1:1). In Hebrews 1:8 we find recorded those glorious words of the Father to His Son, "Your throne, O God, is for ever and ever."

However, Christ not only is God, but He also became a man. He left heaven and came down to this world, being born of the virgin Mary. He was named Jesus, which means "Salvation of God" (Matthew 1:21). He was God revealed in human form (1 Timothy 3:16). Like any other man He knew what it was to be tired and hungry, but unlike us, He never committed any sin. The Bible says "He did no sin" (1 Peter 2:22). He came so that He could be the Saviour of the world. "Unto you is born a Saviour" (Luke 2:11). He was born in Bethlehem and lived most of His life in Nazareth. For three and a half years He had a public ministry, when He went about teaching the people, healing the sick and preparing His disciples for their future work. However, the greatest message of the Bible concerns His death and resurrection. He was falsely accused by the people who hated Him, falsely tried and then falsely sentenced by the Roman Governor,

Pilate. On Mount Calvary, outside Jerusalem, He was crucified on a Roman cross, between two thieves.

"But", you may ask, "why did He die if He did not do anything wrong or commit sin?" Many verses in the Scripture answer this question, such as Isaiah 53:5,6, *"He was wounded for our transgressions... the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all..."*; Romans 5:8, *"God commendeth (God proved) His love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us"*; 1 Corinthians 15:3, *"Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures."* He died, therefore, that you and I may have salvation. See Lesson No. 5. Three days after His crucifixion, He was raised again from the dead (1 Corinthians 15:4)! He then appeared to His disciples and many others before ascending back to heaven and to His Father's right hand (1 Corinthians 15:6, Acts 1:9). One day He is coming back again! (Acts 1:11, 1 Thessalonians 4:16, 1 Corinthians 15:23).

GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Holy Spirit is God. We read this in Acts 5:3,4. He is a person, not just an influence as some wrongly believe and teach. One of His main tasks is to *"reprove the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgement"* (John 16:8). He comforts (John 14:16,17,26), guides (John 16:13), teaches (John 14:26), can be grieved (Ephesians 4:30) and can be hindered in His dealings with us. He was the person of the Godhead who inspired holy men as they wrote the Scriptures (2 Timothy 3:15,16; 2 Peter 1:21). He indwells the bodies of all Christians, as we read in 1 Corinthians 3:16. He fills believers with His power, thus enabling them to live in a way well pleasing to God.

SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

EXAM 3

(Use EXAM FORM C on the website menu)

Enter the correct answer:

1. Where was Jesus born?
2. Who was the mother of Jesus?
3. Where did Jesus live most of His life?
4. Who was the Roman Governor who finally sentenced Jesus to death?
5. On what mountain was Christ crucified?

Enter 'True' or 'False' after each of the following statements:

6. Jesus Christ is God.
7. The Lord's public ministry lasted for 5 years.
8. After His resurrection and appearances to various disciples, the Lord ascended to heaven.
9. The Father convicts the world of sin, righteousness and judgement.
10. The Holy Spirit gives the believer power to live a life that will glorify God.

SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES 4

What the Bible Says About Man

It was God who made the heavens and the earth, the sun, the moon and the stars. He created also fish, birds, animals and vegetation. Then, "God created man". This is what is stated in Genesis 1:27. Adam was the first man and, later, Eve was created and given to Adam as his wife. What a glorious creation it all was! Man was made chiefly to glorify God; so we should live with this aim in view.

All men and women have a free will. We can do what we like, whether good or bad. God wants us, in using our free will, to choose to love and serve Him, so that we may enjoy His presence and fellowship.

THE SIN OF MAN

There came a time in the lives of Eve and then Adam, when they disobeyed God, and sinned (Romans 5:12). Later, they died because of this. Ever since their disobedience, man has been born with a sinful nature. All of us have sinned. In Romans 3:23 we see that "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God". This means that we all have missed the mark and have not kept the standard of perfection that God requires. Evil thoughts as well as evil actions are sins in the sight of God. The Scriptures declare that "there is none righteous, no not one" (Romans 3:10). You and I must face up to this fact that we have done wrong in thought, word and deed. We should acknowledge before God that we have committed sin. The Bible says, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us" (1 John 1:8).

THE PUNISHMENT OF MAN

The Word of God not only proves the fact of sin in our lives, but the holiness of God also protests against it. God is pure and absolutely righteous, so He cannot be associated in any way with sin. Further, He is completely just and has, therefore, passed sentence upon all men because of their sin. The Scripture says, "The wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23). This "death" is a spiritual separation from God. Sin, of course, brought also physical death, which we all know about. In Hebrews 9:27 we read. "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgement". The final punishment for all who are not saved will be hell - Lake of Fire. It is recorded in Revelation 20:15 that "whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire". Solemn words! This will be an eternal, conscious punishment, something that you should avoid at all costs.

SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

Exam 4

(Use EXAM FORM C on the website menu)

Enter the correct answer:

1. Who created man?
2. Who was the first man?
3. Who was the first woman?
4. Give the chapter and verse in Romans which says that "all have sinned."
5. Where will those people go whose names are not found written in the book of life?

Enter 'True' or 'False' after each of the following statements:

6. Man was created before the Universe.
7. The chief aim of man is to admire God.
8. Evil thoughts are not sins.
9. The wages of sin is death.
10. The punishment in the lake of fire will be eternal

SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES 5

What the Bible Says About Salvation

Many questions are asked about salvation. In this lesson we are to consider three, namely: (1) "What is salvation?" (2) "How can a person be saved?" and (3) "Who can be saved?".

1. WHAT IS SALVATION?

Salvation is deliverance. In the Bible it is illustrated nationally, physically and spiritually. Nationally, the Israelites were saved from their bondage and slavery in Egypt (Exodus 13:14). They could not do this themselves, however; God had to do it for them. Daniel was saved physically from the lions' mouths so that he would not be harmed (Daniel 6:22,23). More important by far than national or physical salvation is "spiritual salvation". Spiritually men and women, all of whom are sinners and doomed to destruction, can receive this great salvation, but they cannot obtain it themselves - it is a gift of God. Further, it is not obtained from any church, baptism, creeds or works, but from a person - and that Person is the Lord Jesus Christ. *"By grace are ye saved through faith and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not of works lest any man should boast"* (Ephesians 2:8,9). With such a salvation comes the joy of forgiveness, the power to live the Christian life and a glorious hope that one day we shall be taken to heaven to be with our Saviour for all eternity.

2. HOW CAN A PERSON BE SAVED?

Salvation is only possible through Jesus Christ. The Bible says, *"Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given amongst men, whereby we must be saved"*. To be saved, you must repent of (turn away from) your sin, and by faith, receive Christ as your Saviour and Lord. *"As many as received Him (Christ), to them gave He the right to become children of God, even to them who believe on His name"* (John 1:12). The Scriptures declare, *"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved"* (Acts 16:31).

3. WHO CAN BE SAVED?

You and I can be saved. Salvation is universal and is regardless of nationality, language, background, education or culture. *"The gospel (good news) is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth"* (Romans 1:16). Since you can be saved, why not receive Christ as your Saviour right now? Go to Him straight away and pray, "Lord Jesus, I acknowledge I am a sinner; I am sorry for my sin; I thank You for dying on the Cross so that I can be saved; and I now take You, by faith, as my own personal Saviour and Lord". Don't delay in making this most important decision of your life. This may be the only opportunity you have. *"Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation"* (2 Corinthians 6:2).

SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

EXAM 5

(Use EXAM FORM C on the website menu)

Enter the correct answer:

1. Which is the most important:- national, physical or spiritual salvation?
2. Who were saved from the bondage and slavery of Egypt?
3. Who shut the lions' mouths so that Daniel would not be harmed?
4. Through which person only can we receive this wonderful salvation?
5. What is the word generally used to express "good news"?

Enter 'True' or 'False' after each of the following statements:

6. Salvation is possible only because Christ died on the cross.
7. Salvation is not connected with any Church, baptism or creeds.
8. Only good people can be saved.
9. People can work their way to heaven.
10. It is absolutely necessary that for salvation we repent of sin and by faith take Jesus Christ as our Saviour.

SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES 6

What the Bible Says About Bible Reading and Prayer

Prayer, Bible reading, Church fellowship and witnessing are of the utmost importance to the Christian. In these last two lessons we shall briefly consider these in regard to our living for Christ.

PRAYER

Prayer is simply talking to God. The normal pattern of prayer is to God the Father in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ (Luke 11:2; John 15:16; Ephesians 3: 14-21). However, there are instances in the Scriptures of people who prayed to the Lord Jesus, so both are correct. No example is given of anyone praying to the Holy Spirit.

The Saviour was a man of prayer. We read in Matthew 14:23 that "He went up into the mountain apart to pray". The Apostle Paul was a man of prayer. He says "We do not cease to pray for you" (Colossians 1:9). You and I, too, need to pray. At least every morning and every evening we should get alone with God for a time of prayer. When praying to God, thank Him for sending the Saviour; commit your relatives, friends and yourself to Him for His care and protection; request Him to make you a help and blessing to other people; seek His guidance, strength and wisdom for each day; and so on. Don't neglect this privilege and responsibility of speaking to God in prayer.

BIBLE READING

In Lesson One we learned something about the Bible. Its message has changed the lives of countless men, women, boys and girls down the ages. Bible reading and study are essential for Christian life and service. It is necessary that we "grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord

and Saviour Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 3:18). The Word of God gives us spiritual food without which we become weak and ineffective. Jesus said "Search the Scriptures" (John 5:39). The Bereans "searched the Scriptures daily" (Acts 17:11). We should set aside a time each day for reading the Bible, asking God to help us understand it. Regular, consecutive and prayerful study, too, is most important. Use other books and correspondence courses to help you learn the wonderful teachings of the Bible. A famous Bible teacher gave some good advice when he said, "Apply yourself wholly to the Scriptures and apply the Scriptures wholly to yourself".

SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

EXAM 6

(Use EXAM FORM C on the website menu)

Enter the correct answer:

1. Whom, according to the normal pattern, should we address in prayer?
2. In whose name should we pray?
3. Who said, "We... do not cease to pray for you"?
4. Who said, "Grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ"?
5. Who "searched the Scriptures daily"?

Enter 'True' or 'False' after each of the following statements:

6. No example is given of anyone praying to the Lord Jesus.
7. There are many examples of people praying to the Holy Spirit.
8. You and I don't really need to spend time in prayer.
9. Regular Bible study is not a good thing.
10. The reading of the Scriptures is necessary for Christian life and service.

SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES 7

What the Bible Says About Church Fellowship and Witnessing

CHURCH FELLOWSHIP

The moment we receive Christ as Saviour, we become members of the Church. This Church is made up of every believer on the Lord Jesus Christ regardless of race, colour or culture (1 Corinthians 12:12,13). Members of the Church are found throughout the world, though the entire Church has never yet been assembled in one place. The Head of that complete Church is the Lord - no other (Colossians 3:18,19). There is, however, the opportunity for true Christians to gather together in any locality, as members of the Church. This provides fellowship (1 John 1:7); enables us to remember the Lord in the "breaking of bread" or "the Lord's Supper" (Acts 20:7); gives opportunity for public prayer (Acts 12:12); provides time for us to gain instruction from the Bible (Acts 13:1); and gives a centre from which Christian service can be carried out.

We should be members of a local Church, or Assembly, regularly attending the meetings which are arranged. It is also a good thing to make friends with other believers, as this will help us to stand firm in our Christian faith.

WITNESSING

The Lord Jesus, before He returned to heaven, commissioned His disciples to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature (Matthew 28:19,20; Mark 16:15). His last instruction to them was "You shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you; and you shall be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:8). In fulfilling this commission, the disciples faced many hardships and endured much persecution. Nevertheless, as they went everywhere preaching the gospel message, they experienced the presence of the Lord and knew the power of the Holy Spirit. Throughout the book of Acts we see that believers were baptised, as a means of witnessing.

All of us who have taken Christ as Lord, must personally serve Him. We can witness for Him in our homes, in our schools, colleges, universities and places of employment. We can distribute Christian literature and invite people to Church services, as well as take every opportunity to testify for Christ. God will give strength, courage, help and wisdom as we do this. Then, too, we should pray for those who have never received Jesus Christ as their own personal Lord and Saviour.

SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

EXAM 7

(Use EXAM FORM C on the website menu)

Enter the correct answer

1. Who is the Head of the Church?
2. Who faced many hardships as they tried to fulfil the commission of the risen Saviour?
3. Who was to come upon the followers of the Lord before they could receive power?
4. Is the Church made up of only "some" believers, or "all" believers?
5. Where, beyond Jerusalem and Judaea, were the disciples told to go and be witnesses for the Master?

Enter 'True' or 'False' after each of the following statements:

6. A local Church provides a centre from which Christian service can be done.
7. At the local Church we can gain instruction from the Word of God.
8. Our close friends should only be unbelievers.
9. It is not necessary to pray for those who have not received Christ as their Saviour.
10. Only missionaries should be witnesses.