

# Sound in the Faith

by Bob Pulliam

## Lesson 7

### Studying God's Word Sermons and Classes



Memory Verses: John 8:31; II Timothy 2:15 (KJV); Ephesians 1:22f;  
Ephesians 5:19

**G**od's word is the foundation for all that we are, and all that we do. If you have any doubts about its authenticity, or contents, you should begin a serious study in evidences. But once you have the confidence in scripture that it deserves, you realize that it can be the only guide to truth, righteousness, and eternal life. With all of this understood, you can quickly see how important Bible study really is. And the better we understand its importance, the better our appreciation and enjoyment of its undertaking.

#### *Where Do I Begin?...*

I commonly hear people ask where they should begin? A person with no knowledge of the Bible should probably study with someone who is knowledgeable in all its parts. The Bible is not arranged as we typically arrange our literature in the West. Oriental style oftentimes groups, rather than listing in chronological order. Books of the Bible are grouped in this way. So, while we have a chronological history at the beginning of the Bible, we end up with groupings of books that cover and re-cover. Job is in the middle of the Old Testament; but probably took place around the time of Abraham (found in Genesis). It is worth your while to get acquainted with the arrangement of the Bible.

Since we are not under Old Testament law, your time is better spent in the New Testament, *to begin with*. Matthew and John are good examples of an Oriental style of writing. For that reason, I do not recommend them for beginning your study. Mark and Luke are aimed at Greek (or Western) minds, and are easier to follow for that reason. I recommend reading the first two chapters of Luke, and then all of Mark. This will give you a good overall picture of Jesus' work. Then read the book of Acts, which will give you the history of the gospel's spread in the first century.

When you get ready for Old Testament history, you can read the book of Genesis and the first twenty chapters of Exodus. This covers the creation through the Israelites camping at Mount Sinai. When you've mastered those events, go on to read the following:

- Exodus 32-34
- Leviticus 10; 16; and 17
- Numbers 9-14; 16-17; 20-25; and 31-32
- Joshua - II Kings

This reading leaves out many details, like the construction of the tabernacle, and the offerings commanded for the priests; but it will give you a good overall picture of Old Testament events. On the next page, you will find a brief timeline of Bible events to help you see how some of it's events line up in the Bible.

In all, keep going back to the New Testament. Never forget that we are under New Testament law today. The Old Testament law, given to Israel, was not only given to them, exclusively; it has also been nailed to the cross of Christ (Col 2:14; Gal 3:24f). The New Testament law is called the "law of the Spirit" (Rom 8:2), and the "*law of Christ*" (Gal 6:2). It is the means by which we learn what is pleasing to God. Do not forget that you aren't just studying for your own knowledge. You need to study and know these things to share them with others.

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### *Question Set Number One*

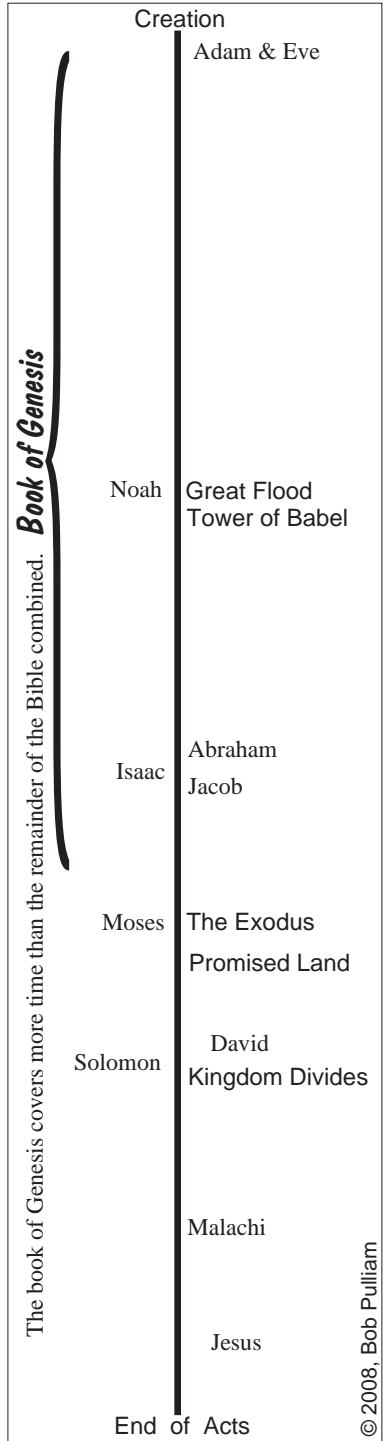
- 1) What is the foundation for all that we are and do?
- 2) A person with little, or no Bible knowledge, should probably do what?
- 3) Since we are not under O.T. law, the beginner should study what?
- 4) What information do the gospels give us?
- 5) What information does the book of Acts give us?
- 6) What should we never forget?
- 7) The New Testament law is also called:
  - a)
  - b)
- 8) Besides studying for ourselves, we also study to--

*Attitude Toward Scripture...*

People in Bible times did not view scripture the way most people view it today. Scripture was considered a product of divine inspiration. To them it was authoritative. Peter told his readers that the prophecy was spoken when holy men of God were “*moved by the Holy Spirit*“ (II Pt 1:20f). Paul told Timothy that all scripture is “*inspired of God*”, meaning that it was God breathed (II Tim 3:16). That inspired scripture was given that a person may be “*thoroughly furnished unto every good work*” (v17). To be thoroughly furnished is to have all one needs to do the work at hand. The word of God furnishes everything necessary. There are many people in the world today who claim to believe the Bible, but they really have little confidence in it.

For example, some people do not view the Bible as being historically true. They tend to think of the scriptures as being filled with tales to teach lessons. They look at the account of Jonah and the big fish as nothing more than a myth to teach a lesson. But Jesus spoke of the event as historically accurate, tying the certainty of His own resurrection to the certainty of Jonah actually spending time in the belly of the great fish (Mt 12:40). If Jonah was never really in that fish, then Jesus was never in that tomb.

Sometimes people don’t look on Bible events so much as myth as they look on them as general tales to summarize truth. Some people who claim to believe the Bible do not believe that

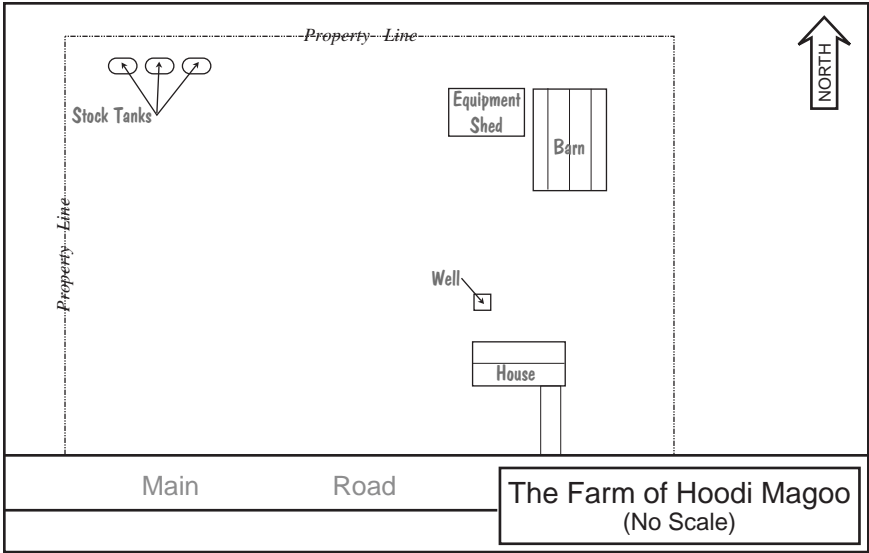


God created man and woman in one day. They have accepted the modern theories of our day over the Bible. They believe that God created; but they believe that He did so through the process of evolution. If that were the case, then they would have to deny that there was ever an actual man named Adam, and an actual woman named Eve, who lived in a garden especially planted by God, with a forbidden tree in it's midst. Would Jesus have accepted such a story as literally true? Well, He said, "*Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning 'made them male and female' "*" (Mt 19:4). If God *made them* male and female, then He did not make a puddle of ooze for intermediate forms to crawl out of. We either believe the Bible or we do not.

What do you think about the account of Noah and the great flood. A Bible believer is obligated to believe it. Otherwise, they do not believe the Bible! And they also do not believe in the second coming of Jesus. Jesus used the "*days of Noah*" as an illustration of how it will be when He comes again (Mt 24:37f). Does it not occur to someone denying the flood of Noah that Jesus is affirming the certainty of it's events. Why would Jesus illustrate the certainty of His sudden coming with a fictitious event? Jesus is obviously affirming that the events of Genesis six through nine really did occur.

If we cannot accept the scriptures as historically true, then we cannot accept them as being from God. If we must suspect the historical nature of scripture, then how can we ever accept it as authoritative? How will we obey it in every portion if we are continually second guessing truth? On one occasion, when Jesus was told that His mother and brothers were waiting to see Him, He said, "*My mother and My brothers are these who hear the word of God and do it.*" (Lk 8:21). What is "*the word of God*"? People have appointed themselves the discerners of what really belongs in "God's word". The "Jesus Seminar", for example, has for many years sat in judgment on the Bible, throwing out the portions that disagree with it's collective conviction. Truth, according to them, is still to be determined by "scholars" who know better. But if I cannot accept one area of scripture, how can I accept others. Heaven, for example, does not exist simply because I want it to exist. It either exists, or it does not. The Bible tells me that it does exist; but it also tells me of hell and torment. If I refuse to believe the one (hell), do I really believe the other (heaven)? When I do this, I am no longer a Bible believer. I have become a believer in my own ability to reason. Believing has become a matter of my own likes and dislikes.

As an example, study the illustration on the next page. Hoodi Magoo had a son, and he put this son in charge of building all of the structures on his new acreage. He gave this son a plot plan, laying out their location,



and instructed him to complete the project exactly to the specifications on the plan.

The son began with the house. He liked it's placement near the road, and the fact that it faced South. So he built is as shown on the plans. He went on to build the barn, and liked the fact that it sat back away from the house, and that the equipment shed was right next to it. So he built it as his father had drawn it. The stock tanks were back toward the rear acreage, which the son thought made perfect sense, so he bought them and placed them where his father had instructed. But the water well seemed to be a problem to Hoodi's son. He looked at the distance to the stock tanks and the barn, and he thought, "It's going to take too much pipe to make that location practical. I think the well should go between the tanks and the barn." So Hoodi's son put the well at the back, between the tanks and the barn. Did Hoodi's son put the house where his father wanted it placed? No, he put it where his father drew it ***because it made sense to him***. Did he put the barn where his father wanted it? No, he put it where his father drew it ***because it made sense to him***. Did he put the stock tanks where his father wanted them? No, he put them where his father drew them ***because it made sense to him***. And his disobedience in placing the well showed that he only did what he did because it made sense to him. It's not hard to agree with God when He agrees with us. We don't show our true colors until we don't agree with God, or His commandments are inconvenient for us. It is so easy to view ourselves as good Christians when we

keep much of God's word. But our true attitude toward God is seen when we fail to obey or "agree" with Him, or when we obey even when it is inconvenient.

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### *Question Set Number Two*

- 1) How did people in Bible times view scripture?
- 2) Prophecy came when holy men of God were...
- 3) Paul told Timothy that all scripture is...
- 4) Why was inspired scripture given?
- 5) Some people do not view the scriptures as being...
- 6) What do they think the scriptures are filled with?
- 7) Jesus tied the certainty of His own resurrection to the certainty of what?
- 8) If we deny that Jonah was in the great fish, we deny what?
- 9) What do some not believe God created in one day?
- 10) What have they accepted over the Bible?
- 11) How do they believe God created?
- 12) What did Jesus say that God "made them" in the beginning?
- 13) What did Jesus use the "days of Noah" to illustrate?
- 14) What must be true if we cannot accept the scriptures as historically true?
- 15) If we suspect the historical nature of scripture, then we cannot accept it as...
- 16) What have people appointed themselves as?
- 17) If I refuse to believe one area of scripture because I don't like it, then what becomes true?
- 18) Then I have become a believer in what?
- 19) What did Hoodi's son like about the house?
- 20) Did Hoodi's son put the house where his father wanted it?
- 21) His son's disobedience showed what?
- 22) When is our true attitude toward God seen?

## *The Authoritative Word - Worthy of Sermons and Study*

Many people are content to “hold fast” God’s word when it comes to the basics. For example, they will tell you that the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus are essentials (and quote I Cor 15:2); but the other details are optional. But scriptures are not a pick-and-choose proposition. Paul told Timothy, “*Hold fast the pattern of sound words which you have heard from me*” (II Tim 1:13). He also told Titus to “*speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine*” (Titus 2:1), and went on to specify matters like conduct and behavior in personal relationships.

The authoritative nature of the word can be seen in an incident in Jesus’ teaching. When the Jews confronted Jesus, He told them, “*If He called them gods, to whom the word of God came (and the Scripture cannot be broken)*” (Jn 10:35). The circumstance was one of answering the Jews intention of killing Jesus for calling Himself God. Jesus quoted from Psalm 82:6. And of it He said, “*the Scriptures cannot be broken*”. If scripture cannot be broken, then it is authoritative. In other words, we must obey it in every part of it’s legislation.

The serious nature of heeding God’s word can be seen in the words of Paul to the Galatians. He wrote, “*But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed.*” (Gal 1:8) That gospel which must remain pure is more than just a belief in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. It is the law of Christ. Paul told the Corinthians that he had preached the gospel without charge that he might win all the more to Christ. He then linked that gospel to the law of Christ through a series of statements regarding his efforts (I Cor 9:18-21). The “*truth of the gospel*” involves the inclusion of the Gentiles without circumcision (Gal 2:14). It also includes the hope laid up for us in heaven (Col 1:5).

All in all, the gospel is to be obeyed, just as you would expect since it is the law of Christ (II Th 1:8; I Pt 4:17). The gospel is defined as “the good news”, but consists of the “*word of the Lord*” (I Pt 1:25). Jesus Himself spoke of our obligation to His word when He said, “*If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed.*” (Jn 8:31) And He also said:

*“Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!' “ (Mt 7:21-23)*

We are to obey, or “do the will of the Father”. Why are we to do the will of the Father? Because it is the law of Christ. Why did Jesus say, “*I never knew you, depart from me*”? Because they were engaged in lawlessness! Please notice that they were sincere in believing that they followed the Lord. And while sincerity is important, it, alone, will not save us. We must keep the law of the Lord.

Knowing all of this, we should see how important it is to read, study, and hear applications (sermons) of God’s word. When you listen to a sermon, try to make personal application. If it is information that will help you teach a friend or neighbor, write it down for future use. Prepare for Bible studies by carefully reading the scriptures to be studied, or working the material to be presented. Make sure you understand the material before going to class, and if you find anything you don’t understand, make a note of it so you can ask in class. If you don’t yet feel comfortable speaking up in class, then ask the teacher about it after class.

The presentation of God’s word is a form of worship that we mustn’t take for granted. The living word, which offers hope and salvation, is being extolled. It should have our attention.

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### ***Question Set Number Three***

- 1) When are most content to “hold fast” the word?
- 2) Some only consider what as essentials?
- 3) They consider the rest of scripture to be what?
- 4) What was Timothy to do with what he had heard from Paul?
  
- 5) What did Paul tell Titus about sound doctrine?
- 6) If an angel from heaven preaches another gospel, we must obey. T F
- 7) The gospel is to be obeyed since it is...
- 8) We are the disciples of Jesus if we do what?
- 9) What will Jesus say to some who call upon Him as “Lord”?
  
- 10) How can we avoid this?
- 11) What should you do as you listen to a sermon?
  
- 12) What is the presentation of God’s word?