



.. God so loved the world...

THE BIBLE IS GOD'S TRUTH

Written by **Carmen D. Hilliard** - Copyright 1989

CREATOR OF THE UNIVERSE.

Looking at the universe, it becomes clear that life didn't come about by accident. An intelligent personality planned and designed it with a purpose in mind. God is that Creator; man is the reason for His creation. Man can know there is a God by the things He made, but only through the Bible can we learn about God's character. We see His unlimited power and knowledge. He is able to do this because He is a Spirit, not confined to time or space. God is an eternal being; He had no beginning and will have no end. God is perfect truth; He cannot lie. It is impossible for God to do anything wrong. He is perfect holiness, with no evil in Him at all. His nature will never change. In the Bible, we learn about God's great and matchless love for man. (Turn now to the worksheet and answer the questions for Section I.)

manner as He did Moses, the prophets or apostles. Prophecies, tongues and supernatural knowledge have ceased, (1 Corinthians 13:8). God will not send an angel or prophet or give you an emotional experience to tell you His truth. He uses the Bible to teach, train and instruct, (2 Timothy 3:16-17). God made a great sacrifice to provide salvation for man. He lovingly gave His only Son to die for us. To receive salvation, we must also make sacrifices. Those who don't study the Bible never come to know God or learn how to be saved. The Bible gives many examples that show us how easy it is to be drawn away from the truth.

Galatians 1:6-8. *I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another, but there be some that trouble you and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.*

Sanctify them through thy truth: *thy word is truth.* (John 17:17)

II. KNOW WHAT THE BIBLE TEACHES. You have an enemy, Satan, who campaigns against God to destroy your soul. He wants you to live in Hell and torment for all eternity when you depart this life. Satan is the direct opposite of God. As God's rival, he tries to distort and ruin God's truth so that you will accept a lie and be lost. Satan is the founder and creator of lies, (John 8:44). He is the great deceiver, (2 Corinthians 11:13-15). The Bible displays how much God loves you by the sending of His Son to die on the cross. It also demonstrates the evil power of Satan and the techniques he uses to entice you to sin. The Bible reveals the consequences of sin and tells how to overcome it.

God communicates with man through the Bible alone, so we must know the Bible to understand what God is saying. He does not talk to us in the same

Here Paul is showing the Galatian brethren how they had been led astray by the opinions and teachings of others. The Bible was written to provide a way to prove right from wrong. It should be used as a guide to make the right decisions in life. You must make sure that what your church practices is correct and that you have not been deceived or led astray from God. You shouldn't rely on family and friends to teach you the truth. Even though they would not purposely mislead you, they are only human and can be wrong. Preachers and religious books are also subject to human error. The only sure way to uncover the truth is to study the Bible and use it as your authority. Don't depend on others to do your

studying for you. (Work Section II.)

III. OLD TESTAMENT / NEW TESTAMENT.

In the Bible, the word "testament" means a will, contract, agreement, or covenant which God established for man. The Old Testament Laws were for people who lived before Christ. The New Testament Laws of Christ are for all of us who came after He died.

The cross divides the Old and New Testament commands.

Christians are not governed by the regulations and ordinances of the Old Testament. Under the Old Law, an animal was killed and sacrificed to atone for sin. Under the New Law, Christ is the sacrifice for sin. God cancelled the Old Testament laws when He established the New Testament. It is important to study the Old Testament, for it teaches vital principles such as faith and obedience, which are the foundation of man's relationship with God. (Work Section III.)

IV THREE PERIODS OF TIME. Viewing the Bible as a whole, we learn of three separate periods of time when God instructed man in different ways. We refer to them as the Patriarchal Age, Jewish Age, and Christian Age.

PATRIARCHAL AGE. The first period of time lasted for 2500 years and covers the book of Genesis to Exodus 19. God spoke directly to the patriarchs and sometimes through angels, to communicate His will. This age is also called the Father Rule Age because the fathers of each household passed the commands on to the rest of the family. For generations God guided their lives in this manner.

JEWISH AGE. The second period of time lasted for 1500 years. It begins with Exodus 20 and ends with the death of Christ. God chose the nation of Israel and gave it a written law. He selected Moses to be the lawgiver. The Law began with the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai. We call it the Old Testament Law of the Jews. The Old Law contained ordinances and regulations which trained them in obedience. They learned that disobeying God's commands would separate them from Him, (Isaiah 59:2). Man needed to know about the power and consequences of sin. God was preparing them for the coming of the Messiah (Christ). The Israelites were later called Jews, which is the reason why we call this period, the Jewish Age. *The Law was given to the Jews through Moses*, but individual instructions were sent through prophets and angels. Christ, being a Jew, obeyed and fulfilled all of the old Jewish Law *perfectly*. He was the only one who could be our Savior because He never committed a sin. With His death on the cross, the atonement was made for sin. Man

no longer kills animals as a sacrifice for his sin. The cross brought an end to the Old Law of the Jews. All of it was cancelled and taken out of the way.

Colossians 2:14: *Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us and took it out of the way, nailing it to the cross.*

Many students ask if God cancelled the Ten Commandments when He took away the Old Testament Law. Yes! The Ten Commandments were part of the Old Law; all of it was removed, and a new law was given. However, this does not mean that we are free to sin in areas such as adultery, murder, stealing, etc. These things were wrong before any law was written and will always be wrong. The New Testament is a more complete law with better promises. In 2 Corinthians 3:6-14, Paul explains that the Old Law written on stones was taken away. He is referring to the Ten Commandments. The Law of Moses was given only to the Jews and no longer exists, except as a record of history. The New Testament, written by Christ, was put in its place and is for everyone living today. It will last until Christ comes again.

Hebrews 9:15-17. *And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth.*

A testator is the writer of a will. The terms of a will become active only after the testator dies.

Christ obeyed the Old Law when He was on earth.

The reason for His obedience to the Old Law was because His New Will and Testament did not become effective until after His death on the cross.

CHRISTIAN AGE. The third period of time is named after Christ and is the last and final Age. Beginning with Acts, the Christian Age covers the entire New Testament, the Christian Age also includes us today and will continue until Christ returns. Before the foundation of the world, Christ knew that He would be nailed to a cross and become the sacrifice that paid for the sins of mankind. He came here to die so that man could have forgiveness and be reunited with God. (In Lesson Five, entitled *God's Salvation*, you

will learn that Christ's death on the cross was the only way man could be saved from sin. It will be sent to you later in the course.) *The New Testament is simple to understand.* Matthew, Mark, Luke and John are the first four books of the New Testament, the Gospels, are accounts of the life and death of Christ. Before His death, He chose twelve men, known as apostles, to teach the people of God's only plan to save man from sin. The book of Acts tells the history of the church, how Christianity began and spread throughout the world. The name Christian was used then and still is today to identify those who obey the gospel and become members of Christ's church. The apostles were promised by Christ that God would send the Holy Spirit to give them power to teach the New Law of Christ. So that the message would be believed, the apostles were given supernatural ability to perform miracles.

They laid their hands on others, passing the spiritual gifts to them.

God used miracles as a means of teaching because it was the only way the people would see the differences in the Old and New Testaments. The apostles continued to teach all of the newly formed churches of Christ in this manner, but after their deaths, the gifts could not be given to anyone else. God wanted the Jews to see that salvation would be for everyone, not just the Jewish nation. All classes of people are equal in God's eyes and all who so choose, can be saved by obeying the gospel. God wrote the New Testament by using the lives of Christians. When it was finished and circulated throughout the country, He brought an end to miracles. Now, God uses only the Bible to guide and direct man's life and no longer teaches man in a miraculous way. *With the Bible, miracles are not needed.* (Work Section IV)

V. WHICH LAW APPLIES TO YOU?

Divide the Bible in chronological order as the Ages occurred. By examining the instructions that God gave to each period of time, you will learn the Scriptures that apply to you. The period of time that we live in is the Christian Age. The New Testament laws tell us **how** to become a Christian, **what** God wants in worship, **how** the church is to be governed and **how** to live our everyday life. Christ's New Law applies to you. The Old Law of Moses was only for the Jews; it does not apply to us today. Most of the New Testament is for Christians today. However, some parts of the New Testament are there to give us a history or background of how the church was established and spread. Examples, such as the miraculous activity of the Holy Spirit, do not apply to

us living in the twentieth-first century.

This confuses many people who do not know how to divide the periods of time properly. It is important for you to learn the history of how and why miracles were used. In the first century, the Holy Spirit gave certain Christians the ability to speak languages unfamiliar to them, called "tongues". This enabled them to cross over language barriers and teach people of the New Law of Christ. Others were given the ability to heal the sick by miracles, predict the future and raise the dead. This proved that they were preaching the truth and that it came from God. Miracles were necessary because the Bible was not complete at that time and the people didn't have God's new instructions. All they had was the Old Testament telling of their past. They taught the New Testament by inspiration, because it had not been written down and the miracles confirmed the validity of what they said.

Later, when the New Testament was complete and circulated among the people, they had a way to prove the truth. In the meantime, the spiritual gifts were very important to the first century church. Without a miracle to confirm the truth, the Jews would never have believed that the Old Law of Moses, which had been obeyed by them for centuries, was cancelled. Because of the spiritual gifts, the gospel spread rapidly throughout the country. I mention this about spiritual gifts because many churches teach that miracles and tongues are necessary today. **This is untrue!** The supernatural spiritual gifts mentioned in the New Testament faded out of existence after the completion of the Bible. Even though many churches imitate spiritual gifts today, they are not real and are not from God.

A church that advocates the use of spiritual gifts is mistaken and teaches a *false doctrine*.

We read in 2 Timothy 2:15, "**Study to show yourself approved unto to God, a workman who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.**" If we handle the Bible correctly, learning how God wrote it, we will know which laws apply to us today. (Work Section V.)

VI. GOD'S WORD IS OUR AUTHORITY. We must use the Bible as a standard to teach us the truth about right and wrong, good and evil. The Bible is accurate and dependable. Many attempts have been made to destroy the Bible, but God's power has protected and preserved it down through the centuries. The Bible was inspired by God which means that it came to us directly from God's

mind. It gives complete instructions for Christian living.

2 Timothy 3:16-17. *All scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.*

John 12:48-50. *He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day. For I have not spoken of myself, but the Father which sent me, He gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. And His commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak.*

The words of the Bible will determine what our sentence will be in the Judgment. (Answer questions for Section VI.)

VII. THE BIBLE DID NOT ORIGINATE WITH MAN. God wrote the Old Testament through prophets and holy men who penned His words as He gave instruction. The New Testament was written in the same way. The unknown things of Christ had previously been a mystery, but the Holy Spirit revealed it to the apostles and prophets. They wrote and preached what was revealed to them. Read what the apostle Paul tells the Ephesian and Galatian brethren.

Ephesians 3:2-5. *If ye heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery: (as I wrote afore in few words; whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ), Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit;*

Galatians 1:11,12. *I certify you, brethren that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.*

The apostles did not teach or write their own

opinions about the revelations they received. No one in history has ever been given the liberty to change a single detail in God's Word. Man cannot interpret the Scriptures as he chooses. It concerns me when I hear people say, "This is my interpretation of the Bible." What they really mean is, "This is what I prefer to believe the Bible teaches."

If God allowed all of us to interpret the Bible according to what we prefer to believe, the Bible would be divided into a million different ideas.

It would completely destroy the truth. This mistaken idea about private interpretation is the reason why so many different kinds of churches exist today. God allows no one to alter His Word. **2 Peter 1:20-21.** *Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation. 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 Spirit.*

If everyone studied the Bible correctly, we would all arrive at the same truth. When truth is uncovered, it must be accepted with an honest heart. Don't think for a moment that God is happy with all the divisions men have made in the church. He gave only one plan to save man and established only one church. Through this course of study, you will learn how God feels about division. *If all churches laid aside their private interpretations of the Bible and accepted the Bible as the only authority, division would be destroyed. Dividing the church was Satan's idea.* (Work Section VII).

VIII. HOW DO WE OBEY THE TRUTH? A good definition of truth is "the correct facts of reality," Christ's Law requires that we make a sacrificial effort to obey it.

1. Recognize that God does not mix the truth with a lie. All attempts to change the truth result in a lie. Christ said in John 17:17, "Thy word is truth."

2. Everyone can have the truth. It is not hard to discover. God promises that we can know it and that learning it will free us from error, John 8:32. "You shall know the truth and the truth shall

make you free." We are told in Zechariah 8:16, **"Speak only the truth."** In 1 Kings 2:4, to **"Walk in the truth."** John 4:24 says to **"Worship In truth."** James 1:18 tells us, **"We are created by the truth."** Truth is one of the most important principles taught in the Bible.

3. Total honesty is needed to learn the truth, and it requires self-discipline. Why? It is a human tendency to want our own way, keep our own opinions, see only what we want to see and admit only what we want. To be totally honest, we must cut through our self pride and be willing to admit when we are wrong. It is important to be objective about our feelings and not allow the opinions of others to take the truth away when we find it. (Work Section VIII.)

IX. THE BIBLE CAN BE USED WRONGLY. In the first century, the apostle Paul warned the early church that some would make changes in the truth by perverting it with lies. They wanted God to accept worship by their rules and didn't want to do as the apostles had instructed,

The teachers they followed told them what they wanted to hear instead.

Read the warnings of Paul, as he tried to prepare them for what was coming.

1 Timothy 4:1-3. Now the spirit speaks expressly, that In the latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; forbidding to marry and commanding to abstain from meats, which God has created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth.

2 Timothy 4:1-3. I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the living and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; preach the word; be instant in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts will

heap to themselves teachers having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.

Paul's predictions during that period of time also continue to happen today. There will always be people who make their own rules of Christianity and disregard the truth . (Work Section IX.)

X. THE TRUTH CAN BE TAKEN FROM US. If we choose to believe and practice a lie instead of obeying the truth, God will allow the power of sin to have its way with our soul. Paul warns us of the action God will take if we make this choice.

2 Thessalonians 2:9-12. Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them a strong delusion, that they should believe a lie; that they might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

All around you are different religions which practice a variety of beliefs. Each church has chosen the way it wants to worship. The teaching in one church will contradict what is taught in another. They are all different, and all of them cannot be correct. *Which is the true church? How can we know what is correct?* You can find true religion by learning how to study the Bible It would take a long time to thoroughly investigate every church.

To make sure that you are following the truth, begin by making a complete evaluation of the church where you are a member.

To help you do this, a lesson will be sent to you entitled **Christ's Church**. Study the pattern of the true church found in the New Testament. Check everything that is practiced in your church. Compare it with the examples found in the Bible. As you learn the truth, stop practicing the things that are wrong. As you learn about the true church, you will know how to spot error in all denominational churches. (Work Section X).

XI. THE BIBLE WILL INTERPRET ITSELF.

Learning how to divide the Scriptures correctly will show you how the Bible interprets and explains its own meaning. Soon you will be able to distinguish between the truth and doctrines that men have created. Here are some guidelines that will help in personal Bible study.

1. **Find out who wrote it** by reading several verses ahead.
2. **Learn which Law** was in effect when it was written, and the circumstances which surround the writing.
3. **Collective information is important.** Seldom does one scripture alone give us all the facts needed to get the whole picture.

Example: We are commanded to work out our salvation, Philippians 2:12. The directions as to "how" are found in several different verses, not just one. Romans 10:9 says that **believing saves**; Acts 3:19 says that **repentance saves**; Romans 10:10 says that **confessing Christ saves**; and 1 Peter 3:21 says that **baptism saves**.

By taking only one of the Scriptures and not including the others, a person would not have complete instructions on what to do to be saved.

4. Learn if a scripture has a **symbolic** meaning (figure of speech), or a **literal** meaning.

Examples: The parables of Christ teach us lasting principles. He used familiar objects, surroundings, events, and people to draw a picture. Let's illustrate how He used symbols: An important part of the Christian's worship on Sunday is the Lord's Supper. We are commanded to remember Him by eating it each Lord's day. The bread (without yeast) symbolizes **His body** on the cross. The fruit of the vine (blood of the grape) is a symbol which represents **His blood** sacrificed for our sins.

5. **Keep each Scripture in its proper context.** Don't remove words, ideas, or concepts from its setting and wrongfully apply somewhere else.

6. **Don't change God's commands.** He means what He says!!! We are told what to do in worship.

Do only what He says and don't try to improve on it.

There is a church in America which conducts ballet dances occasionally as part of its worship service. The practice is sinful! They justify this by saying, "*The Bible doesn't tell us not to do it.*" The Bible doesn't have to say, "Do not conduct a ballet dance" for it to be the wrong thing to do. When the Bible is silent, we must be silent. By not following the examples of New Testament worship, churches add things that God did not authorize in the worship.

The Jews, living under the Old Testament Law, were not allowed to change the worship, (Deuteronomy 4:2). We live under the New Law of Christ, and Christian worship is explained in the New Testament. If a church selects a practice from the Old Law of the Jews and offers it to God today, it is adding to God's commands. This is why you must be certain that what you practice and how you worship are in accordance with the will of God, not what men invented.

Revelation 22:18-20. *For I testify unto every man that hears the words of the prophecy of this book. If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book. And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.* (Work Section XI.)