

BIBLE OVERVIEW

1 Corinthians 10:11-12

These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the fulfillment of the ages has come.

2 Timothy 3:16-17

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Hebrews 4:12

For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.

Rev. Dr. Jerry Schmoyer
© 2014, 2020

Published-2014

?????? Copies

C All Right are reserved

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval systems, or

transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronics, mechanical, photocopying,

recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of the publishers.

Scripture quotations are from the New International Version

Rs. 50/-

For Copies:

Bethel Prayer Fellowship

H. No. 8-2-293/129 Road No.14,

Venkateswaranagar,

Banjara Hills, Hyderabad-500 034.

Andhra Pradesh, India.

bpfellowship@gmail.com

Ph: 9866543468.

Printed at:

Sphoorthi Digital Graphics

Hyderabad, A.P. India.

BIBLE OVERVIEW

Preface	5	15. SPLIT	93--98
Introduction	6	2 Kings: Judgment	95-96
Bible Overview Summarized	7	1 & 2 Chronicles: Faithfulness	97-98
Bible Overview Events with Bible Books	8	16. PROPHETS	99-125
Bible Books and Themes	9	Obadiah: Retribution	106-107
1. CREATION	10-13	Joel: Day of the Lord	108-109
Genesis: Beginnings	12-13	Jonah: Obedience	110-111
2. ADAM & EVE	14-15	Amos: Accountability	112-113
3. NOAH & THE FLOOD	16-17	Hosea : Loyal Love	114-115
4. BABEL	18-19	Isiah: God is Salvation	116-117
5. ABRAHAM	20-24	Micah: Hope	118-119
Job: Suffering	23-24	Nahum: Justice	120-121
6. ISAAC	25-27	Zephaniah: Day of the Lord	122-123
7. JACOB	28-29	Habakkuk: Patience	124-125
8. JOSEPH	30-33	17. ASSYRIAN CAPTIVITY	126-127
9. MOSES	34-60	18. BABYLONIAH CAPTIVITY	128-133
Exodus: Redemption	38-39	Jeremiah: Final Chance	130-131
Leviticus: Holy Living	40-41	Lamentations: Sorrow	132-133
Numbers: Walk by Faith	42-43	19. DANIEL	134-139
Deuteronomy: Obedience	44-45	Daniel: Sovereignty	135-137
10. JOSHUA	61-65	Ezekiel: Glory	138-139
Joshua: Conquest	64-65	20. EZRA (RETURN)	140-154
11. SAMUEL	66-71	Ezra: Return	143-144
Judges: Defeat & Deliverance	68-69	Esther: Providential Care	145-146
Ruth: Kinsman-Redeemer	70-71	Nehemiah: Renewal	147-148
12. SAUL	72-75	Haggai: Priorities	149-150
1 Samuel: Look Inside	74-75	Zechariah: History	151-152
13. DAVID	76-82	Malachi: Repentance	153-154
2 Samuel: Effects of Sin	79-80	21. 200 SILENT YEARS	155-157
Psalms: Worship	81-82	22. JESUS	158-210
14. SOLOMON	83-94	Matthew: Jesus the King	165-167
1 Kings: Idolatry	85-86	Mark: Jesus the Servant	168-170
Song of Solomon: Married Love	87-88	Luke: Jesus the Man	171-174
Proverbs: Wisdom	89-90	John: Jesus the God	175-177
Ecclesiastes: Empty	91-92	a. Birth	186-187
		b. Baptism & Temptation	187-189
		c. Miracles	189-193
		d. Disciples and Teachings	193-201
		e. Crucifixion	202-207
		f. Resurrection	207-209
		g. Ascension and present	209-210

23. PETER	211-219	Final Travels	256-259
Acts: Early Church	212-213	1 Timothy: Church Order	260-261
James: True Faith	214-215	Titus: Daily Walk	262-263
1 Peter: Suffering	216-217	2 Timothy: Faithful Service	264-265
2 Peter: Keep the Faith	218-219	Early Church	266-266
		Hebrews: Christ is Superior	267-269
24. PAUL	220-279	1 John: Fellowship	270-271
Paul, Background	221-224	2 John: Walk in Truth	272-273
1ST Missionary Journey	225-226	3 John: Hospitality	274-275
Jerusalem Council	227-228	Jude: Apostasy	276-277
Galatians: Christian Liberty	229-230	Revelation: Prophecy	278-279
2nd Missionary Journey	231-232	25. CHURCH	280-284
1 Thessalonians: Coming Again	233	26. RAPTURE	285-288
2. Thessalonians: Coming Soon	235	27. TRIBULATION	
3rd Missionary Journey	237-238	& MILLENNIUM	289-293
1 Corinthians: Worldly Wisdom	239-240	Conclusion	294
2 Corinthians: Godly Ministry	241-242		
Romans: Salvation	243-245		
Trip to Rome	246-247		
Ephesians: In Christ	248-249		
Philippians: Joy	250-251		
Colossians: Christ is Supreme	252-253		
Philemon: Christian Courtesy	254-255		

BIOGRAPHY OF THE AUTHOR

Rev. Dr. JERRY SCHMOYER is a graduate of Dallas Theological Seminary where he received his Master's degree in 1975 and Doctor's degree in 2006. He has served as pastor of Main Street Baptist Church in Doylestown, PA since 1981. He has been married to Nancy, who is a nurse, for 34 years. They have 6 children and 14 grandchildren. In addition to pastoring a church, he leads marriage, family and youth conferences, is very active in counseling and mentors younger pastors. He has been involved in ministry to pastors in India since 2006. He can be reached at jerry@schmoyer.net.

PREFACE

Frameworks. We usually don't see them, but without them structures would fall. Buildings need a solid framework. So do groups and organizations. God even created our body with a strong framework, our skeletal system. Can you imagine what we would be like if God had not put bones in our bodies? A framework gives stability and structure.

Not only are frameworks essential, they must come first so other things can be built around them and kept in place by them. Businesses and governments, as well as homes and shops, have an inner structure that must come first so everything else can be kept in its proper place.

That being the case, it is no surprise that God has given structure to His Word. He has built it around a framework that shapes it and gives it flow and direction. Unfortunately many Christians do not understand the structure of the Bible. They will study one portion, but without seeing where it fits in the flow of God's plan and how it relates to other times in history, they lose its full meaning. When building a house or building, you don't just build the front wall by itself, complete with doors and windows, and then when it is finished start on a side wall. A good solid framework that can hold the whole structure must be constructed first, and then details added until the building is complete. That's the only way to really understand the Bible as well.

In order to know and apply God's Word one must first have a thorough grasp of its structure. The development and flow of it builds as time goes on. We must know the outline of Bible history in order to correctly understand how God's plan flows through history. Knowing the context of Scripture, starting with the overall flow of the book itself, is of extreme importance. Only then can a person discover the purpose of each Bible book and how it relates to the rest. This is the foundation of understanding individual passages as well.

My desire in writing this book is to give you an overview, an outline, of the whole Bible. I love studying God's Word, but, as with any book, I must first understand the purpose of the individual writers. It is my prayer that this book will help you better understand and appreciate that most wonderful book of all, the Book that is greater than all other books, God's Word, our Bible.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

Read this book along with your Bible. It is not meant as a substitute to reading your Bible but as a way to help you better understand it. Find someone you can teach what you are learning. Pass the truths onto your children and family, your friends and your church. You can teach the Bible one period at a time. You can spend several sessions on each period if necessary. Use the flash cards which are part of this book as memory aids. Review them regularly so that the flow of events is well known. If you are a pastor you can preach a sermon on each time period, showing how it relates to and builds on what has come before. You can pick a main person during each time period and study that life, using that to explain the time period.

I encourage you to take notes as you read this book and your Bible. You can go back to them later to remember what God was showing you, review what you learned and find material for sermons of Bible studies. God's Word is a never ending source of wisdom, encouragement, enlighten and comfort for God's children.

There are many ways to do this. The only wrong way is to not do it at all. We are to feed on God's Word, for it nourishes our soul (John 21:15-17). Only in this way can we grow and mature spiritually (1 Corinthians 3:1-3).

INTRODUCTION

A framework is necessary for a structure to exist and function. I want to help you see the framework, the structure, the outline of God's plan for man as revealed in His Word. In order for a building to last it must have a solid foundation. The larger the building the more secure the foundation must be. The foundation isn't the whole house, just the beginning of it, but a well-built foundation is the key to the success of the rest of the building. The Old Testament in the Bible is the foundation for all our understanding that comes after it. A solid understanding of all that happened between creation and the birth of Jesus is very important to properly understanding Jesus' life and the rest of the Bible.



The life, death and resurrection of Jesus is the framework that builds on the foundation of the Old Testament. Matthew, Mark, Luke and John can only be properly understood in light of Genesis through Malachi. Jesus' life is like the structure of a building. It puts in place the main pillars and beams which will hold up the rest of the construction. Everything that comes after it is supported by this framework. A correct understanding of Jesus' life, death and resurrection is essential to understanding the rest of the New Testament.

When we have a correct understanding of the four Gospels then we can move on to the rest of the New Testament. Acts through Revelation build on the framework of Jesus. The walls, windows, doors and roof finish the building but are held up by the unseen inner framework. So, too, Jesus teachings are applied and lived out in the rest of the New Testament. They bring protection and enjoyment to life, as the walls and roof do to a building. They are the part seen by all who are outside. They don't see the foundation or the framework, just the outer walls. So, too, when people see us they see the Christian life being lived in daily life. We show them that the framework of Jesus built on the Old Testament truths and principles results in a life that brings glory to God.

In this book I want you to understand the Bible, the whole Bible. We will start with the foundation, the Old Testament. Then we will build upon that the life of Jesus and the Gospels. Finally we will see how the rest of the New Testament shows us how to live in Jesus and reveal Him to the world.

This is an exciting journey, one well worth your time and effort. Everything else you do in this life will one day end, but what you learn about God and His Word will last forever throughout all eternity (Isaiah 40:8; 1 Peter 1:25). I know God will bless you as you learn His Word, both in this life and for all eternity.

THE BIBLE OVERVIEW SUMMARIZED

My method of teaching you an overview of the Bible will be to break it down into 27 sections and study each time period one at a time. Twenty one of these are in the Old Testament and six in the New Testament. Below is a summary to introduce you to them.

In the beginning God made the heavens, earth, trees, animals and water. This was His **CREATION**. He then made **ADAM & EVE**. Satan came to the garden and lied to Eve. Sin came into the world. Sin got so bad that God sent the **FLOOD**. The people didn't learn from the flood and built the **TOWER OF BABEL**, where God again judged sin.

God then chose one man to make a nation He would work through to reach the world. **ABRAHAM** was chosen. He had a son named **ISAAC** and Isaac had a son named **JACOB**. Jacob's son, **JOSEPH**, was taken to Egypt. Eventually all of his family moved there. They were up under bondage for 400 years. Then God sent a man named **MOSES** to lead them out of Egyptian slavery. **JOSHUA** took over for Moses and led the people into the Promised Land.

Then, for 400 years, God would send judges to lead His people. These included people like Gideon, Samson and Deborah. The last judge, who was also the first of many prophets, was named **SAMUEL**. When he grew old the people insisted on a king, so God allowed them to have **SAUL** as the first king. Samuel anointed him as well as his replacement, **DAVID**. The third king was David's son **SOLOMON**. He built God's temple, but because of high taxes and other issues the northern 10 tribes rebelled and the nation **SPLIT** into two. The northern 10 tribes, Israel, had a series of ungodly kings. The southern 2 tribes, Judah, weren't much better. God sent **PROPHETS** to warn the people to turn back to Him or suffer destruction and captivity. After 250 years the north went into **ASSYRIAN CAPTIVITY**. The south followed 150 years later, going into **BABYLONIAN CAPTIVITY**. One of those taken captive was **DANIEL**.

After Judah's 70 years of captivity, God allowed **EZRA** to lead some Jews back to the land and rebuild the temple. Later **NEHEMIAH** brought another group of people back and they rebuilt the walls. The Jews lived there for **400 SILENT YEARS** until **JESUS** was born.

One of Jesus' disciples was a man named **PETER**. He became a leader in the early church in Jerusalem. God called **PAUL** to spread His gospel to other countries and people groups. The **CHURCH** continued to grow, and still does so today.

The next event on God's program is the **RAPTURE**, when Jesus returns in the sky and takes His believers to heaven to be with Him. Following that the seven-year **TRIBULATION** will bring judgment to the earth. Following this comes the 1,000 year **MILLENNIUM** and then **ETERNITY**.

BIBLE OVERVIEW EVENTS WITH BIBLE BOOKS

1. Creation – Genesis 1
2. Adam & Eve – Genesis 2-4
3. Noah & the Flood – Genesis 5-10
4. Babel – Genesis 11
5. Abraham – Genesis 12-25, Job
6. Isaac – Genesis 21-28, 35
7. Jacob – Genesis 25-37, 46-50
8. Joseph – Genesis 37-50
9. Moses - Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy
10. Joshua - Joshua
11. Samuel - Judges, Ruth
12. Saul - 1 Samuel
13. David - 2 Samuel, Psalms
14. Solomon - 1 Kings, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon
15. Split - 2 Kings, 1 & 2 Chronicles
16. Prophets - to north (Israel): Hosea, Amos, (Elijah, Elisha)
 - to south (Judah): Joel, Isaiah, Micah, Zephaniah, Habakkuk
 - to Nineveh (Assyria): Jonah, Nahum
 - to Edom: Obadiah
17. Assyrian Captivity (north)
18. Babylonian Captivity (south) - Jeremiah, Lamentations
19. Daniel - Daniel, Ezekiel
20. Ezra (Return) - Ezra, Haggai, Zechariah, Nehemiah, Malachi, Esther
21. 400 Silent Years
22. Jesus – Matthew, Mark, Luke, John
 - a. Birth
 - b. Baptism & Temptation
 - c. Miracles
 - d. Disciples and Teachings
 - e. Crucifixion
 - f. Resurrection
 - g. Ascension and present
23. Peter
 - a. Peter – Acts 1-7; 1 & 2 Peter
 - b. Philip, Peter, Paul – Acts 8-12 (James)
24. Paul – Acts 13-28- , Romans thru Philemon
 - a. Paul, Background
 - b. 1st Missionary Journey – Acts 13-14
 - c. Jerusalem Council – Acts 15 (Galatians)
 - d. 2nd Missionary Journey – Acts 16-18 (1, 2 Thessalonians)
 - e. 3rd Missionary Journey – Acts 19-20(1, 2 Corinthians, Romans)
 - f. Trip to Rome – Acts 21-28 (Ephesians, Colossians, Philippians, Philemon)
 - g. Final Travels (1 Timothy, Titus, 2 Timothy)
 - h. Early Church (Hebrews, 1, 2, 3 John, Jude, Revelation)
25. Church
26. Rapture
27. The Tribulation & Millennium - Tribulation, Millennium, Eternity

BIBLE BOOKS AND THEMES

GENESIS	Beginnings
EXODUS	Redemption
LEVITICUS	Holy Living
NUMBERS	Walk by Faith
DEUTERONOMY	Obedience
JOSHUA	Conquest
JUDGES	Defeat & Deliverance
RUTH	Kinsman-Redeemer
1 SAMUEL	Look Inside
2 SAMUEL	Effects of Sin
1 KINGS	Idolatry
2 KINGS	Judgment
1 CHRONICLES	Faithfulness
2 CHRONICLES	Faithfulness
EZRA	Return
NEHEMIAH	Renewal
ESTHER	Providential Care
JOB	Suffering
PSALMS	Worship
PROVERBS	Wisdom
ECCLESIASTES	Life Without God Is Empty
SONG of SOLOMON	Married Love
ISAIAH	God is Salvation
JEREMIAH	Final Chance
LAMENTATIONS	Sorrow
EZEKIEL	Glory
DANIEL	Sovereignty
HOSEA	Loyal Love
JOEL	Day of the Lord
AMOS	Accountability
OBADIAH	Retribution
JONAH	Obedience
MICAH	Hope
NAHUM	Justice

HABAKKUK	Patience
ZEPHANIAH	Day of the Lord
HAGGAI	Priorities
ZECHARIAH	History
MALACHI	Repentance
MATTHEW	Jesus the King
MARK	Jesus the Servant
LUKE	Jesus the Man
JOHN	Jesus the God
ACTS	Early Church
ROMANS	Salvation
1 CORINTHIANS	Worldly Wisdom
2 CORINTHIANS	A Godly Ministry
GALATIANS	Christian Liberty
EPHESIANS	In Christ
PHILIPPIANS	Joy
COLOSSIANS	Christ is Supreme
1 THESSALONIANS	Jesus is Coming Again
2 THESSALONIANS	Jesus is Coming Soon
1 TIMOTHY	Church Order
2 TIMOTHY	Faithful Service
TITUS	Daily Walk
PHILEMON	Christian Courtesy
HEBREWS	Christ is Superior
JAMES	True Faith
1 PETER	Suffering
2 PETER	Keep the Faith
1 JOHN	Fellowship
2 JOHN	Walk in Truth
3 JOHN	Hospitality
JUDE	Apostasy
REVELATION	Prophecy

BIBLE OVERVIEW

1. CREATION

MAIN EVENT: Creation of the world

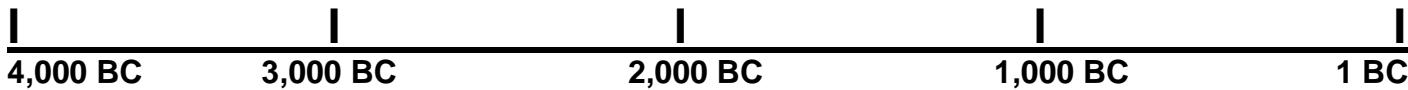
MAIN PEOPLE: God

BOOKS OF THE BIBLE: Genesis 1

BIBLE VERSE: *Genesis 1:1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.*

TIME: 4,700 BC

GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION: Universe



Let's start in the beginning – Genesis chapter 1. Here is where we begin the foundation that we will build on as we go through the whole Bible. The opening chapter of any book is important, for it sets the stage for what is to come. The background information is crucial to understanding the rest of the book. To skip the first chapter and start elsewhere makes one always wonder what is missing, what has been revealed which the reader doesn't know. It's important to pay closer attention to the first chapter, then the rest of the book makes more sense. The same is true with the Bible. Genesis, the first 'chapter' in the Bible, is very important. Make sure you really understand the book of Genesis before going on to the rest of the book.

Everything starts with God. Genesis starts with God in the first verse, Genesis 1:1. God has always existed, something hard for us to grasp with our limited understanding. God never tries to explain or prove His existence in the Bible. There is ample evidence in the world around us because nature itself shows there must be a power greater than itself and outside itself to bring it into being (Romans 1:20; Psalm 19:1-6). When we see the intricate design in the world around us we know it must have been designed by Someone greater than it. When we look at a watch we know it must have been designed by someone, for something so intricate could not just happen. The same is true of the world around us.

We know God exists because we see Him in the world around us, but we also know He exists because He has written basic standards of right and wrong into our hearts (Romans 1:19, 32; 2:15; Ecclesiastes 3:11). There is an empty space in our hearts that only God Himself can fill, and we search in vain until we allow Him into our lives to fill that space. People don't reject God because there isn't enough evidence for His existence, they reject because they do not want to submit themselves and be accountable to the one true God of the universe, the One who has absolute standards to which He holds them accountable.

The Bible was given by God to provide a clearer, more detailed revelation of God. It is the only authoritative, true and inspired revelation from God to the world. If God hadn't revealed Himself and His truths to us in the Bible, we wouldn't be able to know Him and follow Him. Because He is God, He is very able to inspire a book that tells about Him. Because He is God He is able to keep it accurate through the centuries. God desires to reveal Himself through the Bible. The Bible is not a book man would write if he could, or could write if he would. It speaks of many things man knows nothing about: creation, one God, the Trinity, eternity, heaven, hell and the future. All the Bible says about science and history has been proven to be completely true. The hundreds and hundreds of fulfilled prophecies also show the Bible is supernatural. No one could possibly make so many and so accurate prophecies. None has ever been wrong or unfulfilled. There is no doubt the Bible is God's inspired revelation to us today.

God isn't explained in the Bible, but His glory is clearly revealed from the first verse. He simply spoke and all **creation** came into being (Genesis 1), the vast universe to the smallest smell. He added color and beauty, smells and tastes, music and laughter to make the world enjoyable for us. All this took place about 7,000 years ago. God created everything in six 24-hour days and then He rested on the 7th day (Genesis 1:1-2:3). No one was there to see God do this, but He later told Adam about it. Adam told Seth who passed it on as well until it came Moses, who probably is the one who wrote it down.

Below is an outline of the Book of Genesis, which teaches us about the beginning of all things.

OUTLINE OF GENESIS

I. BEGINNING EVENTS (Human Race) 1-11

- A. Creation 1-2
- B. Fall 3-4
- C. Flood 5-9
- D. Babel 10-11

II. BEGINNING PEOPLE (Jewish Race) 12-50

- A. Abraham 12-25:18
- B. Isaac 25:19-26
- C. Jacob 27-36
- D. Joseph 37-50

The next 2 pages will give you an overview of the book of Genesis. There will be a page like this for each book of the Bible so you can read a short summary of the book itself.

GENESIS: BEGINNINGS

TITLE: Greek for "Beginnings"

AUTHOR: Moses

DATE of WRITING: About 1440 BC

PLACE of WRITING: Desert wilderness

TIME COVERED: Creation to 1804 BC

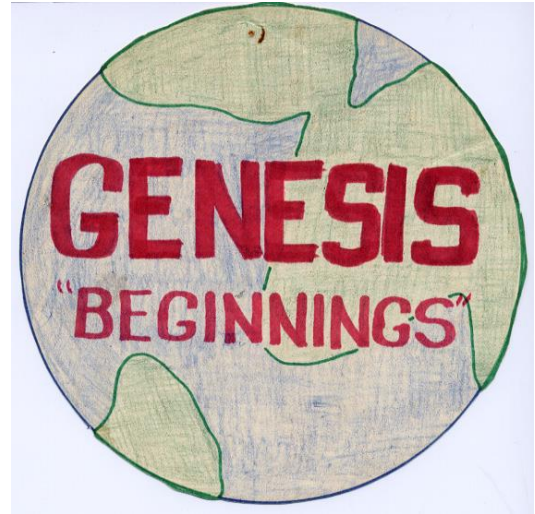
RECIPIENTS: Jews

KEY VERSE: *And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.*" Genesis 3:15

KEY WORD: "Generations" (19 times)

PURPOSE: To show the beginnings of all things, especially Israel.

THEME: The origin of all things.



Several years ago a man named Alex Haley wrote a book called "Roots" which captured the attention of the entire nation. It was about his search for his background, where he came from. "Roots" was an appropriate title. We all need roots. Knowing where we came from can help us understand where we are and where we're going.

BEGINNINGS: Moses wrote a book that also could have been called "Roots." Instead it's called "Genesis." Genesis is the Greek title, taken from the first words of the book in Greek: "In the beginning." Genesis is a book of beginnings. In it we see the beginning of the universe, life, revelation of God and the Trinity, grace, man, Sabbath, marriage, home, sin, temptation, confession, forgiveness, pride, Satan, Christ, election, prophecy, faith, judgment, suffering, murder, family, worship, rewards, prayer, eternal security, witnessing, stewardship, capital punishment, love, sin nature, and so much more. Virtually everything has its beginning in Genesis. The only beginning that isn't told about is the beginning of God, for He has no beginning.

Because Genesis is so important, it is attacked quite heavily. Any book gets most wear and tear on its exposed sides: front and back. Those pages take the most abuse. That is true in the Bible, too. The first three chapters of Genesis (creation) and the last three of Revelation (Jesus' return and eternity) take the most abuse, too. That is where Satan attacks. If he can discredit either of those the truth of the rest of the book is undermined.

TWO BOOKS IN ONE Genesis is really two books in one. The first 11 chapters talk about the beginning of the universe and nations on earth. Chapters 12 - 50 deal with the nation Israel. In 11 short chapters 2,300 years of history are covered. Major events that have shaped our world are covered quickly: creation, fall, flood and Babel. The rest of the book covers only 300 years and focuses on four men: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph. In the first 11 chapters God sets the stage for what He really wants to get to: Abraham and the start of Israel. It's like seeing a movie which starts with a panoramic view of the countryside with a village in the distance. The camera pans across it all, focusing in on the town until focusing on a man walking down the street. The camera then zooms in on him and follows him down the street and into a house. The story slows down and follows events in the man's life. That's how Genesis is. God isn't trying to give all the details we'd like to have about creation and the fall. He just records it's happening then moves on.

HISTORY & SCIENCE Genesis contains a lot about science, and all it includes is true. However, Genesis isn't a science book because it doesn't try to cover all areas of science or answer all questions that come up. The same is true of history. Genesis contains a lot about history, and all it includes is true. But it isn't a history book, because it leaves out so much history. God's purpose isn't to give a detailed account of science or history, but to set the background for Abraham and Israel. The focus of the book of Genesis, like the whole Bible, is redemption. Genesis 1 - 11 show man's need of redemption, but 12 - 50 show the beginning of God's provision of redemption through Israel in the person of Jesus the Messiah.

ORIGINAL CREATION *In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.* There are actually three books in the Bible that start "in the beginning." John 1:1 refers to Jesus being God from before anything else. Genesis 1:1 is the beginning of the created universe, and I John 1:1 the beginning of Jesus' life on earth. The Hebrew word "created" (bara) refers to God creating something out of nothing. In verse 2 a different word (asah) refers to forming something out of existing material.

IS THERE LIFE ON OTHER PLANETS? The earth is mentioned as separate from the rest of the heavens (see also Psalm 115:16). I believe earth is the only planet with life like us (who are in the image of God) on it, because any life created with personality (mind, emotions and will) would have a free will and would therefore exercise it to sin (as did man and the fallen angels). Satan has access through the whole universe and would tempt anything God created. God only left heaven once to die for sin, and that was on this earth. He took the sins of those of us who live on this earth. Therefore there is no redemption for anyone else in the universe. God created the vast universe to show us how great He is, not to have lots of life forms. If He had created other life, He wouldn't need us as He does.

WERE THE CREATION DAYS GEOLOGICAL AGES? Some have attempted to reconcile evolution and creation by saying God used evolutionary ages for the 'days' of creation. That couldn't be true for the Hebrew word translated 'day,' (yom) appears about 1300 times in the Bible, 99% of which obviously refer to a 24-hour day. The meaning of the few which refer to a longer period of time (like the "Day of the Lord") are obvious from the context. Plus the Bible describes the creation days as "morning and evening," and "day and night," normal ways of describing 24 hour days. In Exodus 20:8-11, 'yom' is used 6 times. Two refer to creation days and 4 to 24-hour days. The Sabbath is based on the creation rest 'day.' It seems clear that all the days mentioned here are of the same length instead of referring to two entirely different time periods.

You see, the creation days couldn't possibly be geological ages. Only 3 days had any impact on the earth (3, 5, 6) and there were more than 3 geological ages. Plus the order of the way God created things and how evolution says they progressed is often very different (we'll see examples in future articles). Romans 5:12 says there was no death before sin, so what would account for all the dead (and even extinct) animals for those millions of years before man?

THE TERRARIUM AFFECT Genesis 1:6-8 refers to an "expanse" four times. This is a canopy around the earth creating a terrarium-like effect on the whole earth. This protected the earth from the sun's radiation and produced a uniform climate everywhere. Thus, there was enough vegetation to support the dinosaur population. There was no rain, it wasn't necessary. Everything stayed the same. This canopy was removed when the great flood came and the water that formed it fell to the earth. Thus dinosaurs have been found frozen in Antarctica with tropical vegetation in their mouths.

ROOTS By the way, where are YOUR roots? I don't mean physically, I mean spiritually. Are you rooted and grounded in Jesus? That's the only foundation that will last, that won't wash away. Make sure your roots are firmly embedded in Jesus!

BIBLE OVERVIEW

2. ADAM & EVE

MAIN EVENT: Adam and Eve in Eden

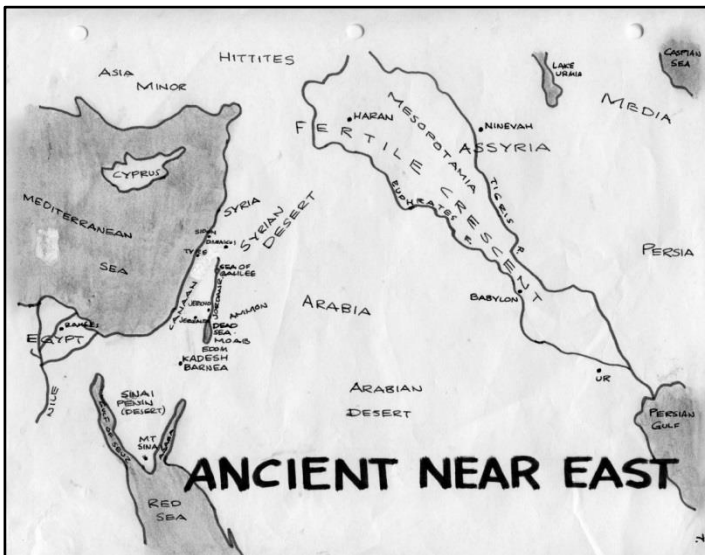
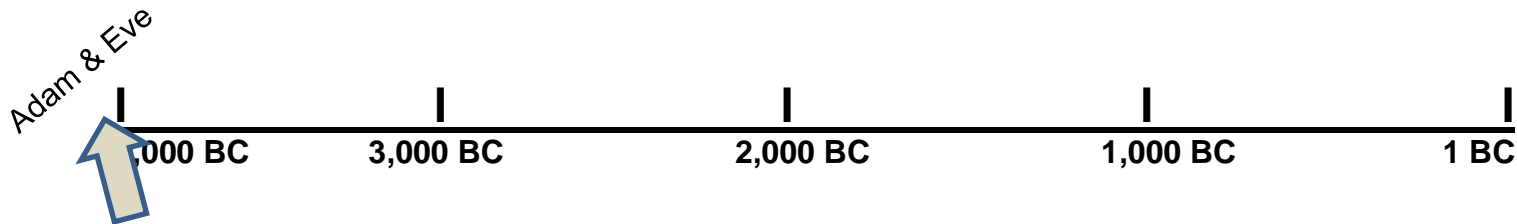
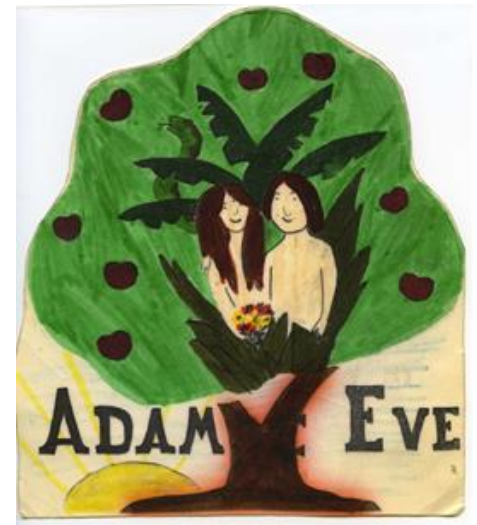
MAIN PEOPLE: Adam, Eve

BOOKS OF THE BIBLE: Genesis 2-4

BIBLE VERSE: *Genesis 2:7 The Lord God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.*

TIME: 4,700 BC

GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION: Eden, world



The second historical event we will cover in our overview of the Bible centers on **Adam and Eve**. God created Adam first, then Eve. He created them perfect and in His image. He gave them a mind, emotions and a free will. God gave them a **free will** because He wants man to choose voluntarily to love and obey Him (Genesis 4:6-7). Without a free will we would not have any choice. It's like the difference between having a real dog or one made out of wood. The wooden dog would be far less trouble, but it wouldn't bring the joy and pleasure a real dog brings. The same is true of us. God wants us to love Him because we choose to.

However, along with a free will came the option to sin and reject God. **Sin first started with Satan** who, because of his pride, rebelled against serving God in heaven (2 Thessalonians 2:4; Isaiah 14:12-16; Ezekiel 28:15-17; Luke 10:18). Very soon after they were created Satan attacked Adam and Eve, tempting them to doubt God's word, His goodness and His character. He used deception to make Eve think God was withholding something good from them. While Eve was misled, Adam was fully aware he was disobeying God (1 Timothy 2:13-15). Adam & Eve tried to cover their own sin but God provided skins to cover them. AN

innocent animal had to die to cover their sin, picturing what Jesus would one day do for us on the cross.

God knew that with a free will man would sin, so He planned to pay for it even before He created the world (Ephesians 1:4). He didn't want man to be separated from Him for all eternity, and that is what the penalty for sin would be. Instead, God the Son volunteered to **come to earth as a man** so He could take our place and pay the penalty for our sin and disobedience. Because He was a man, He could take our place. Since He was God, He could bear the sins of each person who ever lived. It was the perfect solution to the sin problem, the only way mankind could have a free will and still spend eternity with God.

Sin is more than doing something contrary to God's will. It can be a word, thought, something that should be done but isn't, or something good done with a wrong motive. God's plan was to pay the penalty for all sin (John 3:16). Satan and his forces did and continue to do all they can to oppose God's plan for man... God will eventually have victory over Satan. This was foretold to Adam and Eve in Eden: "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel" (Genesis 3:15). This is the first prophecy of Jesus (Isaiah 7:14).

This second stage in our overview of the Bible, called Adam and Eve, ends with the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the Garden (Genesis 3:22-24). Guilt, shame and fear entered the human race. Now man must work the ground for a living and woman will have pain in childbirth as well as being under her husband's authority. Sin also brought a curse on the earth. Disease and sickness started to spread. God's grace is seen in that He removed Adam and Eve from Eden where they would have lived forever in sin and separation from Him.

When Adam disobeyed God **spiritual death** entered the human race and physical death as well. All humans born after Adam and Eve are born with a tendency to sin, a Sin Nature (Matthew 15:19). God withdrew His physical presence from man because sin placed a barrier between them. But God's grace is seen in His promise of a redeemer (Genesis 3:15), in making coats of animal skin to cover them, in allowing them to live physically awhile longer and not die immediately, in providing for their basic needs and in separating them from the tree of life. Living forever would no longer be a blessing, for it would mean man would be stuck in a sinful world and separated from God. God's grace is seen in sending death so man can again be reunited with Him for eternity.

There is a beautiful **picture of salvation** in this section of our Bible overview. It shows man is sinful (Genesis 3:6) and can't cover his own sin (Genesis 3: 7; Ephesians 2:8-9). In fact, man is helpless in sin and separated from God (Genesis 3:8-13). Sin brings punishment (Genesis 3:14-19; Romans 6:23). Man runs from God. It is God that seeks man (Genesis 3:8) to show love and mercy. He alone can conquer sin and Satan (Genesis 3:15). This victory is paid for by innocent blood shed (Genesis 3:31; 4:3-5). This is the first death or suffering, and is by an innocent animal to show what is necessary to cover man's sin. Actually it was the Second person of the Trinity (Jesus before His birth) that was with man in Eden. No one has seen God the father at any time (John 6:46) and the Holy Spirit never materializes but serves to bring attention of Jesus. Thus the first innocent blood shed was by the One who knew it foreshadowed His coming death on the cross for sin. What love and commitment this shows! He did it all (Romans 8:12-21), we must just accept this free gift (Ephesians 2:8-9). We aren't to blame God or others for our sin (Genesis 3:12-13) but freely admit it (1 John 1:9). As Adam and Eve allowed Jesus to dress them in the animal skins He provided, we, too, must allow Him to cover us with His righteousness. Our dressing for sin is worse than fig leaves; it is filthy rags (Isaiah 64:6). The same loving, forgiving God who came seeking Adam and Eve in their sin comes seeking us in ours (Revelation 3:20). Will you welcome Him and accept the covering for your sin which He and He alone provides? Don't put off His offer. Don't refuse His free gift. Accept Him now.

BIBLE OVERVIEW

3. NOAH & the FLOOD

MAIN EVENT: The Worldwide Flood

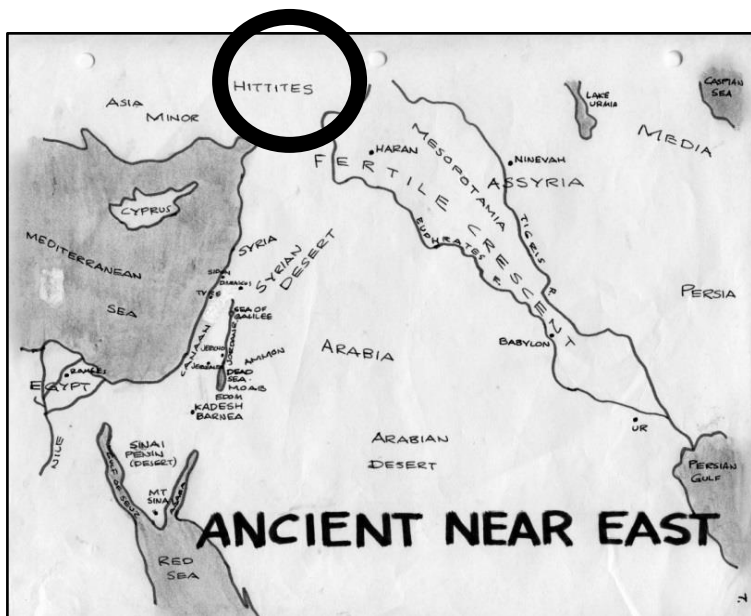
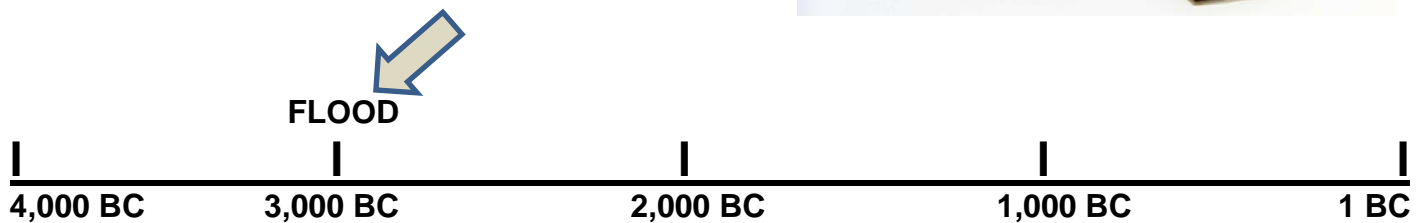
MAIN PEOPLE: Noah and His Family

BOOKS OF THE BIBLE: Genesis 5-10

BIBLE VERSE: *Genesis 6:8-10 But Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord. ... Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked with God.*

TIME: 3,000 BC

GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION: World, Mt. Ararat



This is the third time period in our overview of the Bible. It begins with Adam and Eve leaving Eden (Genesis 3:22-24) and concludes with the end of the flood (Genesis 8:14). During this time man is responsible to work the ground to live. Women have pain in childbirth and wives will be under subjection to their husband's authority.

From the fall in Eden to the flood in Noah's day almost 2,000 years passed. It was approximately 3000 BC when God's patience came to an end and it was time for judgment to come in the form of a flood.

Mankind had failed to obey God. The first person born, Cain, murdered his own brother, Abel. People continued to sin until God sent the great worldwide flood in Noah's day to judge the world. Still, His grace was seen in that He provided a way of salvation for any who would put their faith in Him. He also preserved Noah and his family in the ark during the flood. There was always a faithful minority, a remnant, who remained true to God.

MEET NOAH

Noah was preserved because he obeyed God and was righteous in His sight (Genesis 6:9; 7:1). God told him to build a large boat 520 feet (170 meters) long, 45 feet (15 meters) wide and 75 feet (25 meters) high. This large container could hold as much as 600 railroad cars. He spent about 75 years building the ark. Noah, his wife, his three sons (Shem, Ham and Japheth) and their wives all went into the boat. They took two of each unclean animal and seven pairs of each clean animal with them (Genesis 7:2). God then sent a world-wide flood to destroy sinful man but Noah and his family were safe and secure in the ark. God does not judge His people, we are safe from condemnation (Romans 8:1).

It rained for 40 days and the earth was covered with water for a whole year after that. The water was one mile deep. It was during this time that the earth was reformed into the continents as they are today. The canopy of moisture that was around the earth making it like a terrarium disappeared when all the water in it came to earth, so its protection on man and animal was gone. People then lived to be 950 years old, sometimes more. The north and south polar caps froze. Without there being a tropical climate everywhere vegetation did not grow as fast as before the flood. Therefore the large animals, like dinosaurs, didn't have enough to eat and soon became extinct.

After the flood God placed His rainbow in the sky as a promise to never again judge the whole world by a flood. Noah showed his thankfulness by offering blood sacrifices to God. He lived 350 years after the flood. This was the third distinct time period in the Old Testament.

BIBLE OVERVIEW

4 . BABEL

MAIN EVENT: Tower of Babel

MAIN PEOPLE: Nimrod

BOOKS OF THE BIBLE: Genesis 11

BIBLE VERSE: *Genesis 11:4 Then they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city, with a tower that reaches to the heavens, so that we may make a name for ourselves and not be scattered over the face of the whole earth."*

TIME: 2,600 BC

WORLD EVENTS AT THIS TIME:

Indus Valley Kot Duini, then Mature Harappan

Dravidian Civilization begins in South India.

China empire forming

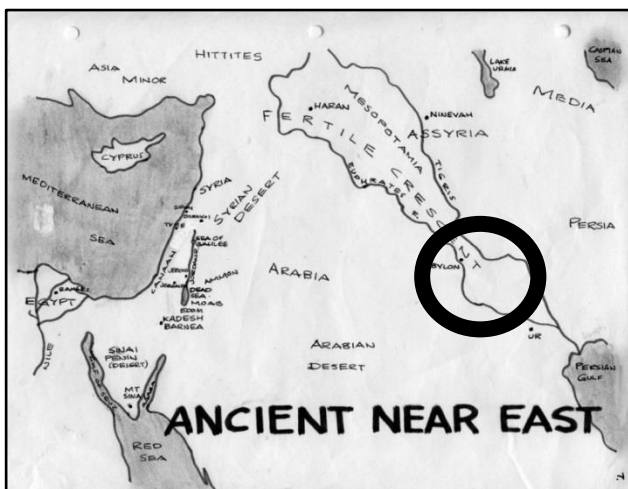
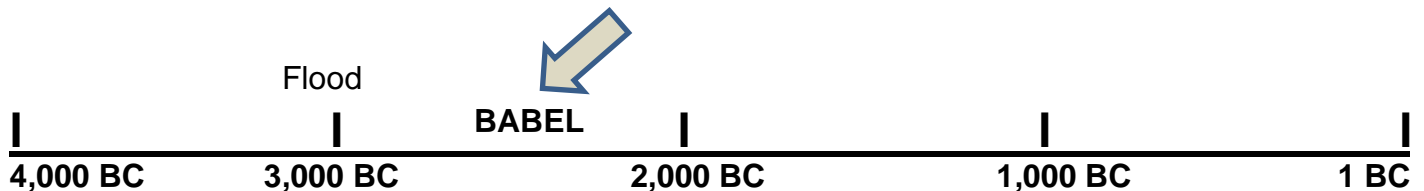
Cuneiform writing in Sumeria

Egypt Old Kingdom

Maya culture starting

Great Pyramid built in Egypt

GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION:



The fourth major event in the Old Testament focuses on the Tower of Babel. This period begins with Noah and his family leaving the ark (Genesis 8:15) and ends with God's call of Abram (Genesis 11:32; 12:1). Man was responsible to keep the covenant God made with Noah. He was to subdue the earth. God now said mankind could eat meat (but not with the blood in it) and exercise capital punishment. However, again man failed. His rebellion and disobedience culminated with the building of the Tower of Babel. God judged their disobedience by changing their languages and scattering the people, but He did make allowances for languages to be translated so people can still communicate with each other.

MEET NIMROD

Nimrod is the first person after the flood of whom more than just a name is given. His name means “to rebel.” God says he is “a mighty one on the earth” (Gen 10:8). Through his pride and self-will, he forced himself into a position of pre-eminence over others. He is also called “a mighty hunter before the Lord” (Genesis 10:9). “Before” means “in opposition to” and shows his rebellion against God. He took the lead in boldly defying God’s authority. He became a hunter of men, tracking down and killing men for sport! His lust for power make him more like a wild beast than a human being. He had people worship him, not God. He was inhumane, cruel, brutal and God-defying. He founded two great civilizations: Babylon and Nineveh (Genesis 10:10-12). These two ruled the then-known world for hundreds and hundreds of years. Nimrod’s purpose was to keep everyone from scattering so they could stay and worship him as their ruler.

Truly **Nimrod is a picture of the Antichrist** who will unite the world the same way. The meaning of both of their names is “the rebel, the lawless one” (2 Thessalonians 2:8). Each was a murderer (Psalm 5:6), a world ruler (king - Daniel 11:36), started or headed Babylon (Isaiah 14:4; Revelation 17:3-5), was mighty (2 Thessalonians 2:9), and was motivated by pride (2 Thessalonians 2:4). Each attempt at usurping God’s authority will end with judgment. Revelation 17 and 18 even call this empire of the Antichrist’s ‘Babylon.’

Up to Nimrod’s time the world spoke one **language** (Genesis 11:1), which Adam instantly knew when he was created, as did Eve. Language specialists today say all languages can be traced to one original language. Nimrod took advantage of this to encourage all to stay together to build a great temple as the central focus of their civilization, so that together they could accomplish more than if they all went their separate directions as God had commanded (Genesis 1:28; 9:1). They were to depend on each other, and especially Nimrod, instead of God. The central place of worship was to be built with “a tower that reaches to the heavens.” The original Hebrew doesn’t say they were trying to make it tall enough to touch God, just that it’s top had to do with the heavens. A more plausible explanation is that they built a temple on top to worship the sun, moon and stars. Nimrod seemingly perverted God’s plan of salvation in the stars to focus it on himself instead of on Jesus. Archaeologists have found numerous temples of this type, called Ziggurats, all focusing on worshipping the heavens. It is the start of astrology. THIS is the reason God changed their languages and scattered them: not because they wanted to make a tall building but because they were perverting His good news of the gospel to form a united world with Satan at the head instead of God. This is why He judged it so severely (Genesis 11:5-9), and will again during the Tribulation.

At this time it seems that there were about 70 family units (about 800 to 1,000 people) on earth. These became the 70 **nations** listed in Genesis 10. Those who descended from Shem settled chiefly in Central Asia and became the Jews, Assyrians, Persians, Arabs, Chaldeans, Indians, Chinese and eventually American Indians. Those descended from Ham settled in Africa and Egypt and became the Negroes, Egyptians, Canaanites and Hittites. Japheth’s descendants settled mainly in Europe and became the Greeks, Romans, Teutons, Anglo-Saxons and Europeans.

Does this mean we shouldn’t have one world standard of measurement, money, even language? To the extent that these bring about a situation which Satan can use to bring attention to himself instead of God they are wrong. To the extent that they set things up for the Antichrist to be able to come and set up his one world empire they are wrong. To the extent that we trust in man and his solutions instead of God they are wrong. Anything that does now or potentially can take the attention from God is wrong. He is to be praised and worshipped above all else. He is to have first place. He is to be preeminent. Bless His holy name!

God doesn’t give up on man, though. He now tries to reach out to mankind through a man, Abraham, and the Jewish nation that will come from him.

BIBLE OVERVIEW

5. ABRAHAM

MAIN EVENT: Abraham, Ur to Palestine

MAIN PEOPLE: Abraham, Sarah (Job)

BOOKS OF THE BIBLE: Genesis 12-25 (Job)

BIBLE VERSE: *Genesis 15:6 Abram believed the Lord, and he credited it to him as righteousness.*

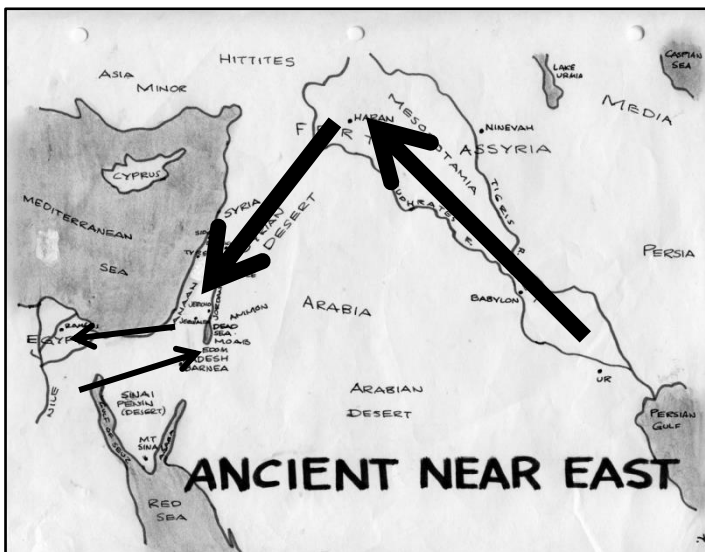
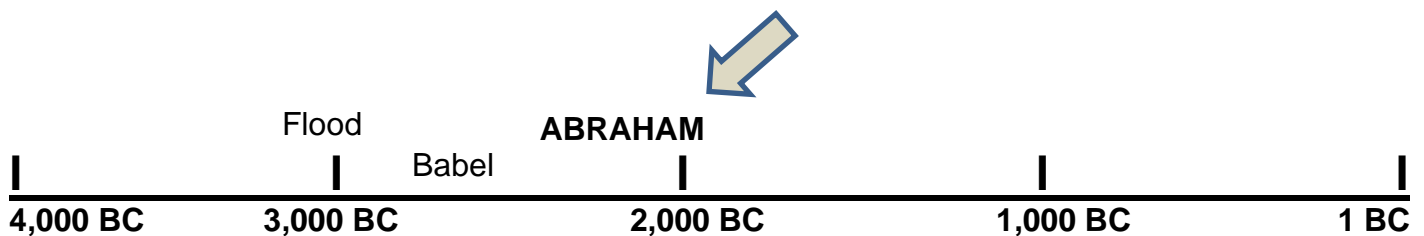
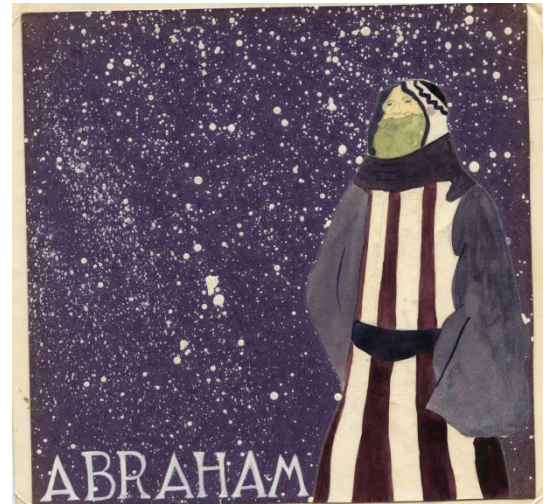
TIME: 2,200 BC

WORLD EVENTS AT THIS TIME:

China Xi Dynasty ruling

Indus Valley Civilization at its height

GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION: Ur, Palestine



God's call of Abram (later to be called Abraham) begins a new phase of God's dealings with man (Genesis 12:1). Abram was born about 4500 years after Adam and about 2200 years before Jesus. He was born about 400 years after the tower of Babel. His story starts in Genesis 12. It is our fifth time period as we travel through the history of the Bible. Instead of God trying to reach all of mankind He now shifts His focus to one man through whom He will start a nation, the people of Israel. Through them He wants to reach the rest of the world by their example and by giving them His word, the Bible. He will also send His promised Messiah through this nation (Genesis 3:15). This is important to understand

in order to develop our foundation of the Old Testament. The Jews are still God's chosen people and will one day be restored to prominence again.

The first four events in our Bible overview covered 2,000 years. Only 11 chapters in Genesis tell us about them. Now the story slows down. The next four events, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph, cover only 300 years but are recorded in 39 chapters in Genesis (12-50).

The first 11 chapters of Genesis are God's wide-angle lens of history, covering those 4500 years in brief outline form. When the account gets to Abram it slows down to a crawl and God switches to His close-up lens. God used him to start His chosen nation, the Jews. He could have used Job or Melchizedek, outstanding believers who were also alive at his time. He chose Abram, the weakest, so He would get all the honor and glory for what He did. That's why He often calls us to do things that seem impossible for us, so that He gets the credit for what is accomplished.

MEET ABRAHAM

Abram's life was a series of tests God used to help him grow spiritually. They were opportunities for Him to trust in God. Some he failed, others he passed.

1. LEAVE UR (Genesis 11:24 - 12:9) God told Abram to leave Ur, the most advanced city of its day where the moon was worshipped. He had been there 60 years and it was hard to leave. He passed that first test because he went straight to Haran 600 miles away. However he also failed in that he took his father and nephew, which was against God's orders and which caused him much trouble. He had to wait in Haran 15 years until his sick father died before he could (Acts 7:2-4). Then he went 400 miles to Palestine. By this time he was 75 years old.

2. FAMINE (Genesis 12:10-20) There was a famine in the land shortly after Abram arrived, and, instead of staying and trusting God he headed to Egypt (a picture of the world) to find food. He always had a problem with fear. He even said Sarai was his sister to protect his own life. If God hadn't saved them from Pharaoh that would have been the end of this new nation God was forming. God was faithful even when Abram wasn't.

3. WEALTH (Genesis 13:1-4) God had made him very wealthy in Egypt, a temptation to trust in the wealth instead of Him but Abram was faithful (Psalm 118:8-9; Proverbs 28:25).

4. CONFLICT WITH LOT (Genesis 13:5-18) Soon there wasn't enough land for Lot and Abram so Abram let Lot have first choice of the available land, even though it all belonged to Abraham. Lot chose the best for himself - Sodom.

5. LOT CAPTURED (Genesis 14:1-16) Lot lived in a very sinful city. When enemies defeated Sodom, Abram had to decide if he would risk his life to rescue Lot. He did so.

6. POWER & WEALTH (Genesis 14:17-24) Then the king of Sodom tried to give Abram riches for rescuing his people, but Abram knew God wanted him to depend only on Him, so he turned them down, with the encouragement and support of Melchizedek (Psalm 40:4).

7. SON PROMISED (Genesis 15:1-21) Even though physically Sarai, Abram's wife, was way too old, God said Abram would have an heir (son). It was hard to believe, especially when time passed and nothing happened. God was teaching Abram to trust Him totally (Psalm 27:14; 37:5).

8. HAGAR (Genesis 16:1-4) While waiting, Sarai came up with a plan that was culturally acceptable. It was for Abram to have a son by her servant and consider it hers. It seemed like a good way to solve the problem, so, instead of waiting for God to provide, unfortunately Abram did what she suggested.

9. ISHMAEL (Genesis 16:5-16) Having a son by Hagar just didn't work out. There was constant jealousy and turmoil in the family. Sarai told Abram to kick them out and he listened to her.

10. OBEY (CIRCUMCISION) (Genesis 17:1-27) By now Abram was 99, and still had no son. He was too old to father a child, and Sarai was way too old to conceive. Still, God told Abram to have all of his males circumcised as a sign of faith in His promise of a coming son. He even changed their names. Abram ("exalted father") became Abraham ("father of many nations"). Sarai ("contentious") became Sarah ("princess"). Abraham responded in faith and obeyed Him.

11. SON NEXT YEAR (Genesis 18:1-15) Now God's promises got even more specific. He said they'd have a son within the next year. Sarah was skeptical, but Abraham believed God and so passed this test.

12. INTERCESSION (Genesis 18:16-33) God showed Abraham that Sodom and Gomorrah were going to be judged for their sins. Lot would have died, too, but Abraham interceded for him, believing God could spare him in His mercy if He chose. God promised He would.

13. LIE ABOUT SARAH (Genesis 20:1-17) This retest was the same as test # 2: protecting himself by saying Sarah was his sister (so when she was taken to Pharaoh's harem Abraham wouldn't be killed) or trust God by staying out of Egypt in the first place! Again he failed.

14. ISHMAEL SENT OUT (Genesis 21:1-21) Abraham didn't fail all his retests, though. When Sarah again wanted Hagar and Ishmael kicked out he went to God, willing to do whatever God said. He said it was time for them to go and He'd take care of them, which He did. Finally Abraham was able to put God above Sarah's pressure and his own fear and do what was right.

15. ISAAC SACRIFICED (Genesis 22:1-19) Abraham's faith in God was really tested when God told him to take Isaac and sacrifice him to God. This was a picture of God Himself sacrificing His only son, Jesus, in nearly the same location. For Abraham, though, a substitute ram was provided so he didn't have to kill his son. But when God's Son hung on the cross in that same area there was no substitute, for Jesus was the substitute for the rest of the world. Abraham didn't have to put his son to death, but God the Father did, so He could become our substitute.

16. SARAH DIES (Genesis 23:1-20) Abraham's wife, Sarah, died when she was 127 years old. For all God had promised him, he didn't even have land to bury her on! He had to trust that God knew best when He took his life's mate. Abraham also had to trust Him to help him be both mother and father to Isaac. God was with him, even providing him with another wife, Keturah.

17. ISAAC'S WIFE (Genesis 24:1-9) Trusting God for a wife for Isaac was hard, but Abraham followed His leading and sent Eleazar back to his home area to find a wife who was a believer in God. God provided Rebekah for Isaac.

18. DEATH (Genesis 25:1-11) Abraham lived to be 175. His last test was to trust God when he was facing death, to trust Him with his soul at death and for all eternity. He had faith in God and died in peace (Isaiah 26:4; Psalm 9:9-10).

19. WHOLE LIFE You could say Abraham's whole life was a test. He passed some and failed others. He did pass more than he failed and God was good and merciful to him. God included Abraham as an example of faith in His "Hall of Faith and Fame," Hebrews 11:8-19. The Jews still know him as the "Father of the Faithful."

What about you? How are you responding to the opportunities God gives you to trust Him? If God was keeping score in your life, how is your pass-fail ratio? How is it lately, any improvement? Remember, with HIS help you can do all things (Acts 1:8; Romans 15:13; Ephesians 3:16).

During this time period named after Abraham, man is responsible to live in faith, trusting God's promises as made in the Abrahamic Covenant (Genesis 15). Again man continued to fail. Abraham didn't trust God's timing and had Ishmael by Hagar. God's grace is seen in His mercy to Abraham by restoring him and keeping his promises to His people.

Job lived during approximately the same time as Abraham so we will include Job in this time period as well. His life story is told in the book that bears his name, Job.

JOB: SUFFERING



TITLE: After the main character

AUTHOR: Job (19:23-34) or Moses

DATE: 2000 BC (time of Abraham)

DATE of WRITING: About 2000 BC

PLACE of WRITING: Uz (Middle East)

TIME COVERED: Later part of Job's life

RECIPIENTS: Unknown

KEY VERSE: 1:21 *"Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I will depart. The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away; may the name of the LORD be praised."*

KEY WORDS: "Affliction" (11 times); "righteous" (21 times); "Answered and said" (32 times)

PURPOSE: To come to grips with the question: "Why do the righteous suffer?"

THEME: Reasons for and purposes of suffering.

I grew up with a sister (no brothers) who grew into a very special woman. She was a woman of faith in Jesus and was very friendly and loving. She did much good for all she knew. She had two little boys and a fine husband who needed her. But she got cancer and died when she was 33. Everyone kept asking: "Why Judy?" They tried to come up with an answer to help them better understand what God was doing, but there is no answer to the "Why?" question. Only God knows that answer -- and He keeps silent. Even asking the question can be wrong when we ask with accusation or rebellion in our attitude, as if challenging God and thinking He is wrong in what He does. Why do bad things happen to people? That's a universal question, and an old one. It's no surprise that the oldest book in the Bible, the first one written, deals with this question. Why DO good people suffer?

SUFFERINGS OF JOB The story of this "Magnificent Man of Misery" begins with a thumb-nail sketch of Job as a very rich, well-known, respected, and godly man. He is pictured as the outstanding man of his day (Job 1:1-5). However, Satan, who accuses God's people whenever he can, finds something to complain to God about. That is the root meaning of the name "Devil" – accuser of believers (Revelation 12:10). He accuses Job of only serving God because God is giving him such a pleasant and prosperous life (1:6-11). For the sake of His honor and glory, God allows Satan to attack Job (1:12), to prove Job's love is sincere and not self-seeking. Note that Satan can't do anything to God's people without His approval. Every trial we face is "Father-filtered."

Anyway, Satan takes away all Job's riches and possessions (1:13-17) and even the lives of his children, whom he deeply loves and cares about (1:4-5, 18-19). Job realized that everything he had came from God and that God had the right to take it all back without any explanation to Job (1:20-22). This is a stirring testimony to true faith and right perspective in life. Remember, Job had no idea WHY this was happening. He trusted and loved God as much when He gave blessings as when He took them away. I think the key for us here is to remember that what we have isn't ours but is God's instead.

Still Satan wasn't done, and accused Job of not really caring about those things because 'as long as you have your health, you have everything' (2:1-5). Again God allowed Satan to test Job, this time causing physical pain in his life (2:6-7). Satan caused the most painful afflictions he could, so that poor Job just sat in ashes, scratching open his puss-pockets to gain some minor relief (2:7-8). Even his wife, who may have been left alive for just this purpose, encouraged him to curse God so God would kill him and put him out of his misery (2:9). Still, he stayed faithful in his love and devotion to God (2:10).

COUNSELORS OF JOB The majority of the book of Job, chapters 3-37, is poetical (which is why Job is placed with the other poetical books in the Bible). Three friends of Job have come to try to force him to admit that he wouldn't be suffering this way if he hadn't really sinned. Then a fourth comes and semi-defends him, but not entirely. This MUST be God's punishment of him, they insist. Imagine your home has just exploded,

destroying every possession you have. Everyone in the family was killed but you and you are in the hospital, wracked with pain, tubes coming out of you everywhere. The pastor and a couple friends show up and stay for several weeks trying to force you to admit God did this because you are such a rotten sinner. How much comfort would their visit bring you?

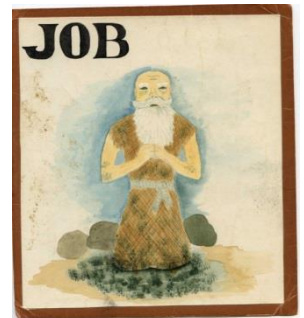
Job defends his innocence, knowing that God doesn't punish His people (Romans 8:1). Often today we, too, think that when we or someone we know is going through a hard time it is because God is punishing us. That is not true. God does discipline us when we won't turn from sin (Hebrews 12:5-11) but he also allows trials to come into our lives when we are faithful so that we will trust Him more and become even more faithful and so abide in Him (John 15). He doesn't tell us why these things happen now, but when we get to heaven we will see that He knew and did what was best and right (John 13:7). Now we must trust Him (Romans 8:28). As a young child doesn't know why a loving parent would allow a doctor to stick or cut him, so we don't know why God allows things to happen to us. Just because we don't know the reason doesn't mean there isn't one, though. We do know that God will abundantly bless and reward us for faithfully trusting Him through the valleys in life, though (2 Corinthians 4:16-17; Romans 8:18). That may or may not happen in this life, but certainly will in heaven.

BLESSINGS OF JOB After spending many chapters trying to blame Job for his situation, God interrupts and, in a voice dripping with sarcasm, shows them they have no business trying to second-guess Him. Read Job 38-41 when you start wondering if God knows what He is doing! God tells Job's counselors they have to come to Job and ask him to pray for them or they will feel the full fury of God's wrath (42:7-9). This must have really humbled them! Then God returned all Job's possessions, doubled (42:10-16). He even replaced his children. He didn't have to double them, for his other children were still living in heaven. Thus in effect he did have double the number of children, too.

Job never does know WHY God did this, and neither do we today. Perhaps bad things happen to good people to show Satan they love God for the right reasons, perhaps it is to learn to trust God more or depend on His grace more completely (as was the case with Paul's thorn in the flesh -- 2 Corinthians 12:7), or for God's glory when we and others see His provision and deliverance, or maybe it's to make us more sensitive to others who suffer (2 Corinthians 1:3-24). Whatever the reason might be, we know God is Sovereign and loves us deeply (Romans 8). All He does is for His glory and our benefit.

WHY DOES GOD ALLOW SUFFERING? Ultimately all suffering is to be glory to God and growth to the one going through it. God uses it for other purposes as well, thought, such as showing the conflict between God and Satan (Job 1-2), to present God's message (Hosea), to teach obedience to God (Hebrews 5:8; Philippians 2:8), to learn to depend on God's grace (2 Corinthians 12:7-10), to draw us closer to Christ (1 Peter 1:7-8; Isaiah 49:2), demonstrates God's power (John 13:16; 16:33; 1 Peter 1:13) and helps us assist others who suffer (2 Corinthians 1:3-4).

HOW SHOULD WE RESPOND TO SUFFERING? When going through suffering make sure you are in God's will (1 Peter 4:19) and trust that God is doing it for our benefit (John 15:2; Romans 8:28). We won't know why these things happen until later (John 13:7). Use this as an opportunity to trust Him and draw closer to Him (Hebrews 13:5). His love has been proved by what He did for us on the cross, so there is no reason to doubt that.



OUTLINE OF JOB

I. SUFFERING OF JOB (Afflictions) 1-2

- A. Job's Circumstances 1:1-5
- B. Job's Calamities 1:6 – 2:10
- C. Job's Comforters 2:11-13

II. COUNSELORS OF JOB (Answers) 3-42

- A. Job's Cry 3
- B. Job's Critics
(Eliphaz, Bildad, Zophar) 4-31

1. Cycle 1 4-14

2. Cycle 2 15-21

3. Cycle 3 22-32

C. Job's Comforter (Elihu) 32-37

D. Job's Creator 38-42

III. BLESSINGS OF JOB 42

- A. Job's Confirmation 42:7
- B. Job's Consolation 42:10

BIBLE OVERVIEW

6. ISAAC

MAIN EVENTS: Birth, Sacrifice of Isaac

MAIN PEOPLE: Isaac, Rebekah

BOOKS OF THE BIBLE: Genesis 21-28,35

BIBLE VERSE: *Genesis 17:19* "Sarah will bear you a son, and you will call him Isaac. I will establish My covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him."

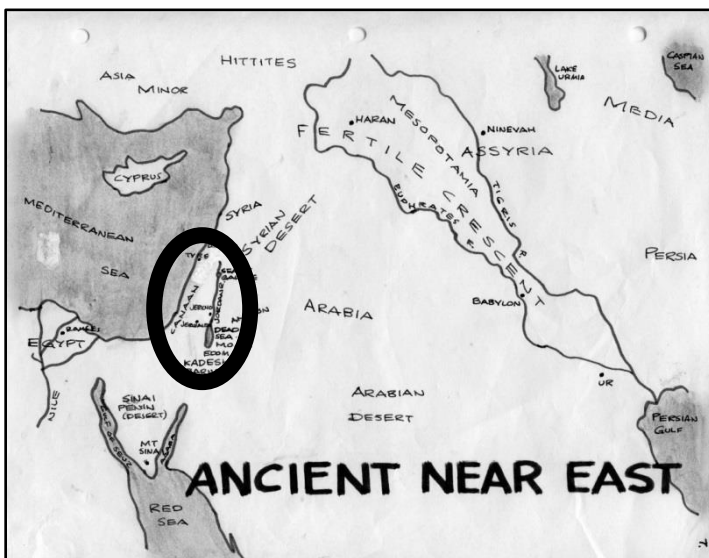
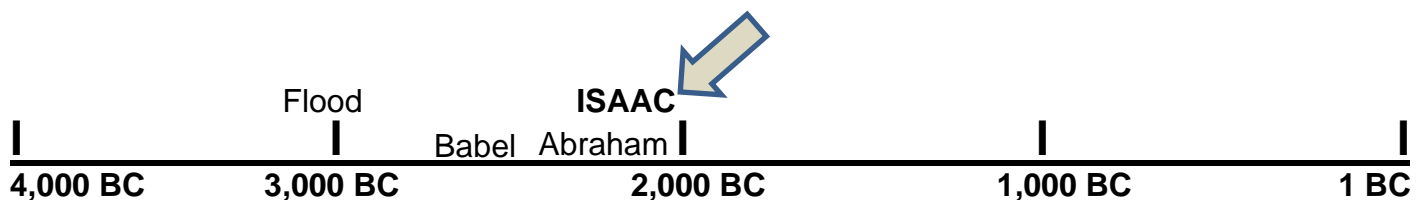
TIME: 2,100 BC

WORLD EVENTS AT THIS TIME:

Egypt, Middle Kingdom replaces Old Kingdom

Hittite Civilization begins

GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION: Palestine



God's promises to Abraham passed on to his son Isaac, the 6th time period in our study. God had promised Abraham that he and Sarah would have a son even though they were too old, and they did (Hebrews 11:17-19). Isaac showed times of great faith, as when he trusted his father Abraham to offer his life as a sacrifice (Genesis 22). He also had times of great disobedience in his life.

MEET ISAAC

Isaac was born to parents who were old enough to be his grandparents. His father, Abraham, was 100 years old when he was born. His mother, Sarah, was 90 (Genesis 21:5; 17:17).

Truly he was a miracle baby and they were very glad to have him. He was special to God as well for God chose his name. 'Isaac' means 'laughter' (Genesis 17:19).

Isaac was circumcised at eight days old, as was the custom. But by the time he was weaned at age two (Genesis 21:8) there were family problems. His father, Abraham, had gotten impatient

waiting for him to be conceived so he followed Sarah's suggestion that he have a son through her servant Hagar. This was an accepted practice in those days, especially when a wife didn't produce an heir. But by the time Isaac was weaned that boy, Ishmael, had been treating Isaac so cruelly because of his jealousy that Sarah demanded he and his mother be sent away (Genesis 21:9-14). God took care of them, though (Genesis 21:12-21).

Isaac's childhood was normal for an only child. He had lots of love and attention. His parents taught him about God and he learned to love and trust God at an early age. When he was a young man a test came into his life which challenged his faith in God and his father. Abraham asked Isaac to accompany him on a trip to go worship God (Genesis 22). That wasn't unusual, it happened quite often. What was different was that he noticed as they prepared for the offering that there was no animal to kill and sacrifice. When his father said Isaac was to be the sacrificed he could hardly believe it. Abraham didn't understand why God was doing this but he felt that God would somehow bring Isaac back to life after he killed him (Hebrews 11:17-19). It must have been very difficult for Isaac to allow his own father to take his life, but he had been raised to trust and obey his father as well as God. So he willingly lay on the altar – his father was too old to force him to do it against his will. As he awaited the knife to come down and end his life something very strange happened. God spoke and told Abraham he didn't have to kill Isaac because He had provided a substitute, a ram caught in the bushes nearby. They both praised God for His provision of a substitute.

The surrender and submission of Isaac to be sacrificed on Mt Moriah is a type of Christ Who was also obedient to death (Philippians 2:5-8). Abraham was a picture of God the Father who did not spare His own Son but delivered Him up for us all (John 3:16; Romans 8:32). The ram miraculously caught in the thicket and sacrificed instead of Isaac is a picture of Jesus who was offered as a sacrifice in the place of all mankind (Hebrews 10:5-10). Abraham's assurance that they would go worship and together return (Genesis 22:5) pictures resurrection from death (Hebrews 11:17-19). Throughout the Bible God shows His love and power, and has many pictures of what Jesus will do when He comes to earth. The whole Old Testament points to Jesus. It is the foundation of the building, and so understanding these things helps us understand Jesus and what He will do to remove sin and provide salvation.

The next major event in Isaac's life was his marriage to Rebekah, soon after his mother died. He was thirty-seven when she died. Abraham sent a trusted servant to Mesopotamia to seek God's will for a wife for Isaac from among his own kin. Isaac was forty when he married Rebekah (Genesis 24). She brought him great comfort from the loss of his mother.

Several years later his father Abraham distributed his property, giving Isaac his possessions while his sons by Hagar and Keturah were sent away with presents. Ishmael and Isaac buried Abraham in the cave of Machpelah and Isaac moved to Beer-lahai-roi (Genesis 25:5-11).

Rebekah and Isaac wanted to have children, but it wasn't until after about twenty years of marriage, in direct answer to prayer, they were given two sons, Jacob and Esau (Genesis 25:21-26). Rebekah and Isaac seem to have grown apart over the years, and perhaps they turned to their sons to make up for what was missing in their marriage. Isaac took great delight in Esau because of his manly, outdoor character. Jacob, a quieter type, was drawn closer to Rebekah. Unfortunately the faith of Isaac's childhood doesn't seem as strong in his later years as when he was young. There is always that danger, of drifting from God as we age. God wants His children to stay faithful to the end, to finish strong and to always keep growing in their faith. If you, like Isaac, find your faith and obedience were stronger when you were younger than they are now, confess that sin and ask God to restore you to your former relationship with Him. Then spend time reading His Bible and praying each day, and live a life of holiness in obedience to Him.

Isaac's lack of faith was also seen when a famine hit the land and, instead of trusting God for provision, he took his family out of the Promised Land to find food. He knew God's promises to his father and himself, but he did not fully trust in God's protection. He followed his fears and moved to Gerar, then called Rebekah his sister, afraid the people might try to kill him if they knew she was his wife. His father had done the same thing – twice. Unfortunately he was following his example. When Abimelech, the Philistine king where they had moved, found out the truth he strongly rebuked Isaac but allowed them to remain in the land (Genesis 26:1-11).

Eventually his flocks and herds grew so large there wasn't room for Isaac and the others living in that land. God was clearly blessing him. He eventually moved back to Beersheba where God again appeared to him and spoke again all the blessings of the covenant. What a wonderful blessing from God!

When he was 100 and Esau 40, Esau married Judith and Basemath, daughters of Canaan, but they brought grief to Rebekah and Isaac (Genesis 26:34-35).

As Isaac got older his eyesight started to fade. Thinking his death would be near, he requested Esau to make a special meal he enjoyed so he could eat it and then bless him before he died. Isaac knew God's blessing was not to be bought or sold, and he also knew it was supposed to go to Jacob (Genesis 25:23). He wasn't living by faith as he had in his youth. Rebekah found out about this plan to bypass Jacob and bless Esau instead. She tricked Isaac so he would unknowingly bless Jacob instead. This so angered Esau he threatened to kill Jacob as soon as Isaac died. Therefore Jacob was sent to Mesopotamia to get a wife from their family there (Genesis 27:41-28:6).

Many years later, when Jacob returned home with two wives and thirteen children, he found Isaac living at Hebron. It was here Isaac died at the age of 180 and was buried by his sons (Genesis 35:27-29).

Isaac's life is an example of someone who starts off strong in their faith when young but then gradually drifts from God. God, in His faithfulness, did give him years of blindness at the end of his life where he had nothing to do but sit and talk to God. He used that to bring Isaac back to Him, but how much better it would have been had he never drifted from Him in the first place. Perhaps you are facing a difficulty in life. Could it be God is trying to use that to get your attention and bring you closer to Him?

BIBLE OVERVIEW

7. JACOB

MAIN EVENTS: Jacob born, conflict with Esau, Laban

MAIN PEOPLE: Jacob, Esau, Rachel, Laban

BOOKS OF THE BIBLE: Genesis 25-37, 46-50

BIBLE VERSE: *Genesis 32:28 Then the Man said, "Your name will no longer be Jacob, but Israel, because you have struggled with God and with men and have overcome."*

TIME: 2,000 BC

WORLD EVENTS AT THIS TIME:

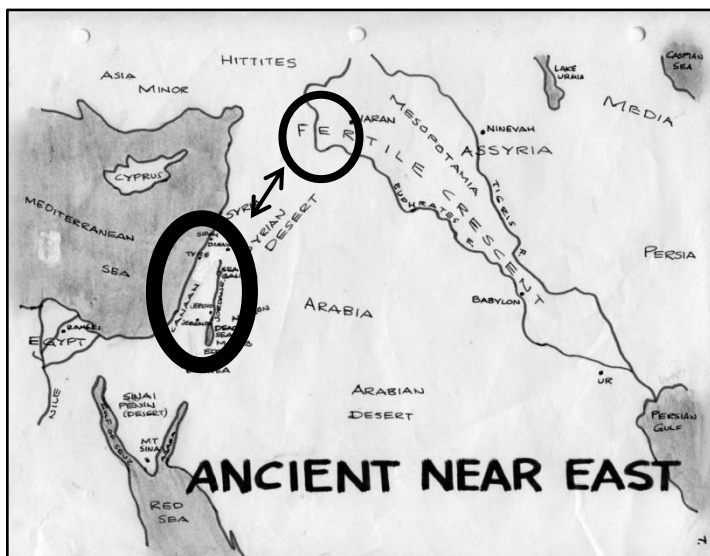
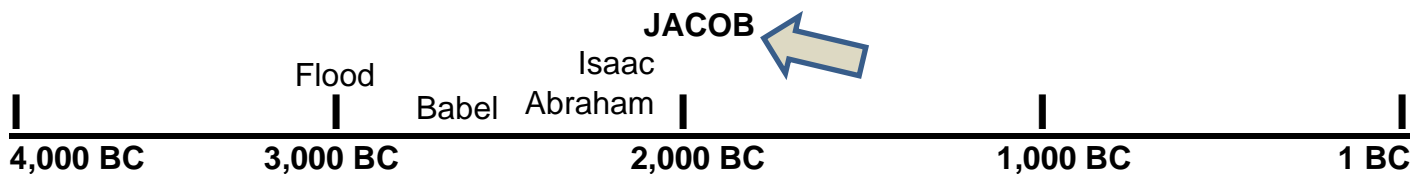
Stonehenge built in England

Hittite Civilization expands in Turkey

Indus Valley civilization collapses

Minoan Civilization grows on Crete

GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION: Palestine, Paddan Aram



The promises God made to the nation Israel through Abraham and Isaac passed on to Jacob, the seventh time period in our overview of the Bible. Jacob was later called Israel, which eventually became the name of the whole nation.

MEET JACOB

Jacob was the answer to his father's prayer (Genesis 25:21) but became the favorite son of his mother (Genesis 25:28). Actually, Jacob is his nickname, because when his brother was born he was holding onto his heel (Genesis 25:26) as if trying to take hold of what was his brother's and make it his own instead. He did that after birth with their birthright (Genesis 25:29-34) and also with his

father's blessing (Genesis 27:1-29). Later God changed his name to Israel, though (Genesis 32:28).

Like his grandfather Abraham, Jacob traveled around a lot. He went from Beersheba to Bethel (Genesis 28:10-22), then to Shechem (Genesis 33:18-20), back to Bethel (Genesis 35:6-7) and to Hebron (Genesis 35:27). Also like Abraham, he built altars where he lived as he continued to worship and serve the God of Abraham and Isaac. Eventually he ended up moving to Egypt with his son Joseph. He died there at a very advanced age (Genesis 46-49).

Jacob's life was, for the most part, quiet and uneventful. There were some times of great excitement and activity, though, like when he went to Haran in Mesopotamia. He was escaping the wrath of his brother Esau for stealing the blessing his father wanted to give to Esau. He went to his uncle Laban's home (Genesis 28:10). On the way, at Bethel, he had a dream of a staircase reaching from earth to heaven with angels going up and down on it. God reiterated to him the promises He had given to Abraham, his grandfather, and Isaac, his father.

While in Haran he married sisters: Rachel and Leah. He had four sons from Leah: Reuben, Simeon, Levi and Judah. Rachel was jealous and wasn't having children so she gave him her servant Bilhah to have children for her. With her Jacob had Dan and Naphtali. Leah then did the same thing, giving Jacob her servant Zilpah, with whom he had Gad and Asher. Then Leah herself had Issachar and Zebulun. Finally Rachel was able to have children and had Joseph and Benjamin. He also had one daughter, Dinah. From these twelve sons came the twelve tribes of Israel. Levi became the priestly tribe so wasn't counted among the tribes. To fill his place the two sons of Joseph, his grandsons, Ephraim and Manassah, each became a tribe. There was no tribe of 'Joseph,' but one from each of his sons.

Returning from his long stay in Haran, at the ford of the River Jabbok, he had another strong encounter with God Himself. He was fearful of his upcoming reunion with Esau (Genesis 32:7). He found himself suddenly engaged in a physical wrestling match with God which mirrored the inner wrestling going on in his soul with Him. For the first time in his life he could not conquer something in his own strength. Submitting to God's greater power, he found the peace he had been seeking. Because of this God changed his name to Israel which means "Prince of God." Jacob called the place Peniel – because he saw God face to face and lived (Genesis 32:30).

The impact of these experiences stayed with Jacob and molded him into a man of God. At the end of his life, when he was quite old (Genesis 47:28), he called his twelve sons around his bed to tell them what should befall them in the last days (Genesis 49:1). He talked to them in the order of their birth. His strongest words were spoken to Reuben, the firstborn, whom he admonished because of his sin (Genesis 49:3-4), and Simeon and Levi, whom he cursed for their anger and cruelty (Genesis 49:5-7). His greatest blessing from God was bestowed on Judah, who would be praised by his brothers and whose tribe would be the source of royalty (Genesis 49:8-12).

Following this scene, Jacob died and was embalmed (Genesis 49:33; 50:2). By his own request his body was carried back to the land of Canaan and was buried in the family burial ground in the cave of the field of Machpelah (Genesis 49:29-32; 50:13). We can learn from his life the importance of letting God break our self-sufficiency so we learn to depend only on Him. It's hard but very necessary.

Unlike his father Isaac, who started out strong in faith but wasn't as obedient to God in his later years, Jacob started off poorly using deception to manipulate and get his own way. But in the end of his life his faith and devotion grew and he became a strong man of faith.

BIBLE OVERVIEW

8. JOSEPH

MAIN EVENTS: Joseph, all the Jews into Egypt

MAIN PEOPLE: Joseph, brothers, Pharaoh

BOOKS OF THE BIBLE: Genesis 37-50

BIBLE VERSE: *Genesis 50:20 You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives.*

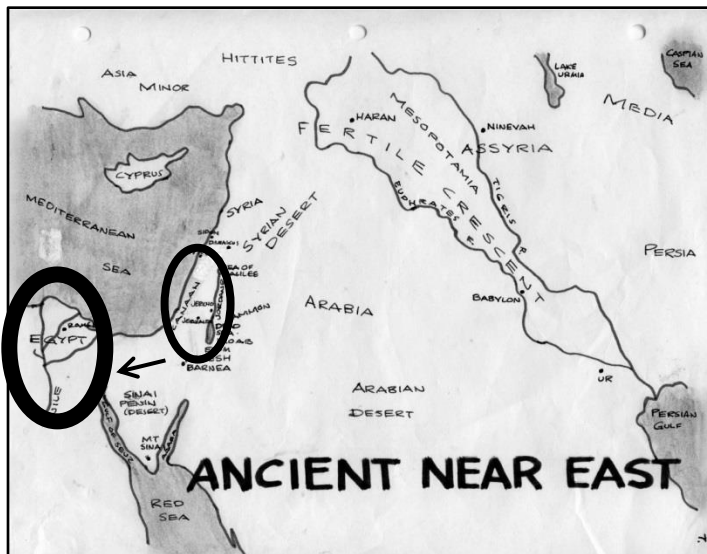
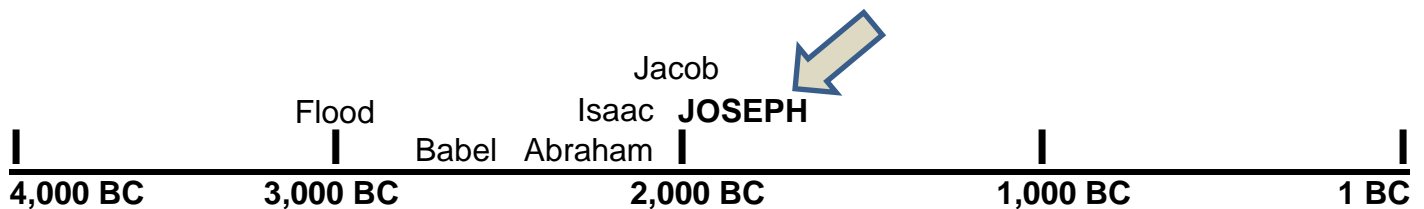
TIME: 1,900 BC

WORLD EVENTS AT THIS TIME:

Hammurabi establishes Babylonian Empire

Assyria grows in power

GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION: Palestine, Egypt



Joseph was the second youngest but favorite son of Jacob. The story line of the Old Testament focuses on him as he was sold into slavery in Egypt during this 8th period in our Bible overview. This prepared the way for the whole nation to find refuge in Egypt during a famine. The line of the Messiah went through his brother Judah, but we name this time period after Joseph because the emphasis of this time is on him.

MEET JOSEPH

Everyone wants to be loved and accepted by the others in their family, but what do you do when your brothers don't like you? That is not an enviable situation to be in, but one in which

Joseph found himself. He was the eleventh son of Jacob, but the first of his favorite wife Rachael (Genesis 33:2, 7). Therefore he became his father's favorite child. Joseph was born in Haran while Jacob was still serving Laban (Genesis 30:22-25).

Because he was Rachael's first child, and because God had gifted him in many special ways, his father liked him more than his brothers. He even gave him a special coat to show his favoritism

(Genesis 37:2-4). His brothers' jealousy caused them to dislike Joseph. His reporting their evil conduct to his father caused them to dislike him even more. But what really made them upset was telling them about his dreams which foretold his leadership over the whole family (Genesis 37:5-11).

Because of this his brothers found an opportunity to sell Joseph as a slave to a caravan heading to Egypt. To cover up their deception, the brothers concealed the truth by convincing their father that Joseph had been killed by a wild animal. In Egypt he was sold to Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, and became a slave.

God was with him and blessed him even in slavery. He became a very trusted servant and directed all his master's affairs. However, when Potiphar's wife tried to seduce Joseph and he refused, she lied and blamed him for attacking her. To save face, the master had to have Joseph put in prison. But even there God blessed him and gave him great wisdom so that soon the head of the prison put its daily affairs into his hands (Genesis 39:1-23).

While in prison he correctly interpreted the dreams of two of his fellow prisoners, but it took two years until he was remembered and brought into the palace to interpret Pharaoh's dreams (Genesis 40). God revealed to him the meaning of the dreams. There would be seven years of plenty when the fields produced great harvests. Following this would be seven years of severe famine and starvation. Joseph advised Pharaoh to store the extra food from the good years to help carry the country through the bad years. Because of Joseph's insight and wisdom, Pharaoh made him head over everyone, second only to Pharaoh himself, so he could implement and carry out this ambitious plan. Pharaoh gave him a daughter of an Egyptian priest as his wife.

Things turned out exactly as Joseph had predicted. Each year the famine got worse and worse and people from many nations came and bought food from Pharaoh, as did the Egyptians themselves. As a result, Pharaoh became even more rich and powerful. It was during these years that Joseph had two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim (Genesis 41:47-52).

God was behind all this, using this to set up things so Joseph's brothers would need food and be forced to go to Egypt to get it. God used this to humble his brothers, to reunite them with Joseph, and to save the family of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. God also had to move them from Canaan where they were intermarrying and soon would no longer be a nation set apart to Him. In Egypt they were rejected and had to live alone, marrying only other Jews as God intended, until they became a large, strong nation of two and a half million when Moses led them out of Egypt to freedom.

God used Joseph in a special way for His work, but it was a painful life he lived. He had to remain faithful despite extreme suffering. God used all of it, even the rejection by his brothers, to bring about the good He had planned (Romans 8:28). "You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish ... the saving of many lives" (Genesis 50:20). That truth still applies to your lives today.

In many ways **Joseph was a picture of Jesus**. Both were specially loved by their fathers (Genesis 37:3; Matthew 3:17; 12:18), prophesied to be rulers (Genesis 37:5-11; Daniel 7:13-14; Micah 4:7; 5:2), and were rejected by their brothers (Genesis 37:4-5, 11; John 7:3-5; 15:18-19) whom they forgave (Genesis 45:5, 10-15; Luke 23:34). Each was sent on a special mission by their father (Genesis 37:13, 18-20; Matthew 21:37-38; Mark 12:6-7), then rejected and plots were made against them (Genesis 37:18-28; John 11:47-53; Acts 2:22-23). Both went to Egypt (Genesis 37:28; Matthew 2:13-15), were made slaves (Genesis 39:1; Philippians 2:7) and were indwelt by God's Spirit (Genesis 41:38; Luke 4:1; Acts 10:38). Each was appointed to bring life to the people around them (Genesis 41:55-57; Acts 4:12; 1 John 5:11-12). God used the evil done to them for His good (Genesis 45:5-8; 50:20; Acts 3:12-18) and both were saviors (Genesis 47:25; Acts 13:23). Jesus was sinless and perfect (1 Peter 2:22) and Joseph is one of the very, very few people in the Bible of whom no sin is mentioned.

THE JEWS IN EGYPT AFTER JOSEPH

The Jews remained in Egypt for about 400 years, until Moses came to deliver them. God put them there to keep them pure (from intermarrying with Gentiles in the land) and to make them into a nation that would serve Him. Unfortunately that was a painful process for them, as it often is for us.

A visitor to Israel saw a shepherd bringing flocks into their fold. All walked on their own but one, which he carried because it had a broken leg. When asked how the leg got broken, the shepherd said he had broken it himself because the sheep was stubborn and kept wandering away from the shepherd. With its leg broken, the sheep was dependent on the shepherd for everything: food, water and transportation. The shepherd said that by the time the leg healed the sheep will have learned to trust the shepherd and obey him, not wandering off on its own any more. God does that same thing to His people – only we don't learn so quickly! He's been doing that throughout history, up to today. A clear example of it is with the Jews in Egypt.

INTO EGYPT No nation on earth is so mixed up with the history of Israel as Egypt. From patriarchal times through today, Egypt and Israel have been closely connected. When God formed a nation from Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph, He told them to stay pure, to not marry unbelievers. This was necessary for Him to grow a nation of His people. Instead they intermarried with the Gentiles around them and their faith in God faded as they brought idols and other gods into their families. Thus God had to intervene to save them from themselves.

Through Joseph and the famine, He had all 70 of them move into Egypt (Exodus 1:1-5). There they had to stay pure and marry only among themselves, for the Egyptians were very prejudiced towards them and would not intermarry among them. This was God's loving way of teaching them to obey and depend on their Shepherd (Hebrews 12:5-10; Revelation 3:19). It was, in effect, a "time out" for the nation of Israel. The prodigal son had to go into the world to learn his lesson the hard way. Often we must, too.

IN EGYPT Eventually Joseph and his contemporaries died (Exodus 1:6) and the nation of Israel grew (Exodus 1:7) from 70 to 2 ½ million over 400 years. God had said He would make a great nation of them, and God always keeps His promises. However, Egypt wasn't a vacation spot but a furnace to refine and mature them. They were there to grow spiritually. When they didn't, God kept gradually turning up the heat higher and higher.

PLAN 1: LABOR CAMPS When a new dynasty arose in Egypt which was antagonistic to outsiders, the Jews felt the brunt of his persecution (Exodus 1:8). In the Bible, Egypt is a type, a picture of the world system under Satan's (Pharaoh's) control. It is the place of material wealth and power (Hebrews 11:26) and fleshly wisdom and false religion (Exodus 8:7; 1 Kings 4:30). It appeals to the flesh with its leeks, garlic and onions. God's manna is not found there. It persecutes God's people (Deuteronomy 4:20) and is eventually overthrown by God's judgment (Exodus 12:29; 15:4-7).

Pharaoh took out his hatred of foreigners by oppressing the Jews. Of course Satan is always behind anti-Semitism just as he is behind persecution of Christians. If he can't get at God directly, he attacks those He loves – His children.

To keep them from growing larger (and joining with enemies of Egypt to overthrow the government) Pharaoh put them to hard slave labor (Exodus 1:9-14). This would weaken them, discourage and disorganize them, and also help his economy. God allowed it to happen to the Jews so they would turn to Him for help. He did it for their benefit, because He loved them (Psalm 119:67, 95).

God was behind all this. He even foretold that they would be slaves in Egypt (Genesis 15:13). In order to cut loose the bonds that bound them to Egypt, the sharp knife of affliction must be used.

Pharaoh was God's instrument in weaning them from the Egyptian world and helping them take up their own place as God's people.

A little girl was traveling on a train, romping up and down the aisles, free from care and worry. Suddenly the train entered a long, dark tunnel. She was terrified and immediately fled to her father's lap as fast as she could.

All of us sometimes need a tunnel to send us back to God's lap. Slavery in Egypt was such an event, only they didn't run back to God. Even so, God kept His promises and they continued to grow stronger (Exodus 1:12), so Pharaoh came up with another plan.

PLAN 2: SUBTLE GENOCIDE Pharaoh turns up the heat by ordering the midwives to kill all male babies (Exodus 1:15-16). It was a simple matter of shutting off their breath while being born and having them born dead. By killing the males there would still be women as slaves to work for Pharaoh, but no soldiers to fight against them. Obviously Satan was behind it all – trying to destroy the line of Christ (the same as he had babies killed in Bethlehem).

The plan didn't work, though, for the midwives put God before Pharaoh and didn't kill the male babies (Exodus 1:17-19). God limits Satan's opposition, and uses it for His purposes (Romans 8:28). God controls and limits Satan's efforts against His people, using it for His purposes. Here it was to cause the Jews to turn back to God.

The people continued to increase, as He had promised, and the midwives were rewarded by God for their obedience to Him (Exodus 1:20-21). But Pharaoh/Satan isn't done yet!

PLAN 3: OVERT GENOCIDE Then Pharaoh turned up the heat, ordering that every male born be cast into the Nile River. Gradually the pressure gets worse, all to get the Jews to turn back to God. God allows painful experiences to come into the lives of His children when they drift from Him so they will turn back to Him.

One day a workman was stuck on a high ledge of a building. He needed to get the attention of someone below so they could send for help for him. He called and no one heard. He dropped a little pebble but it fell unnoticed. A larger one wasn't felt by the person it hit, either. He kept dropping larger and larger objects until finally someone felt the hit and looked up. That's what God was doing to the Jews. He was dropping larger and larger objects on them so they would look up and He'd get their attention. He does that today, to us, as well. How big an object does He have to drop to get your attention? Could He be trying to get your attention about something now?

Unfortunately it's going to take another 80 years before the Jews finally look up. Then they will be ready to obey God and follow Moses out of Egypt.

Please understand that not all suffering is discipline from God. You should know in your heart if things are right between you and God or if there is something there that needs attending to. His Spirit will convict you of anything wrong. Make sure you don't rationalize, justify or explain away what His Spirit may be convicting you of. If He isn't showing you anything then there is nothing to confess, but if there is something between you and God please confess it now. Remember, "All things DO work together for the good of those who love the Lord" (Romans 8:28).

BIBLE OVERVIEW

9. MOSES

MAIN EVENTS: Moses, Deliverance from Egypt

MAIN PEOPLE: Moses, Aaron, Pharaoh

BOOKS OF THE BIBLE: Exodus-Deuteronomy

BIBLE VERSE: *Exodus 33:11 The Lord would speak to Moses face to face, as a man speaks with his friend.*

TIME: 1,500 BC

WORLD EVENTS AT THIS TIME:

Brahma worship starts in India

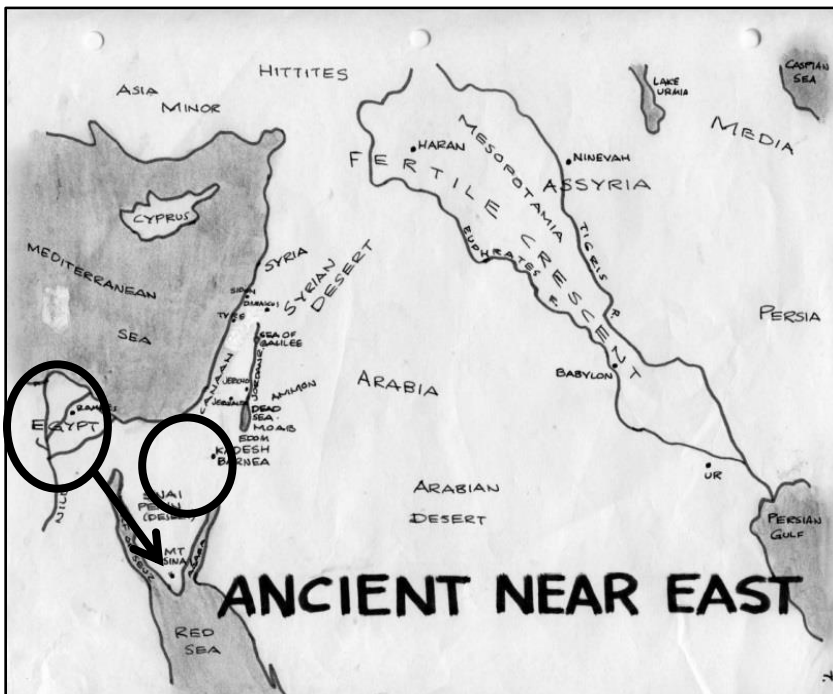
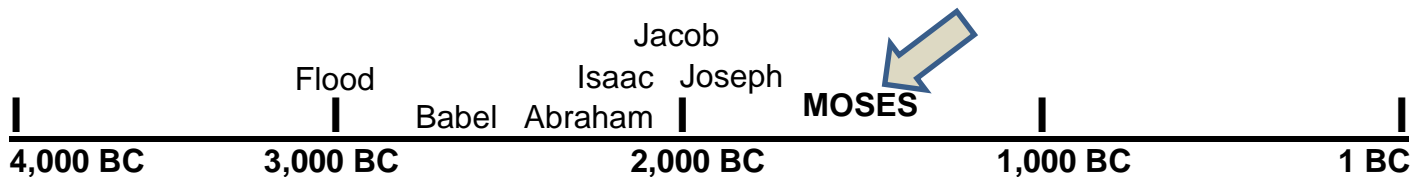
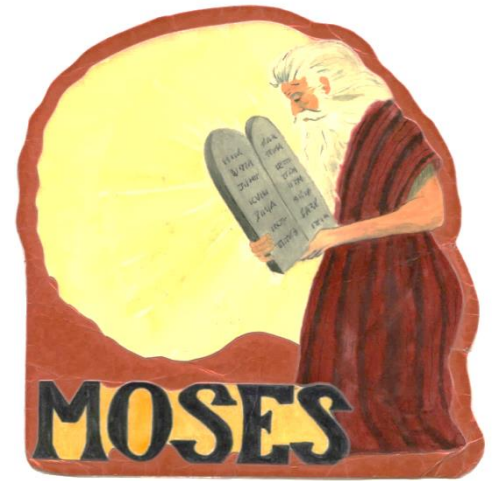
Mycenaean Civilization in Greece

Shang dynasty in China

Sun Pyramid built in Mexico

Egypt reunited, expands

GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION: Egypt, Mt Sinai, wilderness



Much happened during this ninth period in Bible history which is named after Moses. There are many important foundational truths to learn in order to understand the rest of the structure of the Bible. During this time the Jews left Egypt and became an independent nation. God delivered them and became their King but they often rejected Him and disobeyed him. As a result they ended up wandering for 40 years in the desert (the smaller circle on the map).

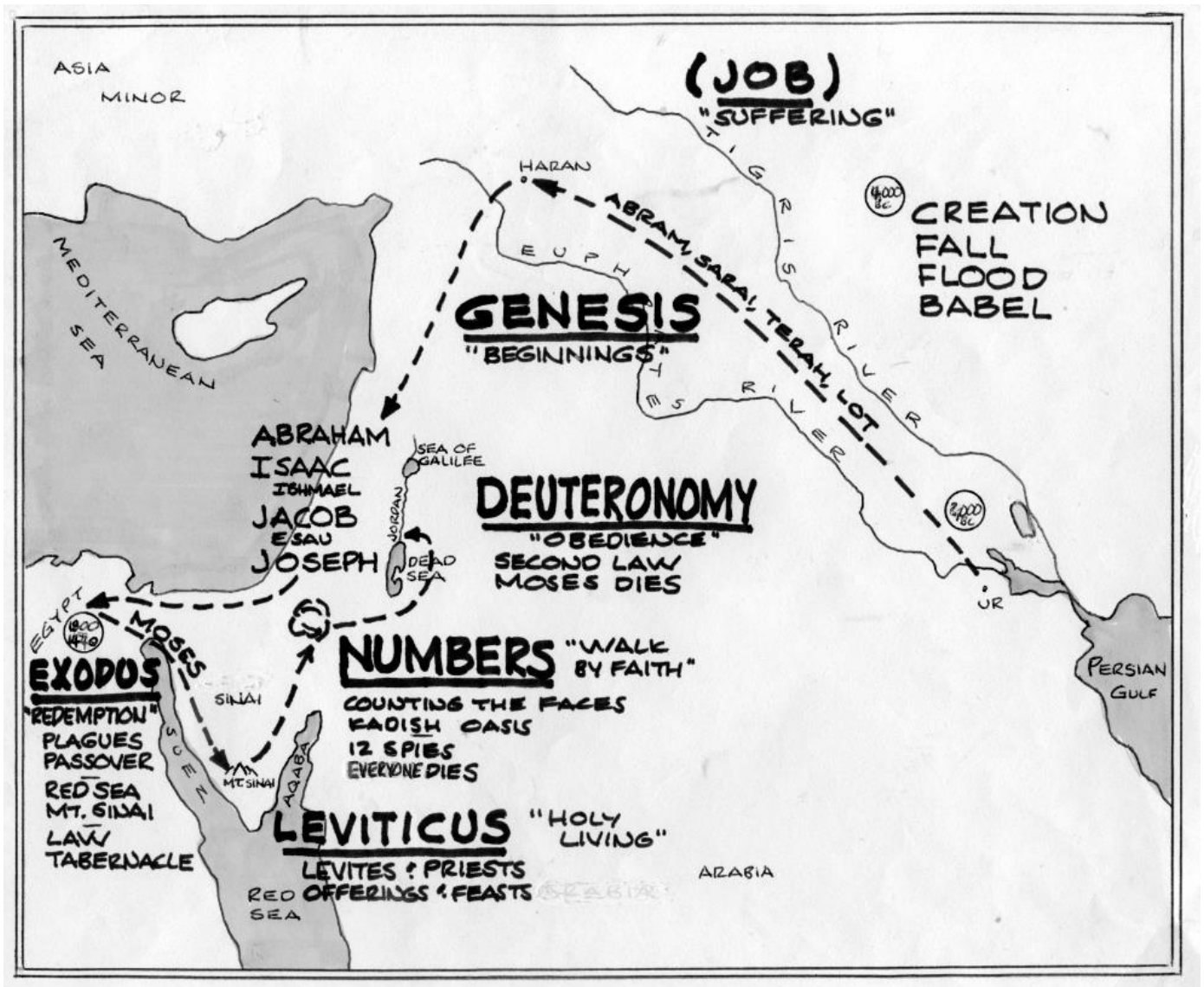
Of special interest during this time is the institution of the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread. They teach about Jesus and His work for us and set the foundation for the Lord's Supper which we still partake of

today.

The Law was given during this time as well, along with the Tabernacle, priesthood, offerings and feasts.

With the giving of the Law, God's dealings with the Jews changed. Now they are under the Law (Exodus 19:1), which will continue until Jesus fulfills the Law on the cross 1,500 years from Moses' time (Romans 10:4; Deuteronomy 18:18; Matthew 5:17). Man is now responsible to keep the Law but fails over and over. Ultimately they will be judged by going into captivity. The northern ten tribes, Israel, will be taken to Assyria. A few years later the southern two tribes, Judah, will be taken to Babylon.

Still God's grace was seen during this time. Forgiveness was available for those who repented. The sacrificial system showed that the blood of an innocent substitute paid for our sins. God's long patience showed grace, as did His protection and preservation of the nation, even though they didn't deserve it. Through the prophets God gave many prophecies of the coming of the Messiah and, eventually, His eternal reign on earth.



MEET MOSES

The main person in this time period, Moses, is one of the most outstanding men in the Bible. He is a man well worth studying for many lessons can be learned from him.

THE FIRST FORTY YEARS Moses' father, Amran (Exodus 6:20; Numbers 26:59) and his mother, Jocabed (Exodus 6:20; Numbers 26:59), were both very godly followers of Jehovah. He had a sister, Miriam, who was 12 when he was born (Exodus 2:4) and a brother, Aaron, 3 years older than he was (Exodus 2:7-10; 7:7). Moses was born in about 1525 (Exodus 2:2), in slavery in Egypt.

His parents hid him for 3 months (Exodus 2:2; Acts 7:20; Hebrews 11:23) but then had to trust his care to God almighty. God provided wonderfully, having him raised in Thebes by Pharaoh's daughter Hatshepsut (Acts 7:20-22). His birth mother was with him for the first several years of his life (Luke 22:25-26). As an Egyptian prince and heir to the throne, he had the best education possible. He became very skillful in leadership and scholarly skills. He had everything one could ask for -- everything but self-control! Some might say he was indulged and spoiled. Moses saw his mother use her anger to get what she wanted. During his childhood, when he should have been learning self-control (Lamentations 3:26-27), he was just learning to do what I wanted instead.

Then came the time when he had to decide: stay with Egypt and become the next Pharaoh or leave it all to go with the Jews, his people (Hebrews 11:24-26). It was very hard to say "no" to his strong-willed Egyptian mother. She was grooming him to be the next Pharaoh, which would also make him the head of the religious system in Egypt. Unfortunately he tried to do it in his own strength, as he was used to doing everything in life. His anger flared when he saw an Egyptian beating a Jew and he reacted with violence (Acts 7:23-29). While God created anger to be a positive motivator to action (Ephesians 4:26), it is a secondary emotion, a wrong response to a more basic emotion like pain, hurt, frustration or fear.

Moses was frustrated by not getting his own way, so he used anger to try to control the situation. That was sin. As a result he ended up committing murder and fleeing (Acts 7:25-29; Exodus 2:15). He was 40 years old and found himself with nothing, away from home, having lost everything -- all because of his anger.

THE SECOND FORTY YEARS When he got to Midian he found young women being taken advantage of and abused (Exodus 2:15-21). This time his response was righteous indignation, not self-centered anger, and he drove the abusers off and protected the women. This led to God placing him in that family with the oldest daughter, Zipporah, as his wife (Exodus 2:21-22). They had two sons (Exodus 18:3-4). He spent much time alone in the wilderness, watching sheep. God was using this time to teach him discipline, to humble him and have him learn patience and contentment. During the times alone with God Moses learned much about Him, and was led to write down things that had been passed down from generation to generation. He probably wrote the books of Genesis and Job at this time. God was lovingly and patiently working on him and through him.

Eventually the Pharaoh who wanted him dead died and another took his place (Exodus 2:23-25). The Jews were groaning in bondage, pleading with God to send them a deliverer. One day God called Moses to be the one to lead them out of Egypt, but he didn't want to do it. He came up with 5 excuses, objections to God's plan, but finally gave in when God Himself got angry at Moses (Exodus 3:1-4:18)!

It seems that God got even angrier when he started back, for he hadn't obeyed Him totally in the matter of circumcising his second son (Exodus 4:20-26). Because of this God physically afflicted Moses so he thought he was dying. Before Moses could lead the nation in obedience to God he had to lead his own family in that way (1 Timothy 3:4-5). God requires those who serve Him to be holy (1 Peter 1:15-16). To save her husband's life Zipporah had to circumcise the boy. After doing this she

left to go back to her home. Later her father brought her to see Moses but scholars disagree on if a reconciliation ever took place or not (Exodus 18:1-5). At this point, though, he went on alone. At 80 years of age he was headed back to Egypt!

THE THIRD FORTY YEARS God Himself was with Moses, and He sent his brother Aaron to help him (Exodus 6:28-30), but Pharaoh certainly didn't cooperate (Exodus 7:1-13). Soon the Jews were angry with him, too (Acts 7:39-43). He was caught right in the middle! God sent a series of 10 plagues, ending with the death of the firstborn of all those who didn't submit to following God, and the Jews were allowed to leave Egypt (Exodus 7:14-12:42). God used a trap at the Red Sea to destroy the Egyptians and the Jews were free (Exodus 13:17-15:21)! You'd think those people would be grateful and glad, but they weren't! They continued complaining about everything (Exodus 14:22-16:12).

When the Jews arrived at Mt. Sinai, Moses went up the mountain to get God's law. When he came down the Jews had built a golden calf to worship Baal with terrible, immoral worship. God was angry at them, and so was Moses. He prayed for God to have mercy and spare them, and God did. He took his anger out on them, though -- first he broke the tablets God had carved (He gave them to Moses again, but this time he had to carve them himself). Moses ground up the idol and poured the powder in water which they had to drink.

Eventually the Jews moved on from there, to Kadesh Barnea, where they were afraid to trust God and enter the land, so they had to wander for 40 years. God still was with them and provided, but fellowship was broken by the nation's sin of unbelief. When Korah rebelled, God quickly opened the earth to swallow up him and his whole family. Good things were going on during this time, too. Moses wrote the books of Exodus and Numbers during this time. Still, it was wasted time because Israel was carnal, out of fellowship with God.

Then it happened. Again. The Jews complained about not having enough water. They were always complaining about something. Moses had had enough and again lost his temper at them (Numbers 20). As a result he wasn't allowed to enter the promised land. God did let him see it, though. Moses died at 120 years of age, not able to enter God's perfect place for him because of his anger. Watch your anger -- it will keep you from God's perfect will, too (Ephesians 4:1-2, 26, 31; Colossians 3:12-13).

EXODUS: REDEMPTION

TITLE: Greek for “Depart, Exit, Way Out”

AUTHOR: Moses

DATE of WRITING: About 1440 BC

PLACE of WRITING: Desert wilderness

TIME COVERED: 1875 BC to 1444 BC

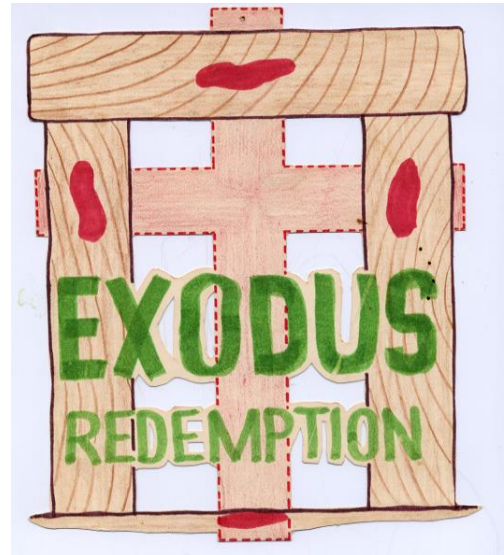
RECIPIENTS: Jews

KEY VERSE: *So I have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey-- the home of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites.* Exodus 3:8

KEY WORD: “Redeem, Deliver” (10 times)

PURPOSE: To show how Israel got out of Egypt (fulfill Gen 15:12-16) and received God’s law

THEME: Redemption of the believer pictured by the exodus



A few years ago a boy made a model sailboat out of wood. He worked hard at carving, sanding and painting it. He loved to sail it on a stream near his home. One day it got away from him, though, and was carried downstream. He tried to retrieve it but wasn’t able. He went home very sad over the loss. Several days later, while walking through town, he saw his sailboat in a toy store window with a price attached to it. He quickly got some odd jobs and worked hard until he was able to save enough money to buy back his own boat. What that boy did is what the Bible word “redeem” refers to. It means to “buy back” something that was originally yours. The word was originally used of a slave owner who had to buy back his runaway slave. That is a perfect picture of what God has done for us. We are his by creation but rebelled and ran away in sin, so He had to pay the price (Jesus on the cross) to buy us back (“redeem” us).

GENESIS & EXODUS Genesis shows man’s failure. Genesis starts with man walking and talking with God, but sin enters, and by the end of the book man is in bondage to Pharaoh (a picture of Satan) in Egypt (a picture of the world system without God). In Exodus we see God coming to man’s rescue, to bring him out of bondage, to “redeem” him. It is done by blood (Passover lamb) and power (Red Sea deliverance).

THE PASSOVER LAMB Just as Genesis 12 is the key chapter in the book of Genesis (telling about Abraham being chosen, leaving all to follow God, and listing God’s eternal promises to him and his descendants), so Exodus 12 is the key chapter in the book of Exodus. It explains about the Passover lamb, the innocent blood shed to bring redemption. This is a beautiful picture of Jesus, the fulfillment of this picture (1 Peter 1:18-19; John 1:29, 36; 1 Corinthians 5:7). The lamb had to be perfect and unblemished, a male in the prime of life. It died as a substitute for the people on the 14th of Nisan, about 3 in the afternoon (the exact day and time Jesus died on the cross). The blood was then applied to the doorpost of the homes of those who believed. The lamb’s death didn’t deliver unless it was personally accepted and applied. Those who were inside were safe from judgment. The blood on the doorposts, top of the frame, and sill (where the lamb was killed) was in the shape of a cross. Inside they ate the meat of the lamb (nourishment from Christ).

When the angel of death saw the blood he passed over, for it was a picture that death had already come. The substitute died in the place of the guilty people. Thus they were “redeemed” by the blood of the lamb. God bought back with a price of infinite value that which was originally His by creation. In the early days of this country the pioneers were often destroyed by great prairie fires that would sweep across the plains miles across and destroy everything and everyone in its path. From the Indians they learned that when they realized such a fire was approaching they should set fire to all the grass around their homestead. Thus when the main fire came roaring through they were safe because, as the Indians said, “Where the fire has been the fire cannot come.” That is true of God’s judgment. When we accept Jesus as our Savior we are eternally safe from any judgment by God (Romans 8:1).

LEAVEN Because there wasn’t time to let bread rise, they quickly cooked bread without leaven and ate it. Leaven is used as a picture of sin in the Bible (Matthew 16:6, 11-12; 1 Corinthians 5:6-8; Galatians 5:9). For centuries the Jews have celebrated this deliverance from Egypt by drinking the juice of the grape (a picture of the blood of the lamb) and eating matzo (unleavened bread). This was a reminder of God’s great deliverance of them, the key miracle in the Old Testament. Genesis 1 to Exodus 11 point to this and from Exodus 13 to the end of Malachi the Old Testament looks back to this event as the highlight of God’s work for His people.

In the New Testament Jesus takes this juice from the grape and unleavened bread and says that it no longer stands for physical deliverance but for spiritual deliverance from sin and Satan. Jesus teaches that the real fulfillment of these was in His very own body and blood, and that we are to now celebrate this as the Lord’s Supper, a reminder of God’s greatest of all deliverances (Mark 14:22-24).

THE TABERNACLE The other great teaching tool in the book of Exodus is the Tabernacle. It, too, shows all about Jesus.

OUTLINE OF EXODUS

I. MAN’S NEED FOR REDEMPTION - SLAVERY 1-6

- A. Bondage in Egypt 1
- B. Birth of the Deliverer (Moses) 2
- C. Call of the Deliverer (Moses) 3-6

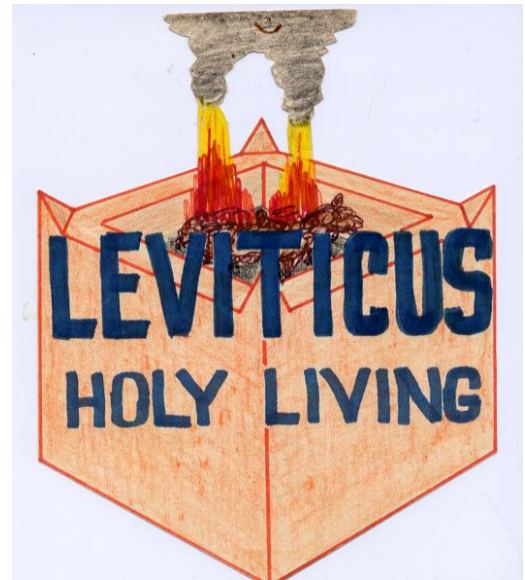
II. GOD’S PROVISION OF REDEMPTION - SALVATION 7-18

- A. Judgment on Unbelief (10 Plagues) 7-10
- B. Price of Redemption (Passover) 11-12
- C. Deliverance of the Redeemed (Through Red Sea) 13-15
- D. Journey of the Redeemed (to Mt. Sinai) 16-18

III. BELIEVERS’ RESULTS FROM REDEMPTION - SANCTIFICATION 19-40

- A. Life of the Redeemed (Law & Ceremonies) 19-24
- B. Worship of the Redeemed (Tabernacle) 25-31, 35-40
- D. Failure of the Redeemed (Golden Calf) 32-34

LEVITICUS: HOLY LIVING



TITLE: Greek "Pertaining to the Levites"

AUTHOR: Moses

DATE of WRITING: 1444 BC

PLACE of WRITING: Mt. Sinai

TIME COVERED: A few weeks in 1444 BC

RECIPIENTS: Jews, especially the Levites

KEY VERSE: *You are to be holy to me because I, the LORD, am holy, and I have set you apart from the nations to be my own.* Lev. 20:26

KEY WORDS: Holy/Sanctify (131x); Sacrifice (300x); Clean/unclean (200x); Atonement (36x)

PURPOSE: To instruct Israel in how to live a holy life, but teaching the Levites how to serve.

THEME: A holy people worshipping a holy God in the spirit of holiness.

No one likes to read a book of laws and rules. Unless one has a special reason, it is very uninteresting reading. That can be the case in reading Leviticus as well. Reading it is like reading the ordinances, building code, and laws of your local city. Sound exciting? Genesis is good reading, and Exodus starts off exciting, but by the time we get to Leviticus we often bog down and never finish reading the Bible. What a shame. Laws aren't exciting reading, but where would we be without them?

GENESIS, EXODUS AND LEVITICUS Genesis shows the problem: man is sinful and that separates him from God. Exodus shows the solution: God provides redemption by innocent blood being shed on his behalf. Then what? If the Bible ended after Exodus 12 we would assume, and correctly so, that salvation was the end of things. We accept Jesus as our Savior and that is all there is. However the Bible doesn't end there. There is MUCH more, and that is living a holy life for God. After man sees his need (Genesis) and accepts God's provision (Exodus) then he is to live a holy life for God (Leviticus). We are to worship and serve God in everything we do. The rest of the Bible gives instructions in how to do that. Leviticus taught the redeemed Jews how to live holy lives of godly service.

SACRIFICE The Old Testament sacrificial system was God's reminder that sin had to be paid for by innocent blood being shed. This is true of the once-for-all acceptance of salvation (applying the blood of the Lamb) and then the daily need for cleansing from acts of sin after salvation (sacrifices). These sacrifices also pictured Jesus in that they were innocent and perfect. One important truth to note: there was no provision of forgiveness for intentional, knowing, willful sin. The sacrifices were for sins of ignorance only. God would forgive other sin, but only by his mercy. Today we are guaranteed forgiveness (1 John 1:9).

PRIESTHOOD The priest was a go-between for God and man (another picture of Jesus). All his garments and colors taught about Jesus, as did the Tabernacle. The duties and functions of the priests are detailed in Leviticus.

DAY OF ATONEMENT The Day of Atonement, Exodus 16, is the key chapter in the book. "Atonement" means to cover, take away, remove. On this day the sins of the nation were forgiven by God. Two goats were taken, one was killed and its blood collected. Some of the blood was taken

into the Holy of Holies by the high priest, with a rope around his ankle so they could pull him out if God didn't accept the sacrifice and struck him dead. When we enter God's presence we enter with assurance He will hear and accept us because of what Jesus did on the cross (Hebrews 10:19). The rest of the blood was sprinkled on the second goat, which was sent away into the wilderness. This 'scape goat' pictured sins being carried away.

LAWS, LAWS AND MORE LAWS The book of Leviticus is full of all kinds of laws to govern the people's relationships with each other and with God. Sexual regulations, capital punishment, cleanliness (sanitation and health concerns), and other laws are all for the benefit of the people themselves. Laws are for their protection and pleasure, not to make life harder and take away 'fun.'

Weekly and yearly feasts were also part of God's way of teaching His truths to His people. They all show how important it is to live holy, committed lives in obedience to God. We today live under grace, not the law, but God still requires holiness and obedience from His people.

OUTLINE OF LEVITICUS

I. WAY TO GOD: HOLY SACRIFICE (Priests) 1-10

- A. Voluntary Sacrifices (Burnt, Grain, Peace) 1-3
- B. Compulsory Sacrifices (Sin, Trespass) 4-7
- C. The Priesthood 8-10

II. WALK WITH GOD: HOLY SERVICE (Feasts) 11-27

- A. Personal Holiness (Laws of Purity) 11-15
- B. National Holiness 16-20
- C. Priestly Holiness 21-23
- D. Future Holiness 24-27

NUMBERS: WALK BY FAITH

TITLE: From the Census (start & end of bk.)

AUTHOR: Moses

DATE of WRITING: About 1405 BC

PLACE of WRITING: Moab

TIME COVERED: 39 years (1440-1405)

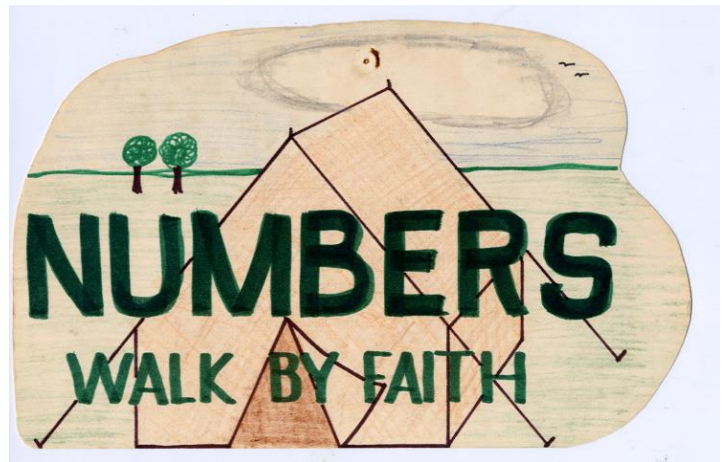
RECIPIENTS: Jews

KEY VERSE: *Numbers 10:29 Moses said to Hobab son of Reuel the Midianite, Moses' father-in-law, "We are setting out for the place about which the LORD said, 'I will give it to you.' Come with us and we will treat you well, for the LORD has promised good things to Israel."*

KEY WORD: "Wilderness" (45 times)

PURPOSE: To record what happened when the Jews left Mt Sinai and how they died in the desert because of their unbelief.

THEME: God's faithfulness despite man's faithlessness. Man is to walk by faith.



Too often the Old Testament is viewed as just history -- a bunch of old stories that have no relevancy for today. That's not true. God kept the Old Testament as part of our Bible today because it is invaluable in many ways. For one thing, all the historical stories do relate to today and teach lessons to us. Paul himself said that the events in Exodus and Numbers were recorded as examples for us today to learn from (1 Corinthians 10:1-12). If we miss the lesson we are bound to make the same mistake ourselves.

I. GOD IS FAITHFUL (Old Generation) (Numbers 1-12) Numbers starts with a census of the people. The purpose is to raise an army of fighting men, for warfare is coming. Genesis shows man's sin and helplessness (he can't fight sin). Exodus reveals God fighting for man to provide redemption (we can't attain our own salvation). Leviticus teaches how to live a holy life (preparation for the fight). Numbers shows the battle has begun. We are in a battle with sin. We are to go on as in "Onward Christian Soldiers."

God assigned responsibility to the people (Numbers 2-4). God is organized. Each one of God's people is given an assignment, and if they don't do their duty others suffer, too.

Then the people are cleansed (Numbers 5) and consecrated (Numbers 6 - 10), ready to leave. However on the way to the Promised Land they start complaining again (Numbers 11-12). God hated it (Psalm 95:10-11). How could anyone complain when rescued from slavery and given health, food and a promised home? We have it even better, how God must hate it when we complain! That just shows lack of appreciation, selfishness, self-centeredness and sin!

II. MAN IS UNFAITHFUL (Death of Old Generation) (Numbers 13-20:13) Now comes the big test - trust God to give them the land He has promised. Their fear of the giants (who certainly aren't bigger than God) keep them from trusting God and entering the land. What 'giants' in your life keep you from trusting and obeying God? Are they bigger than God?

The Jews feared, disobeyed, rebelled, tried to kill Moses & Aaron, and chose new leaders to take them back into the land. In his disgust, God said they'd not be able to enter the land. Actually, it was only God's mercy at Moses' pleading that kept Him from destroying the whole nation. They had

to wonder aimlessly until all the adults (those over 40) who came out of Egypt died off and the children grew up. God would then give them a chance to decide for themselves. It was a waste of 40 years and millions of lives, all because of disobedience!

Moses himself didn't fare much better. A life-long problem with anger culminated with him again acting in anger (chap 20) and not being able to enter the Promised Land, either. Anger that isn't controlled brings terrible consequences, as the life of Moses shows.

III. GOD PROVIDES FOR MAN'S UNFAITHFULNESS (New Generation) (Numbers 20:14-36)

Despite man's continual failure, God remained faithful. He defended the Jews from Edom, Arad, Shion and Og (Numbers 20-21). He protected them from unknown danger (Balaam - Numbers 22-26). After another census preparing the new generation for their turn at warfare (Numbers 26) and instructions in how to divide the land (Numbers 26, 31-34) Joshua is promoted to leadership, replacing Moses (Numbers 27). Moses will have some final sermons to this new generation, reviewing what has happened to the first and challenging them to not make the same mistakes. That is the book of Deuteronomy.

OUTLINE OF NUMBERS

I. GOD IS FAITHFUL (Old Generation) 1-12

- A. Waiting at Sinai 1-10:10
 - 1. People Counted 1
 - 2. People Camped 2-4
 - 3. People Cleansed 5
 - 4. People Consecrated 6-10:10
- B. Walking to Kadesh-Barnea 10:11-12
 - 1. People Traveled 10:11-11
 - 2. People Complained 11-12

II. MAN IS UNFAITHFUL (Death of Old Generation) 13-20:13

- Wandering at Kadesh-Barnea
- A. Disobedience to God (12 Spies) 13-14
- B. Discipline from God (Korah, Moses sin) 15-20:13

III. GOD PROVIDES FOR MAN'S UNFAITHFULNESS (New Generation) 20:14-36

- A. Walking to Moab (Aaron, Jews Die) 20:14-21
- B. Waiting at Moab 22-36
 - 1. Balaam Apostatizes 22-24
 - 2. Israel Apostatizes 25
 - 3. Israel Counted, Instructed 26-30
 - 4. East of Jordan 31-33
 - 5. West of Jordan 34-36

DEUTERONOMY

OBEDIENCE

TITLE: "Second Law" (Greek)

AUTHOR: Moses (1:1-6)

DATE of WRITING: About 1405 BC

PLACE of WRITING: Moab

TIME COVERED: 2 months in 1405 BC (Reviews last)

RECIPIENTS: Israel

KEY VERSE: *Deuteronomy 10:12-13 And now, O Israel, what does the LORD your God ask of you but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to observe the LORD's commands and decrees that I am giving you today for your own good?*

KEY WORDS: "Hear" (50 times); "Do, Keep, Observe" (177 times); "Love" (21 times)

PURPOSE: The old generation is gone. Moses will soon die. He instructs the new generation to remember God's faithfulness and learn from past failures so they will obey God in love.

THEME: Obey God motivated by love because of His faithfulness in the past.



Which is your favorite book in the Bible? Usually we choose Psalms, Proverbs, John, Ephesians, Revelation or some such book. If you'd have asked Jesus, though, you might have gotten an entirely different answer. He may have said "Deuteronomy!" After all, He knew large portions of it by heart. When tempted by Satan He quoted from the book of Deuteronomy -- three times! When was the last time you quoted Deuteronomy to have victory over temptation?

MOSES' LAST WORDS Because of his sins of anger and disobedience, Moses cannot enter the promised land with the other Jews. Before he dies and they enter the land under Joshua, God gives Moses the opportunity to give a series of addresses to the people. Basically he tells them that, because God has always been faithful to them (even when they weren't faithful to Him), the Jews should obey Him in love. History can be a great teacher, with much wisdom to share, if we but listen and learn. That is what Moses wanted this generation to do. He encouraged them to learn from the mistakes of their parents and obey God. God's laws are for our own good. They are like signs pointing out mines in a mine-field. God knows what can damage and destroy, and warns His people to avoid these things.

While obedience is for our own benefit and brings blessing instead of calamity, Moses wants the people to obey because of love for God (Deuteronomy 6:5). For a child to say he loves his parents is one thing, to show it by obedience is quite another. The same is true with God's children.

Moses reviews the law God gave on Mt. Sinai, for this generation has been living in disobedience to God for the last 39 years. The people agree to keep the law and obey God in love. They want to learn from the past and not make the same mistakes themselves.

Moses also gives some new laws covering situations and circumstances that have come up, which aren't addressed by other laws. He not only tells them what to do but why to do it. Then God takes Moses home to heaven with him. Satan tried to get his body (Jude 9) but Michael hid it. Perhaps Satan would let the Jews find it and worship Moses' body instead of Moses' God. Moses appears to Jesus at the Transfiguration in his resurrection body, and that's how we'll see him when we join him in heaven.

What about your obedience to God? Do you learn from past mistakes of your own and others? Do you obey in love? Adam and Eve didn't always obey. Abel did. Cain didn't. Noah did. Abraham,

Isaac and Jacob did and didn't. Joseph did. The Jews didn't. Aaron didn't. Miriam didn't. Joshua and Caleb did. What will God say about your life? It's up to you now. Make obedience based on love the main goal of you live and you can't go wrong!

OUTLINE OF DEUTERONOMY

I. LOOKING BACK (Disobedience in Past) 1-4

- A. Review of the Journey 1-3
- B. Spiritual Application 4

II. LOOKING AT THE PRESENT (Obedience in the Present) 5-26

- A. Reviewing God's Law 5-7
- B. The Importance of Obedience 8-11
- C. Ceremonial Laws 12-16
- D. Civil Laws 17-20
- E. Social Laws 21-26

III. LOOKING AHEAD (Promised Obedience in the Future) 27-34

- A. Promise to Keep the Covenant 27-30
- B. Farewell & Death of Moses 31-34

THE PLAN AND PURPOSE OF THE LAW

We talk about the "Law" a lot, but what exactly do we mean by it? When God became King of the Jews by freeing them from Egyptian bondage and making them His own, He then set up a covenant with them concerning His responsibility to them and theirs to Him. This is the way every king in every country ran their government. God made His unconditional promises to care for the people, and He set up a system of works for them to serve Him (Exodus 19:5-6). The Jews were responsible to obey the law as they followed God (Exodus 19:1). It was not a way of earning salvation, but showed them their need of salvation because they couldn't keep God's high standards (Galatians 3:24). They were never able to keep their part in this covenant and it has been superseded by a new covenant of grace (Jeremiah 31:31-34; Hebrews 8:8-13). The code of laws given to Moses included the commandments (Exodus 20:1-17), the ordinances stipulating the Israelites' social life (Exodus 21-23), and those directing Israel's worship (Exodus 25-31). This included the Tabernacle, God's great teaching tool to show His people about the coming Messiah. The priesthood, sacrificial system and the feasts and holy days were also to point to the One who would come and fulfill all this system required. Forgiveness by innocent blood being shed was the heart of the system, pointing to the coming Messiah (Genesis 3:15). Civil and governmental regulations and health and sanitary principles were also included.

This Mosaic system, including the Ten Commandments as a way of life, came to an end with the death of Christ (John 1:17; Romans 10:4). God's people were to preserve and study the Lord's law (Deuteronomy 4:2; 6:6-7), revere His name (Deuteronomy 8:6; 10:12), be grateful and thankful (Deuteronomy 8:10), and obey, love, and serve their redeemer God (Deuteronomy 10:14-16; 6:4-5; 11:1, 13-14).

THE FIRST PASSOVER

Sheep are mentioned more frequently than any other animal in the bible - about 750 times. This is natural since the Jews were wandering herdsmen, an occupation well suited for Palestine's dry plains. The sheep were used for food (milk, cheese, butter and mutton) and clothing (wool, skins). By nature sheep are helpless and depend on the shepherd for water, pasture, guidance and defense. They are often used as an example of how God takes care of us (John 10:1-18; Psalm 23).

'LAMB OF GOD' It is no coincidence, then, that the first descriptive name used of Jesus was LAMB. It happened when He first went public in His ministry. He wasn't seen as King, Lord or even God, although He was all these things. He was seen as "the Lamb of God" (John 1:29, 36). That's what John called Him when Jesus came to where John was baptizing. Why 'lamb'? Because that describes Him and why He came. Sure, He was called Jesus, Savior and Christ/Messiah, but all of these refer to what He did as the Lamb of God. Jesus means 'saves,' Savior means 'deliverer,' and Christ/Messiah refers to His being 'anointed' for death. By calling Him the 'Lamb of God' the people would all understand that He was the One come to pay for the sins of all. How would they know this? Because they knew all about the Passover Lamb.

ANIMAL SACRIFICES When Adam and Eve sinned, innocent blood had to be shed to cover their sin. It was God Himself (God the Son, the Second Person of the Trinity, is the One who appears to man in both Old and New Testament). This picture of covering sin by innocent blood continued through Able, Noah, Job, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph.

This is clearly seen when Abraham took Isaac to offer him to God as a sacrifice (Genesis 22:7-8). God provided a ram to die in Isaac's place, as a substitute. This very rock became the spot where the temple was built, and the blood poured each year on Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement) to cover the nations sins. It was on this same mountain that Jesus was crucified and died. Ultimately Jesus was Abraham's substitute for Isaac, so he didn't have to kill his son. God, however, had no other Substitute, for Jesus was the only One who could pay for our sins, so Jesus Himself died there as our substitute. The analogy is beautiful and striking.

THE PASSOVER LAMB The most complete and detailed picture of this, though, is given in Exodus 12. The Jews were in slavery and bondage in Egypt and, after a year of plagues, God is about to redeem them by killing the firstborn in all of Egypt. The problem, though, was that the Jewish firstborn was as deserving of death as the Egyptian firstborn, maybe more so because he was more accountable to God. How could God just overlook their sin? As a just and holy God, He couldn't. What He could do, though, was provide a substitute. The Passover lamb was the substitute, a picture of the ultimate Substitute which would one day die for all of our sins.

The blood of animals only 'covered' sin. Only Jesus' blood removed it. It would be like having a grape juice stain on a nice white rug. Without any way of cleaning the rug, all you could do was put a throw rug over it and 'cover' it up. Then one day someone shows up with a stain remover that will get the stain out. The throw rug is no longer needed. Animal sacrifices are like that throw rug. The blood of Jesus is the only cleanser for sin.

THE LAMB CHOSEN (Exodus 12:3, 5b) Lambs were innocent, gentle, meek, helpless animals, a picture of Jesus as a man. The lamb had to be unblemished (perfect, spotless Jesus) and a male (the strength and energy of Jesus). It had to be 1 year old (in the prime of life).

THE LAMB KILLED (Exodus 12:6a) The lamb alive did no good, though. It had to die. It's blood had to be shed. Jesus' perfect life only condemns us, showing that a perfect life can be lived. It is only His death that saves us.

The person owning the lamb would place his hands on the animal's head and confess his sins, thus making the lamb accountable for the sin. Thus the animal had to die, for sin brings death. It was killed by having its throat slit and the blood caught in a bowl.

The lamb to be the Passover substitute was chosen and set aside on 10 Nisan to make sure it was spotless and unblemished. Four days later, on 14 Nisan, it would die. For almost 4 years Jesus ministered in public, under the careful eye of all who watched, showing He was perfect and without sin. Then He died on 14 Nisan. Both died at 3 PM – same time on the same day. Jesus was the fulfillment of the Passover lamb.

Killing a lamb you had raised from birth was a good picture of the wastefulness and death that sin brings. Innocent blood must be shed to cover the guilty. The whole sacrificial system was built on this premise. Within the next year the Jews would be putting the finishing touches on the Tabernacle, where sacrifices would continue until the time of Jesus. The tabernacle, then the temple, were designed by God to show that innocent blood must be shed to cover sin.

THE LAMB'S BLOOD APPLIED (Exodus 12:7) The living lamb couldn't save, neither could the lamb killed. It was only as the blood was applied personally that sin was covered. If the blood was on the door, the family was safe. If there was no blood then death entered. Nationality didn't matter, or how well educated, or how rich – only the blood mattered.

"Without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins" (Hebrews 9:22). "The life of the flesh is in the blood" (Leviticus 17:11). Our good works are like "filthy rags" (Isaiah 64:6) or a "dung heap" (Philippians 3:8). Only the blood counts, because it stands for Jesus' life.

The blood had to be applied in such a way that it was publicly visible. It was applied to the front door by the person responsible for the house. Hyssop was used. It was used in rituals of purification and cleansing. The lamb was slain on the door stoop and the blood painted on the top and sides of the door. Actually this formed a cross, with the blood being at the same places where Jesus bled on the cross: head, hands and feet.

After the blood was applied, the people had to enter into the house, 'through the blood' as it were. When they entered there was blood above, below and on both sides of them. Then they had to stay inside all night to be safe. Outside was death, inside was life. When the angel of death saw the blood he would "Pass over" and not stop to bring death to that home. The blood was sufficient. "When I see the blood I will pass over." It was a 'sign' – to the angel of death, to neighbors (believers and unbelievers alike), to angels and to Satan and his forces. It was a 'brand' of security. Jesus' blood is our security, our 'sign' of eternal life (Ephesians 1:7; 1 John 1:7; 1 Peter 1:19; Matthew 26:28; Hebrews 9:12; Revelation 1:5; Romans 5:8-9).

THE LAMB'S BODY EATEN (Exodus 12:8-10, 46) After the lamb died the blood was applied, and the body had to be used in its way, too. The body was eaten. The lamb didn't die just to be looked at but to be personally identified with by eating it. This would give them nourishment and sustenance for the coming journey. Jesus died for our sins, but He also provides the nourishment and strength we need to go on after salvation (John 6:53-57). The Jews had to feed on the lamb that same night, we can't put off partaking. There was nothing to be left over so it didn't decay (Jesus' body didn't decay). It was to be eaten roasted, not raw or boiled. This was to be a picture of Jesus facing not just death but also fire – hell judgment on the cross. It couldn't be eaten raw, it had to go through the fire. Jesus had to go through our hell to redeem us. It couldn't be boiled in water, for there was no water to slacken Jesus' thirst. No bone was to be broken, a common practice to eat the marrow within. This was prophesied of Jesus.

Thus the lamb had to be chosen (Exodus 12:5) as Christ volunteered to die for our sins in eternity past (1 Peter 1:20). It has to be kept (Exodus 12:5), a picture of Christ in life (Matthew 3:17;

17:5). Then it was slain (Exodus 12:6), Christ sacrificed (1 Corinthians 5:7). Then it was roasted (Exodus 12:8), a picture of Christ's sufferings (Psalm 88:7; 89:46). Then it had to be fed on (Exodus 12:5, 8) as we feed on Christ, pictured in the Lord's Supper (1 Corinthians 5:8).

INSIDE The Jews were to eat standing up, dressed, with outdoor traveling clothing on, sandals on their feet and walking staff in one hand. This was a reminder that Egypt was not their home, they weren't to settle there, they were there temporarily and just passing through. That must be our approach to life in this world as well.

UNLEAVENED BREAD Along these same lines, they were to not take time to let their bread rise. There was to be no leaven in it. Leaven is a picture of sin. It is a yeast (fungus) which grows and decays. It will destroy the whole batch unless stopped (by cooking). Sin is like that (1 Corinthians 5:6-8). For 7 days they were to eat unleavened bread. This pictures Jesus' sinless life and body, and why we are to make sure there is no sin in our lives when we partake of the Lord's Supper (1 Corinthians 11:23-32).

DEATH OUTSIDE While those with blood on their door were inside, safe, feeding on the lamb, the others were facing God's judgment of death. They were not safe. In the early days of this country those crossing a prairie were in danger of fires out of control traveling rapidly to where they are and beyond. The Indians showed them a way to be safe. When they saw a fire coming they would start a fire near where they were, then when it burned itself out move into that area with their possessions. Thus when the main fire came roaring through they were safe. As the Indians said, "Where the fire has been, the fire cannot come." When we enter through the blood, and place ourselves at the foot of the cross, we are in God's 'burnt-over' area. Jesus took our judgment so we have no danger of ever being under judgment (Romans 8:1).

SACRIFICES THROUGHOUT THE OLD TESTAMENT When the Jews left Egypt they went to Mt. Sinai. There God gave them many regulations about offering sacrifices: who, when, why, where and how. Much of Exodus and most of Leviticus cover this. All this was to cover sin until God's stain-remover came. For 1400 years this picture continued, then came the Lamb of God.

JESUS THE LAMB OF GOD It was prophesied that the Messiah would be the Lamb of God (Isaiah 53:7-8). John recognized Jesus as the fulfillment of this (John 1:29, 36), as did Paul (1 Corinthians 5:7), Peter (1 Peter 1:19) and Philip (Acts 8:32).

LORD'S SUPPER REPLACES PASSOVER When Jesus had the Last Supper with His disciples, He took the matzo that represented the Jews leaving Egypt and said that it now applied to His body. "Take, eat; this is my body" (Matthew 26:26). The cup of grape juice that they drank was a picture of the lamb's blood. When the Jews left Egypt and were living in tents they didn't have door posts to paint with blood, so they used the blood of the grape as the same picture. By drinking it they were identifying with the lamb's blood, applying it to their lives. Jesus said this was now to picture His blood. "This is My blood of the covenant" (Matthew 26:28). Thus Jesus was saying that the Passover no longer applied to the lamb of Exodus 12 and the physical deliverance from Egypt, it now pictured the Lamb of God and the deliverance from sin and death.

The number one miracle in the Old Testament was the Passover and Red Sea deliverance. This was a picture of what would be done by Jesus and was the focal point of the Old Testament and Jewish history. The crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus was, of course, the number one New Testament event. In fact, it was the number one event of history of all time.

THE LAMB AROSE In the Old Testament, when the Passover lamb died it stayed dead. However when the Lamb of God died, He came back to life!!! Imagine a dead lamb, blood applied and body eaten, come back to live and run and jump around – not with a physical body but with a new, eternal

body! It's amazing, but it's true! The Lamb still lives today, that's why we worship and praise Him. Dying paid for our sins, coming back to life assures us of eternal life.

THE LAMB TODAY The Lamb continues to live today, in heaven. In fact, "The Lamb" is the title given to Jesus throughout Revelation. Thirty three times He is called the 'Lamb'! As the lamb, He is in the position of sovereign glory and honor (Revelation 7:17). He shares glory and grace equally with the Father (Revelation 22:1, 3). He is the leader and shepherd of His saints (Revelation 7:17; 14:4). Angels and believers are worshipping the Lamb (Revelation 5:6, 8, 12, 13; 15:3) singing "Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise." 'Lamb' is more than a title, it is the description of Him. When we see Him we will see gentleness and purity which was slain for us. The marks of crucifixion will be on Him. We will worship Him, not because of His sovereign power, but because of His work for us as the Lamb of God, which took away the sins of the world.

THE LAMB IN THE FUTURE One day soon the Lamb will return for His bride – us. Then we will together share in the Marriage Supper of the Lamb (Revelation 19:7, 9) while the Tribulation rages on earth. Many of those who come to salvation during this time will be martyred and will gather around the throne praising the Lamb in heaven (Revelation 7:7-14; 13:8; 15:3).

Then the Lamb, to whom all judgment is committed (Revelation 6:1, 16; 13:8), will come and do war against the dragon (Satan - Revelation 17:14; 12:11). This return will end the Tribulation (Revelation 14:1) with a marvelous victory (Revelation 19:11-16). No one will escape the wrath of the lamb (Revelation 6:16). The Lamb will return as a lion. When Satan and sin are gone, the Lamb will reign on the throne forever, with all worshipping Him forever. Truly, "worthy is the Lamb!"

THE FEAST OF UNLEAVENED BREAD

There is a true story about how a stolen bucket started a war and ended a career. One day long ago a soldier took an attractive bucket from a public well, just for the fun of it. The bucket got passed on from one person to another until it was given to Prince Henry of Sardinia. A great fuss was made over it, ending in a war to get it back. Prince Henry himself was captured and put in prison. His father, the king, offered a golden chain 7 miles long to get him back. The offer was refused in anger. The prince lay in prison for 20 years until he died. The war continued until most of the governments of Europe were involved. Thousands of lives and much property was lost, and all because of such a 'little thing' like taking a bucket! It was just a little thing, but look at the consequences.

Now think for a moment. Is there such a thing as a 'little' sin? Maybe in our sight some sin has more serious consequences and brings greater guilt, and other sin seems to be beneficial and pleasurable – but is there really any difference in God's sight? "For whoever keeps the whole law and yet offends in one point is guilty of breaking the whole law" (James 2:10). It doesn't sound like God thinks ANY sin is small, does He?

SIN IS SIN 'Sin' means 'to miss the mark.' "For all have sinned (missed the mark) and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). Our target is to be like Jesus, as holy as God. It doesn't matter if we miss by 1 inch or 1,000 miles, we still miss. A pass is incomplete in football if it is off the fingertips, or 20 yards over the receiver's head. All sin is sin. In fact, 'little' sin can be said to be worse than other sin because it is more subtle and dangerous. We are more apt to commit 'little' sins, as our enemy knows. That's why we are tempted in that way more often. Often we get so used to them we don't realize they are really sins. Actually, victory in the Christian life doesn't come so much from winning the big battles as the little battles, for if the little battles over sin would be won, there wouldn't be any big battles. Big battles mean sin has been allowed to grow and was not

defeated when 'little.' The only way to win big battles is to start winning some of the 'little' ones related to that area of life, then the big battles will be won. Thus avoiding 'little' sin is a very key truth for God's people. It is an important lesson to learn.

In fact, it is so important, it is the very first lesson God teaches His people after salvation (Passover blood on the door). The first truth He teaches them is not prayer, knowing God's will, or spiritual gifts. It is about the deadliness of 'little' sin. God uses leaven as an illustration of this point, making His point clear.

FEAST OF UNLEAVENED BREAD During the time of darkness God had told Moses all about eating bread without leaven (Exodus 12:15-20). Moses passed this on to the people (Exodus 13:3-10) and the people obeyed God's instructions (Exodus 12:34, 39). On the 10th day of the new month, Nisan, they were to set aside an unblemished male lamb one year old and then on the 14th kill it and eat it after applying the blood to the door posts. They were to eat the meal standing and ready to leave Egypt, so there was no time to let dough rise and then bake it. They were to mix dough and take it with them to cook along the way, but to not put any leaven in it. For 7 days they were to eat bread with no leaven, Nisan 14 to 21. This came to be called the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

LEAVEN Everything focused on the leaven – or lack of it. Yeast is a microscopic plant invisible to the naked eye which is placed in a substance called leaven. It is actually a fungus which can be dried for long periods of time which springs to life when it comes in contact with moisture and warmth. The cells will multiply with tremendous rapidity. Starch and sugar turns into carbon dioxide gas and alcohol. This causes the dough to 'rise' as the air bubbles in it expand. This process would continue and turn the dough sour if the yeast wasn't killed by high temperatures at the right time. This is where the baking comes in. The heat kills the growing cells and stops the fermentation (decomposition). Thus unleavened bread is flat, more solid, lacking in air bubbles. For this reason leaven is a picture of sin.

LEAVEN = SIN Nothing in the world spoils like sin. It ruins whatever it touches unless stopped by confession and cleansing by the blood of Christ. Leaven must be destroyed before bread can be eaten. Sin must be destroyed before a Christian can become like Jesus. Paul, in I Corinthians 5:6-8, uses leaven as a picture of sin. He says it is little and hidden, but grows and spreads to destroy everything unless stopped.

Recently a huge tree in Colorado fell to the ground with a resounding crash. It was over 400 years and had just started growing when Columbus came to America. It had been struck by lightning 14 times, stood through winds, earthquakes, fires and storms. Yet it was killed by a little beetle which bored under the bark and chewed away the mighty fibers of the tree, one tiny bite at a time. That's how sin works. That's what leaven pictures.

Paul takes this leaven analogy a step further. He equates leaven to Christ, referring to Christ's sinlessness in order to be our sin sacrifice. Just as the unleavened bread was 'sinless' (no leaven), so Christ Himself was sinless. The unblemished Lamb of God was also the unleavened Bread of God. Thus when Jesus said 'this is My Body' about the bread, it truly applied for it was a picture of His sinless body.

PASSOVER TO LORD'S SUPPER Every year since He was 12, Jesus went to Jerusalem for the feasts of Passover and Unleavened Bread. The events of His final days and hours on earth center around these feasts. In fact, Jesus changed the meaning of the juice as the blood of the Passover lamb to His blood. He also changed the meaning of the unleavened bread from being a reminder of their quick flight from Egypt to being a reminder of His sinless Body broken for us (Luke 22:14-22).

Paul passed this significance on in I Corinthians (11:23-32). He enlarged the analogy to show that we, too, must be sinless when we partake of the Lord's Supper. Like unleavened bread, we must

not have sin we hold onto in our lives. We must remove all leaven/sin from our lives. If not, God will discipline us to remove it. It is a serious contradiction to partake of that which symbolizes Jesus' work for us on the cross while still having sin in our own lives.

In Mexico and tropical zones of South America a so-called 'Strangler' fig grows everywhere. It is a tree-killer. This fig can only be eaten by cattle and birds. It is so sticky a bird must clean its beak on a nearby tree after eating it. Small seeds can stick to bark and germinate in rainy season. Tiny roots make their way down into the heart of the tree. In a few years it covers the once beautiful tree and kills it.

That is exactly the way sin is. It starts small and grows until all is destroyed. That's what leaven is a picture of. Why not take a moment now to search your heart and life, asking God to help you find and root out the 'little' sins that lead to big defeats in your life? Confess each one and ask for His victory over them. Become like unleavened bread for the Lord.

THE TABERNACLE

The tabernacle is the most important structure ever built by man: past, present or future. For one thousand years in the past, and another thousand in the future, God's very presence dwelt in it (and the Temple which is really just a permanent tabernacle). More space is given to it and its function than any other single subject in the Bible - 50 long chapters (the creation of the whole universe and earth is given just 2 chapters). In order to understand the Jewish sacrificial system, feasts, priesthood, etc., one must understand the tabernacle. The best part about the tabernacle, though, is the most complete, detailed, beautiful picture/type of salvation and the Christian life in Scripture. All of it speaks of and glorifies Jesus in a way children as well as adults can understand. Learning the tabernacle makes it much easier for children to understand and apply Bible truths like salvation, Jesus' work on the cross, confession of sin, obedience, fellowship, praise and worship.

When the resurrected Jesus appeared on the road to Damascus and talked with the disciples there (and later with all the disciples in the upper room) He showed them what the Old Testament said about Him, starting with Moses' writings (Luke 24:27, 44). He had earlier said Moses wrote about Him (John 5:39-40, 46). Much of what He said were what we now call 'types.' A type is an Old Testament event foreshadowing a New Testament event, person or truth. It's sort of like seeing a shadow before you see the real object. Jonah is a type of Jesus (resurrection after 3 days - Matthew 12:39-40; Luke 11:29-30). The Passover Lamb is a picture of Jesus (John 1:29-30; 1 Corinthians 5:7). The bronze serpent being lifted up foreshadows Jesus on the cross (John 3:14-15). There are many examples. The Old Testament is full of examples and pictures of that which is more fully developed in the New Testament (1 Corinthians 10:1-6, 11; Romans 15:4; Colossians 2:17). In fact, you can't really understand the spiritual truths (theology) of the New Testament without understanding the physical truths (historical happenings) of the Old Testament. This is especially true of the tabernacle. It is God's photograph album of His Son -- hundreds of pictures of Jesus. Some are close-ups, other group pictures. These pictures walk and talk, so really they are more like videos of Jesus before His birth. Understanding the tabernacle brings Jesus' life and work alive in a new and special way, especially for children. The gate through the fence is a perfect example of this.

Around the outside of the tabernacle was a **fence** of white linen 7'-6" high. The fence kept people away from God. White stood for purity and it was a reminder of God's holiness which man couldn't enter. God did provide a way in, however. There was one gate by which man could enter. It was always open, picturing Jesus, the way to God for us. The gate was the only way, as Jesus is the only way to God (John 14:6; Acts 4:12). The curtain over the top of the gate was red (picturing Jesus' blood because He was a man), blue (picturing heaven because Jesus was also God), purple (a

combination of blue and red, the kingly color, because Jesus was the Messiah King) and white because Jesus was perfect and sinless. We can only come to God through Jesus (John 3:15-16; 6:51; 7:37; 10:9; Romans 10:13)

The first of 7 pieces of furniture stood right within the gate. It was a large **altar of bronze**, 7'-6" by 7'-6" by 4'-6" high (Exodus 27:1-8; 38:1-7). It was made of wood which came from the earth and pictures Jesus' humanity. Bronze covered it, and bronze was always a picture of judgment (Revelation 1:15, John 3:14-15; Daniel, etc.). As a man Jesus took our judgment (John 3:14-15; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Galatians 3:13). The purpose of the altar was to hold a fire (also judgment) which consumed offerings and sacrifices given to God. Innocent blood had to be shed

A holy God must judge sin, and when a person placed his hands on an innocent animal, thus identifying that animal with his sin, the animal had to die. Its throat was slit by the altar and after bleeding, the animal was burnt on the fire. Sin causes death and eternity in hell. This is what Jesus went through on the cross for us. That's why He said "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" Because He took our death and eternal hell fire we don't have to (Romans 8:1). Our sins are forever paid for and gone!

But what about the innocent animals that died? God's teaching from the Garden of Eden on is that innocent animals must die to cover sin as a picture of Jesus' death on the cross for our sin. It was Jesus Himself, before His birth in Eden, that killed those animals to cover Adam and Eve, knowing they were a picture of what He would do on the cross. Millions of innocent animals died in the Old Testament, showing the awfulness of sin. They didn't remove sin, but foreshadowed Jesus' blood shed on the cross which does remove sin (Hebrews 9:22; 1 Peter 3:18; 2:24; Isaiah 53:5-6; Matthew 26:28; 2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 John 1:7). Have you come to God by way of the altar of sacrifice, the cross of Jesus? There's no other way to enter but with an innocent blood offering - Jesus' blood shed for you. The tabernacle vividly showed the importance of coming by innocent blood. Upon entering the tabernacle one would see animals, smoke, hear the screams of the dying animals, smell the smoke and burning flesh & hair, feel the mud between their barefooted toes (made from all the blood spilled on the ground) and even taste the burnt meat in the air. Don't forget we come to God the same way today!

The only piece of furniture in the outer court besides the bronze altar was the **laver**. The altar was the once-for-all cleansing of salvation by the blood of Jesus (John 3:16). The laver stands for the moment by moment cleansing needed of sins after salvation (1 John 1:9). Both are necessary to serve God (1 John 5:6; Titus 3:5). "Rock of Ages," the well-known hymn, refers to this: "Rock of Ages, cleft for me, let me hide myself in Thee; Let the water (laver) and the blood (altar), from Thy wounded side which flowed (crucifixion, where cleansing provided for). Be of sin the double cure (sins past - salvation/bronze altar; sins present: confession/laver). Save from wrath (judgment [bronze] not on us but on Jesus at bronze altar) and make me pure (daily cleansing in the laver as we become more Christ like)."

"Laver" is the same as "lavatory" and refers to a place to wash. The laver was for cleansing, because the priests had to be clean in order to serve God. God is a clean (holy) God and those who serve Him must be clean, too (Psalm 24:3-4). Note that the laver is only for the priests. All Christians today are priests (1 Peter 2:5-9). Although they were once washed at the start of their service (salvation) they continually got dirty in their service to God. The ground was muddy, the fire dirty, blood was everywhere.

The **tabernacle building itself** was formed of boards of wood (humanity of Jesus) covered with a layer of gold (deity of Jesus). The boards were 15' by 2'-6" and about 4" thick. Jesus was a man in the full sense of the word (John 1:1, 14; Hebrews 2:17, 14; 1 Timothy 2:5; 1 Peter 2:22; John 3:5; 2 Corinthians 5:21). Acacia wood was hard-grained, wouldn't rot or decay, very sturdy, and had

no defects or failures in it. It pictures Jesus, also of the ground (as was wood), with no defects or failures (Hebrews 4:15; 7:25; 1 Peter 2:22; 1 John 3:5). Bases of silver held up the boards. The silver pictured the cost of redemption, the price paid for salvation.

Four **curtains** were draped over the Tabernacle. The first was made of white linen (Jesus' perfection) and had cherubim embroidered on it in red, blue and purple, the same colors as over the gate. These showed Jesus as the God (red) man (blue) in one, the Messiah King (purple). The Cherubim were angels who protected and proclaimed God's holiness. As the priests looked up they saw this tremendous manifestation of the glory of God, wings and power everywhere! That's why so many Psalms refer to the safety of being under God's wings (Psalm 61:4, 7; 17:8; 57:1; 91:4; 36:7; etc.).

Next was a goat's hair curtain. Goats were used for sin offerings (Leviticus 4:23, 27-28; 9:2-3; Numbers 7:16; 15:24,27; 28:11, 15). On the Day of Atonement a goat was offered as a scape-goat (Leviticus 16; Numbers. 28:11-15). Jesus was our scape-goat, our sin offering to God (Isaiah 53:6, 10; Hebrews 9:14, 26, 28; 10:10, 14; 2 Corinthians. 5:21; Ephesians 5:2). On top of it was a covering of ram's skin dyed red. The ram was used as a substitute. It pictures Christ as our substitute (1 Peter 3:18; 2:21; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Galatians 1:4; Isaiah 53:6; Romans 4:25; 5:8; John. 3:16). They were dyed red as a picture of Jesus' blood (Isaiah 1:18). Christ, our substitute, shed his blood in our place (ram's skin) as a sin offering for us (goats hair). This is why we glorify Him (linen with cherubim).

On top of these 3 curtains was one of animal skin. Scholars agree it was a manatee-type animal (seal, porpoise, dugong). It was a thick, tough covering (sandals were made of this). This offered protection to that within (as Jesus does for us). From the outside the tabernacle was unattractive, no different than the other tents around it. As a man Jesus looked like everyone else (Isaiah. 53:2-3). He couldn't be distinguished from the other disciples, which is why Judas was paid to point Him out. From the outside, in appearance, Jesus looks the same as everyone else. His great beauty can't be seen or appreciated from the outside, only by those who enter in (John 1:10-13).

The curtains over this door are the same as the curtains over the first gate. It is only half the size, though. Many come to Jesus for salvation (bronze altar) but few of those go on to serve Jesus with their lives and live in His presence day by day. Many more came into the Tabernacle than went into the inner building to God's presence.

Inside the building were 5 pieces of furniture in the shape of a cross. On the left was a **lampstand** giving light, for there was no natural light inside the building. It was made of gold, showing Jesus as God who was the light of the world. . Light is contrasted with darkness, which stands for sin and evil (Proverbs 4:19; John 3:19). The world today is in darkness (Romans 1:22, 25). Man, like bugs under a rock, tries to hide from the light (Revelation 6:15-17). Light is greater than darkness, though. Light can remove darkness, but darkness cannot remove light (John 11:9).

Across from the lampstand was a **table that had showbread** on it . The table was of wood and gold (Jesus as man and God) and held bread for the priests to be nourished. The purpose of the bread was for the priests to eat, nourishing themselves in God's presence (1 Samuel 21:6; Leviticus 24:5-9). That is what fellowship is -- nourishing on Jesus in His presence, along with other believer/priests (1 Corinthians 10:16-17). Individually we do this in private worship and devotions.

The inside of the Tabernacle building was, in essence, three cubes. This stands for the three-fold Trinity of God. The Holy Place was the size of two cubes and then a curtain separated it from the Holy of Holies which was a perfect cube. In front of the curtain, in the Holy Place, was a **gold altar** on which incense was burnt. One day an old priest named Zacharias was taking his turn serving in the temple in Jerusalem. He was chosen by lot to offer the incense on the golden altar, a once-in-a-

lifetime (if you got to do it at all) privilege! It was the first week of October, 748 A.U.C. (6 BC). His life completely changed because of what happened there. You can read about his encounter with Gabriel in Luke 1.

Incense in the Bible is used to symbolize prayer and communion with God (Psalm 142:2; 141:2; Luke 1:10; Revelation 5:8; 8:3-4; Ezra 9:5; Daniel 9:21). This is what Zacharias was doing when Gabriel came to tell him his prayers had been answered (Luke 1). The gold altar with fire from Jesus' work on the cross shows the altar is a picture of Jesus and the prayers He prays ascending to God. What is Jesus doing for us now in heaven? He intercedes for us (Hebrews 7:25; 8:1; Romans 8:34). He prayed for His disciples while He was on earth, and He still prays for His disciples today (Luke 22:31-32). John 17 is an example of how He prays for us.

Before we sin, Jesus intercedes on our behalf. If we sin anyway, He then becomes our advocate (lawyer) and represents our case before God (1 John 2:1). He comes to our defense when Satan wants God to enact the death penalty against us after we sin. His defense: our sins were paid for on the bronze altar.

Behind the altar of incense is a curtain. This is the third of three entrance ways. They show Jesus as the way, truth and life (John 14:6). The gate (#1) shows Jesus as the WAY to God (not by works, family, etc. Ephesians 2:8-9; Galatians 2:16). The door (#2) shows Jesus as the TRUTH of God (only Jesus' wisdom suffices, He is our light & nourishment, John 4:25). The veil (#3) shows Jesus as the LIFE of God (1 John 1:1-2; John 3). The veil stands for Jesus' life, His body.

The 15' by 15' square curtain or veil was of fine linen (the purity and righteousness of Jesus). It was embroidered with red, blue and scarlet thread in the design of a cherubim. The significance is the same as with the curtain above - showing God's majesty and power, His greatness and sovereignty. This third opening is the same size as the second opening, but while that was open this is closed, keeping everyone out.

The purpose of this veil is to protect God's holiness by keeping sinful man out of His presence, lest man be instantly destroyed. The veil was to show separation of man and God -- but it wasn't a wall (promising that the way would one day be open).

Only the High Priest could enter the Holy of Holies, past the veil, and then just once a year, the Day of Atonement. Then he had to come with innocent blood (Leviticus 16:2; Hebrews 9:6-8), access to God is only by blood. Still, he would have a rope tied around his ankle. If the sacrifice was unacceptable to God he was struck dead and would lie there and decay. The rope was used to pull him out. God wasn't being mean, just holy. No sin was allowed in His presence, like no germs are allowed in an operating room. What does the veil stand for? That's easy, because Hebrews 10:19-20 tells us precisely that it pictures Jesus' body.

The temple Solomon built, and Herod rebuilt, was the same as the tabernacle just larger. The veil in Jesus' day was 30' square and 4" thick. It was a beautiful work of art, gorgeous in design, artistic in color, superb in the minutest detail, and rich in adornment. It was one of the greatest tapestries of the world. It was replaced regularly so as to not weaken. It was tested by oxen pulling on all four corners at once to make sure it was strong. They would take no chance on the barrier protecting man from God's judgment to be broken down.

The very instant Jesus died several things were happening in the temple. For one, the Passover lamb for the whole nation was being killed. Also, a priest was at the altar of incense offering prayers to God. Right in front of his eyes the large veil tore from top to bottom, born by the hands of God (Matthew 27:46-52; Mark 15:34-38; Luke 23:44-46). Jesus had just said "It is finished," referring to the work of reconciling God and man. Tearing the veil was God's way of saying, "Now we don't need this anymore." As Jesus body was torn, so was the veil in the temple. In the Lord's

Supper we 'break' bread, memorializing this very event. The veil was torn from top to bottom, showing God considered Jesus' sacrifice sufficient payment for the sins of the world. It was torn in the middle so it would be obvious to all, as Jesus was crucified publicly before all. It was torn completely; the barrier was removed, not just part way or allowing a peek inside.

This event ended the old way, the law, and instituted the new -- grace (Hebrews 10:19-22). Now we can come into God's presence any time we want. We don't have to wait for one man to represent us, once a year, with a rope around his leg. Every time we pray we come into God's presence as that priest did. Our access is because of what Jesus did on the cross. That's what we say when we pray "in Jesus' name." Our privilege of access is through Jesus. We don't appreciate what a privilege prayer is, or what praying "in Jesus' name" really means. Again we see that all we have comes from Jesus' death. His life condemns us, for it shows our sin & failure since we don't live a perfect life as He did. His death opens the way into God for all of us. Thank Him for that each time you enter His presence in prayer!

Inside the Holy of Holies was a wooden chest called the **Ark of the Covenant** with the Mercy Seat on top. It speaks of Jesus as God and man (John 1:1, 14). It was made of wood (humanity of Jesus, Isaiah 53:2); covered with gold (deity of Jesus, Colossians 2:9). As a box for safety and security, what it carried was of the most importance. Hebrews 9:1-5 gives the record of its contents: tablets of the law, golden bowl full of manna, and Aaron's rod that budded. One of the names is the "Ark of the Testimony" because each of these bear testimony to God's holiness and grace and man's sinfulness and disobedience. They testify to man's failure and God's faithfulness.

The **Mercy Seat** was made of solid gold beaten into the shape of two cherubim looking down on the lid which held them. The space between these cherubim was the most important place in the tabernacle, actually the most important place on earth, for that is where God's presence was (1 Samuel 4:4; 2 Samuel. 6:2; 2 Kings 19:15; Psalm 80:1; 99:1). It was His throne (Revelation 11:19). Called the 'Shekinah' glory (meaning God's 'Presence'), this is where God was and from where He spoke to man (Numbers 7:89; Exodus 25:22).

In New Testament times God's presence was in Christ, who was God. He 'tabernacled' on earth (John 1:1-14). Jesus was called 'Immanuel' meaning 'God with us' (Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:23).

When the blood was poured there on the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur, Leviticus 17). Aaron offered one goat on the burnt altar, catching his blood in a gold basin. Some was sprinkled on a second goat (the 'scape goat') and the rest brought into the Holy of Holies by the high priest, with a rope tied around his ankle. If the offering was rejected by God the priest was struck dead. The blood was then sprinkled on the mercy seat (Leviticus 16:14). This was done seven times (sacred perfection). There is no way man could enter God's presence without the innocent blood (Hebrews 9:22). The writer of Hebrews says Christ (symbolically) took His blood to God to offer as the final sacrifice for all sin (9:24-28). Christ's sacrifice on Calvary was what the Day of Atonement pointed to. He fulfilled, it was never needed again. That's why the veil was torn by God, it wasn't needed any more.

Everything in the tabernacle is a picture of Jesus' sacrifice for us (Hebrews. 9:11-14). The tabernacle, especially the mercy seat, was where God met man. The lid on top of the ark of the covenant was called the "mercy seat" because that is what it did. It is used 26 times in the Old Testament and 4 in the New Testament. The New Testament uses are especially significant: 1 John 2:2; 4:10; Hebrews 9:5; Romans 3:21-25. The word translated "mercy seat" in the Old Testament is here translated "atonement" or "propitiation." Literally this means "to cover," for Jesus' blood covers our sins, pictured by the blood covering the mercy seat in the tabernacle. It means He satisfied God's demands on sin. He paid the price of judgment on sin so we can approach God free and clear. This is what makes Christ our mercy seat (Hebrews 10:19-22).

Everything depends on the blood. That is why the Cherubim are pictured looking down at the blood. They are interested in the unfolding of God's redemptive purpose. They never experienced grace and redemption themselves, they only see it in us. Because of what it shows about God, they are deeply intrigued (1 Peter 1:11-12; 1 Corinthians 4:9; Ephesians. 3:10). They are amazed at God showing us mercy - and that's what the "mercy" seat is all about! It shows God's goodness bestowed on the unworthy and undeserving sinner.

The only way to approach God is through Jesus' blood. Trying to come into His presence without the innocent blood brought immediate death and destruction (50,070 men died because of this, 1 Samuel 6:19-21). Apart from the blood there is no mercy, only judgment.

God Himself directed the movement of the Tabernacle from within a cloud which gave protection from the sun during the day and which shone with God's presence at night. When the cloud moved the whole Jewish nation, which was camped around the Tabernacle, followed as well.

Following the exact pattern of the tabernacle, which God gave to Moses, the Jews built a permanent tabernacle, called a **temple, in Jerusalem**. David planned it and Solomon built it. It was one of the wonders of the ancient world! After 300 years, though, Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians destroyed it. Seventy years later Ezra returned from Babylon and led a temple rebuilding program. For 400 years the Jews used this, then Herod enlarged and beautified it until it was once again one of the wonders of the world. After less than 100 years it was destroyed when Jerusalem was conquered by Rome in 70 AD. During the coming tribulation period there will be a temple on the same spot used by the Jews until the Antichrist takes it over and sets himself up to be worshipped in it. It will be destroyed during the battle of Armageddon. A Millennial temple there will become God's throne on earth for 1,000 years (Ezekiel 40-48).

When Jesus came to earth He was the place where God and man met, where God dwelt among man. John 1:14 says Jesus "became flesh and made His dwelling among us." Literally the Bible says He became flesh and "tabernacled" among us. Jesus was the tabernacle while on earth. It all pointed to Him and spoke of Him, and He fulfilled it while on earth. Like the tabernacle, Jesus's life on earth was temporary, humble, simple in appearance, God's dwelling place, and the place of sacrifice.

Today God doesn't dwell in a man-made building on earth. His dwelling is in the hearts of those who love Him and have accepted Jesus as Savior. WE are His tabernacle ("dwelling") today (1 Corinthians 3:16-17; 6:19; 2 Corinthians 6:16). Thus the tabernacle speaks of us, too! We are His tabernacle, and we are His royal priesthood (1 Pet. 2:5, 9-10). What a privilege we have in serving God in our lives!

Think of how God prepared and cared for the tabernacle, how He used it to reveal His glory, how it was where He dwelt on earth among men. God prepares and cares for us even more. He uses us today to reveal His glory to others. It is in us that He dwells on earth. What a special blessing that is for us today!

THE PRIESTHOOD

When you hear the word "priest" what do you think of? Someone who wears special clothes and acts as a go-between of God and man in a religious group? If so, you are pretty accurate. While most religions have a priesthood, the one we are concerned about is the one God instituted in the Bible for Israel. The others are all Satan's counterfeits.

God chose the tribe of Levi to be the priestly tribe because of their faithfulness to God when the others were sinning after Moses came down from Mt. Sinai with the law from God. Levi was a

son of Jacob and Leah. His descendants are the Levites by birth. Levites assisted the priests in carrying the ark and caring for the things of the Tabernacle and later the Temple. They were the doorkeepers, provided the music, prepared the sacrifices, cleaned and repaired as necessary, and kept the fires on the altar going. Healthy males between the ages of 25 and 50 served. They began their service with a ritual of consecration and cleansing, and then needed continual, regular cleansing at the laver to stay clean so they could serve.

Levites owned no land but were given four cities in every tribe's area so they could live among and minister to the people. They were paid by the tithes of the people and by keeping parts of the sacrifices as ordained by God. They copied, taught and enforced the law and helped priests in any way necessary.

The priests were one small portion of the tribe of Levi. They were descendants of the family of Aaron, who was a Levite. His sons were priests. The oldest son of the oldest son was the high priest. Aaron was the first High Priest. Actually Moses was God's first choice but turned it down when he wouldn't speak to Pharaoh for God. However Aaron did so poorly that Moses took over anyway while still in Egypt.

Aaron's sons were priests while he was high priest. Nadab and Abihu disobeyed and didn't follow God's directions, using 'strange' fire on the altar. As a result, God took their lives. Their brothers Eleazar and Ithamar took over for them. From there on it was the firstborn of the firstborn on down. If a son was crippled or infirm in any way he was not to serve as a priest.

The priests served from age 30 to 50. Younger than 30 was considered not mature enough for the responsibility that came with the privilege. They, too, lived in the same cities the Levites lived in so they could be among the people to minister to them. They lived on the tithes of money and food provided by the people.

When they first began to serve the priests were washed at the door of the Tabernacle or Temple. Hands were laid on a bull which was then slaughtered and its blood sprinkled on the horns of the altar. The priest was dressed in white for purity and anointed with oil. Blood from the bull was applied to their right ear, hand and foot as a picture of total consecration to the Lord.

While the dress of the priests was all in white, the High Priest had red, blue and purple woven in as well. He wore a special robe and an ephod which was used in his role as mediator between God and man. In it were placed the Urim and Thummim. The high priest was a mediator, a go-between representing God to man and man to God.

Priests would carry out this responsibility by burning incense on the golden altar, as Zacharias was doing when the angel told him he would have John the Baptist born to his wife. They cleaned and trimmed the lamps on the lamp stands, kept fresh bread on the Table of Showbread, fed the fire and cleaned away the ashes on the Bronze Altar. In addition they inspected the unclean, especially lepers, and declared them clean if God had healed them. They taught the people the law and acted as a high court of appeals if there were issues the Levites couldn't handle.

As was true of everything in the Tabernacle and Temple, the priesthood, too, was there to teach about Jesus. He is our High Priest (Hebrews 3:1; 4:14). While the Jewish High Priest put the blood of the sacrifice on the Mercy Seat, Jesus paid for our sins with His own blood (1 Peter 1:18-19). Jesus is our Mediator, our go-between, representing God to us and us to God (1 Timothy 2:5-6; Hebrews 4:14-16).

We can thank God for giving us such a wonderful, merciful High Priest who Himself became our sacrifice for sin. Jesus is the ultimate fulfillment of the Old Testament priesthood.

So the priesthood in the Old Testament speaks of Jesus as the High Priest. Then who are the priests who serve under Him? We are! All believers are priests (1 Peter 2:4-5). Starting with Adam every man was his own priest and presented sacrifices to God. Afterwards that office went to the head of each family: Noah, Abraham, etc. After Mt. Sinai only men from the Tribe of Levi and the family of Aaron could serve as priests. Now, in the church age, every born-again believer is a priest in the sight of God. What a great honor and privilege we have in representing God to man by our life and witness and in representing man to God by our prayers and intercession.

We, too, become priests by birth – new birth into the family of God. We are cleansed and consecrated, set apart to serve as priests, at salvation. We keep clean by washing when dirty by confessing our sins (1 John 1:9). After this we, too, are dressed in white showing our purity in His sight. We are also anointed with oil – the Holy Spirit. Instead of blood on our right ear, hand and foot, we are covered by the blood of Jesus.

We are available to serve Him as He needs. We serve Him by serving each other. God asks us to carry each other's burdens (Galatians 6:2), by encouraging them emotionally (Numbers 6:22-27), by interceding regularly for each other (Colossians 1:3; 2 Thessalonians 1:11), by lovingly confronting those who are in sin (Exodus 32:25-29; 2 Chronicles 26:16-21; Galatians 6:1).

You are a priest. I am a priest. What a great privilege. We don't need to approach God through another person; we can go directly ourselves, any time we want. We can talk to others about Him or talk to Him about others any time we choose. We can come into His presence any time we want. In the Old Testament only the High Priest could come into God's presence, and then only once a year and in fear and trembling. We can come into His presence any time we want because Jesus tore the separating veil by His work on the cross. Priests of Jesus – what an honor and privilege!

SALVATION BEFORE JESUS CAME

The question often comes up about those who were born before Jesus or those today who never heard of Him. Is salvation available for them? If so, how? First let's be sure that salvation is only to be found through Jesus (John 14:6; Acts 4:12; 1 Timothy 2:5). There is no other way, person, religion, etc. to get us to heaven. Only Jesus. But what about those who never heard of Him?

Every person is accountable to God, if they have heard the name Jesus or not (Romans 1:18-32; 3:23). All deserve eternal separation from God (Romans 6:23). He paid for their sins, if they heard about Him or not (John 4:42; 1 John 2:2). Those who reject His payment for sin will eternally endure God's wrath on sin in hell (John 3:16, 36; Revelation 20:15).

Salvation only comes from hearing God's good news of forgiveness (Romans 10:13-14). We know God is just and would never do anything that was not just (Genesis 18:25; Romans 2:11). All deserve hell; no one deserves heaven, or even a chance at heaven through Jesus (Ephesians 2:1-9). But how can God hold someone accountable for rejecting Jesus if they never heard about Him?

THOSE WHO DO NOT HAVE THE OLD TESTAMENT

First, let's talk about those who do not know about God through His written Word in the Old Testament. They may not have heard about the creator God of Israel, but they do know there is a God for their conscience within makes that plain to them (Romans 1:19, 32; 2:15; Ecclesiastes 3:11). Everyone has something within that tells them there is a God. If they respond to that or deny it is up to their free will choice.

In addition, God has revealed His eternal power and divine nature through nature and what He has created (Romans 1:20). So man is responsible for what he does about this basic awareness of the existence of God. Suppose you were lost in a dark cave and then found a little lighted arrow

pointing in a certain direction. Whose fault would it be if you failed to follow the arrow? Just yours. God has His own little arrows in our heart and in nature. Man must just follow them.

So what is the bottom line of what needs to happen for salvation? A person must give all of himself that he has to all of God that he understands. I repeat. A person must give all of himself that he has to all of God that he understands. That is true for a child, a mentally handicapped person, or someone who only knows there is a God through his heart and through nature. The more mature we get the more of ourselves we have to give, but even a child can give his heart to God. And a person doesn't need to know more than that there is a God to accept that truth and seek to know more about and follow that God. Anyone can do that, no matter if they have never heard the name of Jesus or read any of the Old Testament.

God wants all men to be saved (1 Timothy 2:4; 2 Peter 3:9). He welcomes those who acknowledge their spiritual need and seek Him (Ezekiel 34:11; Luke 19:10). When a person does accept the reality of this creator God and seeks to better know Him then he is accepting all of God that He understands. Sometimes God will reveal more of Himself to that person through a messenger (Acts 16:6-10), through inner revelation in the form of a supernatural dream, or through other means such as the names and meanings of the stars as He created them. God's promise is still true. "If from there you seek the Lord your God, you will find him if you look for him with all your heart and with all your soul" (Deuteronomy 4:29).

Those who do not turn to Him do not do so out of ignorance, for all are accountable and fully responsible (Romans 1:19-20). However if they do not respond to Him they are guilty of rejecting Him (Romans 1:21-23). Man can reject the truth (Romans 1:18) and refuse to honor God (Romans 1:21), turning to idols instead (Romans 1:23). They can ignore God's standard of righteousness, but they are still accountable for doing so (Romans 1:24-32). The serious part is that when someone rejects God, He rejects them (Romans 1:24-32).

Never let it be said that God is unfair in doing so, though (Romans 2:1-16). God is more than fair. He reveals Himself to man within (heart/conscience) without (nature) and all man has to do is accept that truth and in His heart acknowledge the God that created him. God may or may not reveal more to him, but if he has given everything he has in himself to all of God that he understands, God will forgive his sins and give him salvation. It couldn't be any simpler or fairer than that.

THOSE WHO DO HAVE THE OLD TESTAMENT

But then, what about those who also have the more clear revelation of God in the Old Testament, but lived before Jesus and only had vague prophecies about his future coming? What would be their standard for salvation? It would be no different than what we already mentioned, giving all of themselves that they had to all of God that they understood. It's just that they would understand God much more clearly from His revelation of Himself in the Old Testament.

You see, the basis of salvation is always the death of Christ. That is the only way God can forgive sin of anyone, because Jesus paid for it on the cross. There is no other way. And the requirement for that pardon to be applied is always faith in God from the heart of the individual requesting forgiveness. What changes through Bible history is the content of that faith, what God has revealed to man. For those who don't have the written revelation of God the content of their faith is in a creator God who is sovereign over all. For those who knew more about Him the content increases. Adam, for example, understood that innocent blood had to be shed to cover his shame and guilt. He and his descendants offered sacrifices as a way of showing their faith in God who would remove their sins.

Now when God revealed the Law to Moses and the Jews on Mt. Sinai they got a much deeper, clearer revelation of Who God was and what He expected. Their faith in God was shown by living by the rules and regulations in Exodus and Leviticus. It wasn't that doing these things earned their salvation, for salvation is a free gift (Ephesians 2:8-9), but that inner faith shows itself outwardly by wanting to follow God – James' "faith without works is dead" (James 2:14-20). Salvation didn't come by their putting faith in what they did, but in putting faith in the God who told them to do it. Actually the law could not bring salvation, no matter how well it was kept. Its purpose wasn't to be a way to earn salvation but to show man his sin and the impossibility of being perfect in God's sight (Galatians 3:14-24). Today our faith isn't shown by our trust in God as seen in His Law, today we are under grace and our trust in our gracious God to provide free salvation (Ephesians 2:8-9).

Those with the Old Testament had the same truth revealed to them as we have in the New Testament. Man's heart is wicked and corrupt (Jeremiah 17:9) and even our righteous acts are dirty in God's sight (Isaiah 64:6). Because God is holy He must separate from sinful man. Man cannot reach up to God, only God can initiate the contact by reaching down to man (Isaiah 59:1-2). He reaches down to reveal that the way between God and man can only be open by the shedding of innocent blood (Leviticus 17:11). The blood of animals can't pay for sin, but the sacrifice of the sinless God-man Messiah can pay for it (Isaiah 53:1-12).

So faith in the provision by the coming Messiah was a key ingredient in the faith content for those who had the Old Testament. They didn't know His earthly name would be 'Jesus,' but that wasn't the issue. Putting faith in this coming Messiah was the critical point. God would provide for their sins for they could not. In order for this to happen the Messiah would have to be "cut off" (crucified, Daniel 9:26). This would be a painful time of suffering for Him (Psalm 22:1-31). This is what God revealed and in what those with the Old Testament had to put their faith (Genesis 15:6).

CONTINUED FAILURE OF THE PEOPLE

Despite all God did to reach His people and teach them about Himself and His plan for them, the people continued to disobey and fail to follow God. They sinned, while Moses was on Mt Sinai getting the law by building a golden calf (Exodus 32). They complained, grumbled and criticized God and Moses (Exodus 15:24; 16:2, 7-9, 12; 17:3; Numbers 14:2, 27-29, 36; 16:11, 41; 17:5, 10). They failed to enter the land because of their fear of the giants (Numbers 13-14). They had to wander for 40 years because of their sin (Numbers 32:13). Even Moses himself failed to enter the land because of his sin of anger (Numbers 20; Deuteronomy 32:48-52).

BIBLE OVERVIEW

10. JOSHUA

MAIN EVENTS: Conquest of the Promised Land

MAIN PEOPLE: Joshua, Twelve Tribes

BOOKS OF THE BIBLE: Joshua

BIBLE VERSE: Joshua 1:2-3 "You and all these people, get ready to cross the Jordan River into the land I am about to give to them-to the Israelites. I will give you every place where you set your foot, as I promised Moses."

TIME: 1,400 BC

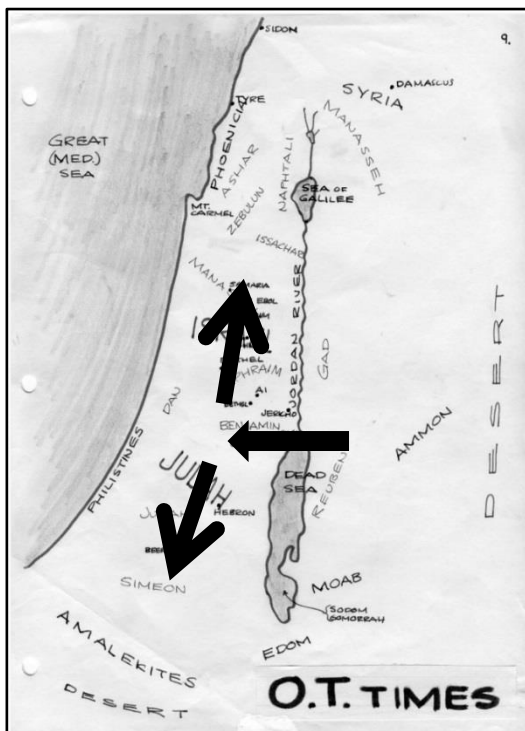
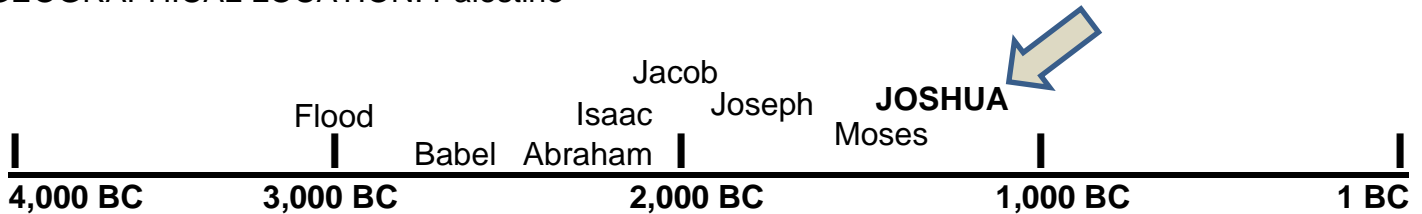
WORLD EVENTS AT THIS TIME:

India invaded by Aryans who settle in Indus and Ganges Valleys

Vedas written in India

Late Harappan Culture in India

GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION: Palestine



When Moses died, God chose Joshua to lead the people into the land. Joshua did not have the special education or the great gifts and skills that Moses had, but he had been faithful to God his whole life and was willing to be used by God. God used Joshua to lead the Jews into the land and defeat the Canaanites living there.

This time period was one of warfare – God’s people taking possession of that which God had given them in their Promised Land. In the same way, we are in a spiritual battle as well. The battle started in Eden (Genesis 3:15) will continue until Jesus returns and sets up His Kingdom on earth. That is a foundational truth we must be aware of for the battle is seen on every page in the Bible.

God’s power brought victory in these battles when His people faithfully served Him and followed His leading. The same is true for us today.

MEET JOSHUA

Living the Christian life is a battle. It always has been. We see this in the life of Joshua as well. He was involved in much warfare in his time. All who desire to live for God are. In his day it was the Egyptians and the Canaanites they fought. In our day we are still battling God's enemies, but they are different. We battle Satan and his forces, the flesh (our sin nature, that natural tendency to be selfish, prideful and self-centered) and the world system with its ungodly system of priorities and values. The weapons that were used against him were swords, spears and arrows. Weapons used against us are greed, selfishness, fear, lust, anger and pride. What he went through physically is a picture of what we go through spiritually (1 Corinthians 10:11; Romans 15:4).

This battle we fight is really between God and Satan. It just spilled over to this planet and is carried out here on earth. It started in Eden when Satan started attacking God's people because He couldn't defeat God Himself. He started with Adam and Eve, then attacked Cain. He hit everyone until God wiped out all but Noah in the flood, then Satan went after the people after the flood. He got them to build Babel. God then chose one man to make into a special nation to reveal Himself to the world. That man, Abraham, then was bruised. Isaac, Jacob and Joseph were all attacked by Satan. Eventually the new nation ended up captive in Egypt (a picture of the world) helpless slaves of Pharaoh (a picture of Satan). God intervened and delivered them by the innocent blood of the Passover Lamb (a picture of Jesus' work on the cross). He defeated their enemies at the Red Sea (a picture of His resurrection power). All believers are in this battle. In Egypt the Jews weren't in any battle, they were helpless victims with no power to fight back. After they left Egypt to follow God the battles start. The same is true with us.

Joshua was born a slave in Egypt. He remembered the Passover and deliverance through the Red Sea. He saw all the miracles of God's deliverance. His name means "Jehovah is salvation," the Hebrew equivalent of the Greek word "Jesus." He was a soldier in Pharaoh's army. That's why Moses chose him to lead the Jews in their battle with Amalek (a picture of the flesh) soon after they crossed the Red Sea.

God's enemies are our enemies when we are on His side, and they can seem formidable! The giants in the land caused most of the other spies as well as the people to run in fear, so the Jews had to wander in the desert for 40 years. Then, when the older generation had died, God chose Joshua to lead the new generation into the land (Joshua 1:1). Following such a well-known, successful leader like Moses was not easy. He himself couldn't do it. It was only God's power that enabled him to lead the people to victory. He had to totally rely on God's promises in order to have victory. God promised He would give them the land (Joshua 1:2), but they had to move out in faith and fight the battles to take it. "I will give you every place where you set your foot" (Joshua 1:3,4; Deuteronomy 11:24; Genesis 12:1-7). The land was theirs – but they had to set their foot there. The Canaanites who were living there did their best to prevent that!

Fortunately God promised He would fight their battles through them. He guaranteed victory for them (Joshua 1:5). God promises us that we will never be alone, either (Genesis 28:15; Romans 8:38-39; Exodus 33:14). Because of this we don't have to fear (Joshua 1:6; Psalm 118:6; 23:4; Isaiah 41:10; Deuteronomy 31:6; Matthew 14:27). Of course God expects us to obey Him in everything (Joshua 1:7-8), for disobedience cuts us off from His power and protection.

God told Joshua "Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go" (Joshua 1:9). That was what he rested his hope on. God has promised us, too, that He will meet all our needs (Psalm 84:11; 23:1-3; Philippians 4:19; Hebrews 13:5), that He will guide us (Psalm 48:14; 32:8; Proverbs 3:5-6) and that He will be our strength for whatever comes (Philippians 4:13; 2 Corinthians 12:9; Deuteronomy 33:25; Isaiah 40:29).

He promises us victory in our battles, too (1 Corinthians 10:13). We need only to trust His word and lean on His strength.

So when we have battles, and we will have them, learn from Joshua's battles. His were physical, ours are spiritual (Ephesians 6:12). Fight in God's strength, wear His armor (Ephesians 6:10-17) and then, and only then, will we be able to have victory as Joshua had victory. The book of Joshua is a book of warfare and victory, but it starts with God's promises.

Victory doesn't come quickly. It takes a lifetime of fighting. God taught Joshua that lesson in his life, too. He had to learn to persevere, to not quit but to keep faithfully serving God no matter what happened. It's not an easy lesson to learn, for patience doesn't come naturally to human beings. Is God trying to teach you patience and perseverance? How are you coming with your progress? Maybe Joshua's story will help you.

Joshua grew up in Egypt. For the first forty years of his life he was a slave patiently awaiting God's deliverance. Then when deliverance did come he ended up having to wait another 40 years to enter the land – more patience was required. Finally, five years after they crossed the Jordan River and began their conquest of the land, he got his chance to fight for his land.

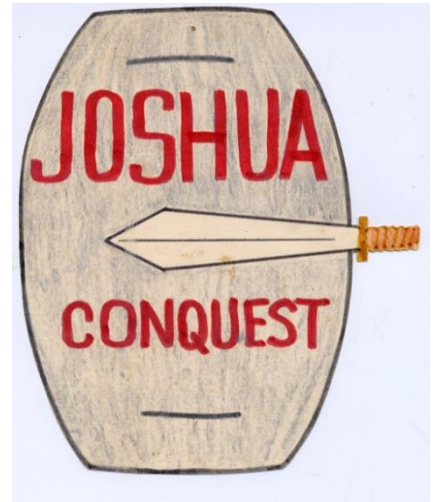
It took them years to defeat the confederations of tribes in Canaan. God was teaching them patience and perseverance. He was letting them have victory in one area, settle and hold it, and then move on to another area, just like He does in our lives today. To give it all to them at once would have been too hard for them. If all the Canaanites were destroyed before they could move in and replace them, wild animals would take over and make the places unsafe (Exodus 23:20-30). Thus God's way has always been little by little, conquer and grow in one area and then move on to the next area to be conquered.

Even so, despite the fact that the major Canaanite armies had all been defeated, there were still pockets of resistance and a few cities of giants left. It took ongoing mop-up operations to remove them all, a lifelong task. Other new areas of defiance would raise up as well and had to be put down. Isn't that the way it is in your life, too? After salvation (Passover lamb and Red Sea deliverance) you must decide who you will live for: yourself or God. If you choose yourself, you wander for years in aimlessness (as the Jews wandered for 40 years in the desert). If you choose God and follow Him into the place of His perfect will for you, then you will find battles and opposition. The world, the flesh and the devil will fight you every step of the way to keep you from making that commitment to put Him before yourself. God will give you victory if you faithfully persevere and stay true to Him. The first major battles between the flesh and the spirit will have been won, but living in His will (in the land) will mean a lifetime of continual skirmishes, mop-up operations, taking new territory, and fighting giants that remain.

The problem was that the Jews didn't go ahead and keep battling. They got weary of it and decided that 90% victory was good enough when it wasn't! The tribes of Reuben, Gad and half of Manasseh were willing to settle for land on the east of the Jordan. It was right next to God's perfect land (will) for them, but not in it. It was close enough to have some of the benefits, but stopped short of being where the battles and conflicts were. In future years they were the first to get attacked and defeated, though, because they weren't in God's perfect place for them.

What a great God we serve! He had promised that every place they put their foot would be theirs if they faithfully obeyed and followed Him (Joshua 1:3-5), and that is what happened (Joshua 21:43-45). The same is true for us, too, if you follow your "Joshua" ("Jesus" in Greek is the same as "Joshua" in Hebrew). Are you following? Persevere, patiently obey Him. You won't regret it! It's the only way to have victory in your daily battles. He never promised to remove the battles, but He does promise to be with you and fight for you through them.

JOSHUA: CONQUEST



TITLE: Named after author, main character

AUTHOR: Joshua

DATE of WRITING: About 1375 BC

PLACE of WRITING: Canaan (Palestine)

TIME COVERED: About 30 years

RECIPIENTS: Jews, second generation of those who left Egypt

KEY VERSE: *Joshua 1:2-3 "Moses my servant is dead. Now then, you and all these people, get ready to cross the Jordan River into the land I am about to give to them-- to the Israelites. I will give you every place where you set your foot, as I promised Moses."*

KEY WORDS: Possess/Possessions (22 times); Inherit/Inheritance (63 times)

PURPOSE: To show how God's promises were fulfilled in giving Canaan to Israel (23:14) but how Israel failed to fully possess the land (18:3), setting groundwork for future troubles.

THEME: Conquest and division of Canaan.

Have you ever been in a position where you had to replace someone who did an outstanding job? Maybe it was at work, or even at church. You didn't seem to have the skills and natural ability your predecessor did, but now it was your responsibility. With God's help it all worked out fine. That is the position Joshua finds himself in. He was only average in ability, but above average in availability. He wasn't the gifted, natural leader Moses was, but he trusted God and God used him to lead the Jews into their Promised Land.

Joshua was born a slave in Egypt. He assisted Moses and was trained by Moses since the Jews left Egypt. He was the general who led the soldiers against the Amalekites while Moses prayed (Exodus 17). Joshua and Caleb were the only spies who trusted that God could defeat the giants and give them the land. Now he is a man of about 80 or 90, full of wisdom and confidence in God. Naturally he was a fearful man, but when he trusted in God he had courage and strength for his tasks (Joshua 1:6-9). Joshua in many ways is a picture (type) of Jesus. His name (Hebrew) and Jesus (Greek) both mean "the LORD is salvation" (Acts 7:45; Hebrews 4:8). In the Old Testament Joshua leads the Jews to victory over physical enemies (Canaanites). In the New Testament it is Jesus who leads his people to victory over spiritual enemies (sin, Satan, the flesh and the world, 1 Corinthians 3:21-23) (Ephesians 6:12). Victory isn't given, it must be won. However behind Joshua/Jesus it CAN be won! If people follow Joshua/Jesus, God gives victory (John 6:37-39; 10:14-16, 27-30)!

I. MOVING INTO THE LAND The first half of the book talks about the Jews claiming (chap. 1-5) and conquering (chap. 6-12) the land God had long ago promised them to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph. After Joshua is commissioned (chap. 1), Jericho is canvassed (chap. 2). While Joshua knows to trust in God, he also knows his part is to use common sense and plan ahead. He trusted completely and planned completely, a good example to us today.

Jericho was the key city in entering the land, for it was virtually impregnable. The outer walls were 30 by 6 foot. After a 15 foot space the inner wall was 30 by 12 foot. They were joined at the top and surrounded by a deep moat with a smooth, vertical surface. Arrows and swords could never conquer such a place. Without God's help it would be impossible. The spies sent were saved by a prostitute named Rahab, who gave her heart to God. She was a fine woman of faith (Heb 11:31; James 2:25) who was the great-great-grandmother of David (mother of Boaz), an ancestor of Jesus.

After crossing the Jordan (chap 3-4) by stepping into the water before it parted (unlike the Red Sea crossing where it separated first -- God expects more from our faith as we grow and mature in

Him), they recommitted themselves by circumcision (chap 5) which they neglected while wandering. God expects His people to be holy and 100% obedient to Him.

After defeating Jericho by a crazy, far-out battle plan from God (which actually worked - the large walls fell into the moat so it was smooth walking into town) (chap. 6), the Jews are defeated at Ai (chap 7) because of Achan's sin. The sin of one can affect a whole family, church or nation! God hates sin and judges it wherever it is. The Canaanites were being removed because of their awful sin, but the Jews, too, had to keep from all sin. How awful sin is can be seen by Jesus' crucifixion!

Joshua's campaign was to 'divide and conquer,' separate the various tribes before they could unite. Moshe Dyan, in 1967, studied and followed Joshua's strategy in defeating the Arabs in 6 days despite being outnumbered 60 to 1!

The closest to recorded sin by Joshua is his omission of prayer about a treaty he signed with the Gibeonites (chap. 9-10). Assuming they were from far away, he promised to help them and soon found himself fighting other tribes defending them! God gave the victory by yet another miracle in the life of Joshua -- the sun stood still so darkness wouldn't aid the enemy.

After defeating the other Canaanite tribes, peace came. However the Jews didn't remove every Canaanite, and they would be a thorn in their side from then on, leading them into intermarriage and idolatry until that caused the Jews to again be removed from Palestine. It is so very important to obey God 100% and remove every sin, no matter how 'small.'

II. SETTLING IN THE LAND The second half of the book deals with the colonizing of the land (chap. 13-21) and consecrating of the land (chap. 22-24). The land is divided among the 12 tribes. The highlight of this section is Caleb's faith in taking on the giants with just his family and defeating them! Despite his age and wasting 40 years of his life because of someone else's sin, and despite being passed over for leadership when Joshua was chosen, he always stayed faithful to God, even raising a faithful family who also served God (Judges 1:12-15).

OUTLINE OF JOSHUA

I. MOVING INTO THE LAND (Subduing the Land) 1-12

A. Claiming the Land 1-5

1. Joshua Commissioned 1
2. Jericho Investigated 2
3. Jordan Crossed 3-4
4. Jews Circumcised 5

B. Conquering the Land 6-12

1. Central Campaign 6-8
2. Southern Campaign 9-10
3. Northern Campaign 11a
4. Summary 11b-12

II. SETTLING IN THE LAND (Subdividing the Land) 13-24

A. Colonizing the Land 13-21

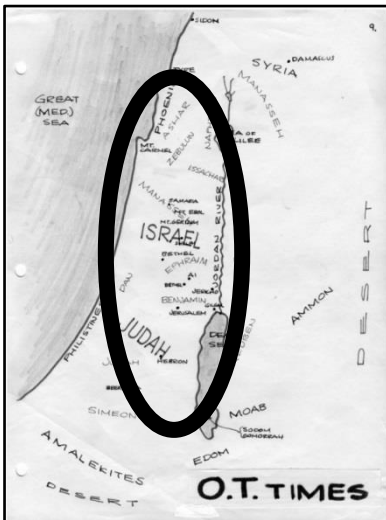
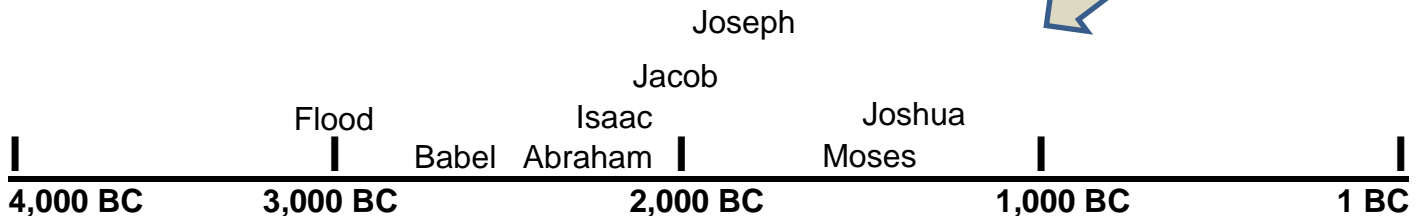
1. 2 ½ Tribes East of Jordan 13
2. Caleb 14
3. 9 ½ Tribes West of Jordan 15-19
4. Levi 20-21

B. Consecrating the Land 22-24

1. Setting it apart for God 22
2. Separating from sin 23
3. Serving God 24

11. SAMUEL

GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION: Palestine



Following the time of Joshua we come to the period of the Judges in our Bible Overview. Since Samuel was a man used by God to lead the people and anoint the first two kings, I have named this section after him. Other well known judges include people such as Gideon, Deborah and Samson. Ruth also lived during this time, but she wasn't a judge.

This was a very dark period in Israel's history because of the sin and disobedience so common among the people during these 400 years. When the people repented and turned to God, He delivered them . However they only turned to Him when things were very bad, then when God helped them recover they again turned from Him and the cycle repeated itself again.

MEET SAMUEL Samuel's birth was miraculous, for his mother, Hannah, wasn't able to have children until God blessed her with a son (1 Samuel 1:7-20). She consecrated him to God even before he was born (1 Samuel 1:11, 22, 24-28). When he was weaned he was taken to the Tabernacle and left for Eli to raise and train in God's service (1 Samuel 2:11, 18-19). God's blessing was on young Samuel (1 Samuel 2:21; 3:19).

When Samuel was still a young boy, God revealed to him that Eli's family would no longer be ruling as High Priests (1 Samuel 3:1-18). Samuel grew to be a special prophet (1 Samuel 3:20-21; 4:1) and judge of Israel (1 Samuel 7:15-17). Samuel organized the Tabernacle service (1 Chronicles 9:22; 26:28; 2 Chronicles 35:18). His teaching and admonitions brought repentance to the people (1 Samuel 7:4-6). His intercession and sacrifices led to victory over the Philistines (1 Samuel 7:7-14). However, he made his corrupt sons judges in Israel (1 Samuel 8:1-3).

When the people wanted a king like the other nations he protested (1 Samuel 8:4-22) but eventually anointed Saul (1 Samuel 9; 10) and later David (1 Samuel 16) as kings over Israel. He warned Saul about God's coming judgment on him (1 Samuel 13:11-15; 15) and sheltered David when he was escaping from Saul (1 Samuel 19:18). When he died the people grieved his loss (1 Samuel 25:1). He was a great man of integrity and served well as a judge and ruler (1 Samuel 12:1-5; Psalm 99:6; Jeremiah 15:1; Hebrews 11:32).

MEET GIDEON Gideon was called to serve God (while taking care of his harvest, Judges 6:11, 14). At first quite hesitant (Judges 6:15), he promises to serve the Lord (Judges 6:16-24). God provides a miracle to confirm his call (Judges 6:21-24). Gideon then destroys the altar to Baal and builds one to the Lord (Judges 6:25-27). Struggling with obeying God, he puts out a 'fleece' to make sure he knows God's will (Judges 6:36-40). Then he leads a small army against the Midianites and defeats them with God's help (Judges 6:33-35; 7; 8:4-12). As a result Israel wants to make him king but he refuses (Judges 8:22-23). He was known as a man of faith (Hebrews 11:32).

MEET DEBORAH Deborah was a prophetess in Israel. People came to her for help in settling matters of disagreement. God led her to send a message to Barak asking him to assemble ten thousand men to fight Sisera (Jabin's general). God assured them of victory. Barak said he would only do it if Deborah accompanied him. Because of his lack of faith, the honor of the victory was given to a woman, Jael. The victory brought rest to Israel for forty years.

MEET SAMSON Samson was a Danite, a son of Manoah, miraculously born to his wife although she was unable to conceive. God set him apart as a Nazirite from before he was born (Judges 13:2-7, 24-25). Instead of trusting God to provide a godly, Jewish wife he wanted a Philistine woman for a wife. On the way to her home he killed a lion with his hands and later touched the dead body gathering honey, thus breaking the part of the Nazirite vow about touching a dead body.

At his marriage feast he asked a riddle, the answer of which his new wife gave to the others there (Judges 14:8-19). To pay the debt he killed thirty Philistines to use their clothing as payment (Judges 14:19). Then he left his new wife (Judges 14:20; 15:1-2). It is highly likely that at a pagan marriage feast alcohol was served, and if Samson drank any of it he would have broken a second part of his Nazirite vow. When Samson eventually returned to his wife and found out her father had married her to another man, he caught 300 foxes, tied their tails together and set them on fire and scattered them throughout the Philistine fields, doing great damage to their crops. To get back on him they burned the house his wife was in and killed her and her father (Judges 15:3-8).

Samson was known for his great strength (Judges 15:7-14; Hebrews 11:32). He killed a thousand Philistines with just the jawbone of a donkey (Judges 15:13-17). His downfall came when he started spending time with Delilah, a prostitute, who eventually discovered the secret of his strength and used it to have him weakened and taken prisoner (Judges 16:1-20). Having his hair cut for the first time in his life broke the third and final part of his Nazirite vow. In humbleness he repented and turned back to God, who gave him strength one final time. With it Samson pulled down the Philistine temple he was in and thereby killed thousands of them while losing his own life (Judges 16:21-31; Hebrews 11:32). Samson is a picture of a man with physical strength but no moral strength. Allowing his lusts to control him defeated him and then brought about his premature death.

JUDGES:

DEFEAT & DELIVERANCE

TITLE: People God used to deliver Israel

AUTHOR: Unknown (possibly Samuel)

DATE of WRITING: About 1045 BC

PLACE of WRITING: Canaan

TIME COVERED: 1375 - 1049 BC

RECIPIENTS: Jews

KEY VERSE: *Judges 2:11-19 They provoked the LORD to anger because they forsook him and served Baal and the Ashtoreths. ... The LORD handed them over to raiders who plundered them. ... They were in great distress. Then the LORD raised up judges, who saved them out of the hands of these raiders. Yet they would not listen to their judges but prostituted themselves to other gods and worshiped them. ... Whenever the LORD raised up a judge for them, he was with the judge and saved them out of the hands of their enemies as long as the judge lived; for the LORD had compassion on them as they groaned under those who oppressed and afflicted them. ... But when the judge died, the people returned to ways even more corrupt than those of their fathers, following other gods and serving and worshipping them. They refused to give up their evil practices and stubborn ways.*

They refused to give up their evil practices and stubborn ways.

KEY WORDS: "did evil" (14 times); "judges" (22 times)

PURPOSE: To show the history of Israel from Joshua to Samuel and to show the sinfulness of man and what happens when people turn from God.

THEME: Failure Through Compromise



We all know the story of the prodigal son and how he was forgiven and restored when he returned. It is a heart-warming story with a good ending. What we don't know is what happened after he returned. Suppose we found out that a little later he again took what his father would give him and left, only to again fail and return. Then he did it again, and again, and again -- for the rest of his life! That would certainly change your opinion of the story and the son. That is exactly what the book of Judges is about. God is the father, and the nation Israel is the prodigal son.

DOOM AND GLOOM While Joshua was a book of joy and victory, Judges is full of gloom and defeat. Joshua teaches that faithfulness brings freedom, but Judges shows that faithlessness brings servitude. The appendix at the end of the book (chapters 17-21) give two examples of how spiritually perverted and morally polluted God's people can get when they aren't living close to Him! Its a great book to read on a cold, rainy night when you are down and depressed -- the book will fit your mood perfectly!

SEVEN CYCLES OF SIN The book of judges is structured around seven cycles of sin, summarized in 2:11-19. The people disobey God and turn to false gods and idolatry. God withdraws His blessing and they end up in bondage to an enemy. When they hit bottom they have no place else to turn so they call out to God who hears them and provides a judge to lead them to deliverance. These judges are not like we think of judges, but more like patriotic evangelists (Joan of Arc types) who lead the people in repentance and then war against their oppressors. After a period of peace and rest they stop depending on God and start to drift into sin again, and the cycle repeats itself. Actually these are downward spirals, for they don't reach as high but do sink lower each time. This happens seven times in the book of Judges, as shown on the outline (chapters 3 - 16).

You might also recognize this pattern in your own life or in the lives of those around you. We all have a tendency to be closer to God when things are tough, then drift on our own when everything seems to be all right. God allows pressure to stay on us to keep us close to Him.

SEX: SATAN'S BEST TRAP BAIT Living in a sex-saturated society isn't anything new to us. Satan has used that repeatedly through the ages, and why not -- it produces the results he wants! The Jews were gradually lured from God by sexual compromises. It started off with their not killing all the Canaanites when they conquered the land under Joshua. Although few and used as slaves, the Canaanites increased in number and the Jews started intermarrying with them. The Canaanites brought their old gods to their family and taught their worship to their children. Frankly, it was much more appealing to the flesh than serving and submitting to God. Baal and Ashtoreth were worshipped in immorality, for they were fertility gods. Ashtoreth, the female consort of Baal, was worshipped by religious prostitution (in Europe the "A" changed to "E" and she was Eshtoreth, then Esther, symbolized by rabbits, eggs and other symbols of fertility). The Jews didn't jump right into this sin, but gradually slid in. Like land eroding at a river bank or curtains fading in a living room, a gradual change is harder to notice than a quick change. Notice the programs and talk on TV now compared to 20 years ago and you'll see just how this works.

Although specially chosen and gifted by God, Samson was destroyed by his preoccupation with sex. He had great physical strength, but no moral strength, a common description of many people today. Sexual temptation ruled his life and destroyed him, as it has done and continues to do with so many others today. It's natural that Satan would bait his trap with something that was created to be so fine and beautiful. Watch for his trap in your life!

OUTLINE OF JUDGES

I. ISRAEL'S WARS (Causes of the Cycles) 1-2

- A. Political Background (Failure) 1
- B. Spiritual Background (Faithlessness) 2

II. ISRAEL'S OPPRESSION (Courses of the Cycles) 3-16

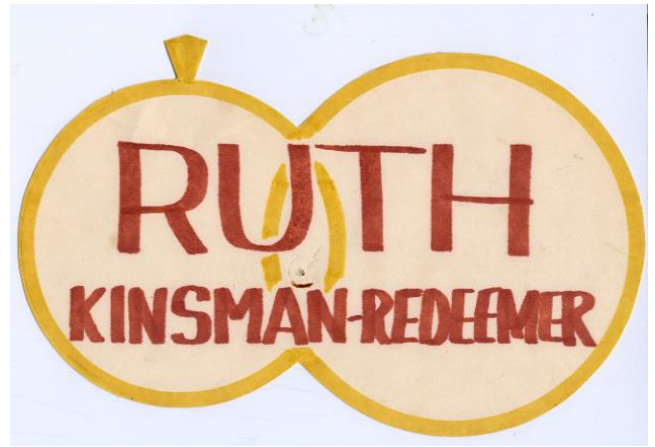
- A. Cycle 1: Othniel (Mesopotamia) 3a
- B. Cycle 2: Ehud, Shamgar (Moabites) 3b
- C. Cycle 3: Deborah, Barak (Canaanites) 4-5
- D. Cycle 4: Gideon (Midianites) 6-8
- E. Cycle 5: Tola, Jair (Civil War) 9
- F. Cycle 6: Jephthah, Ibzan, Elon, Abdon (Ammonites) 10-12
- G. Cycle 7: Samson (Philistines) 13-16

III. ISRAEL'S SINS (Conditions in the Cycles) 17-21

- A. Spiritual Perversion (Dan) 17-18
- B. Moral Pollution (Benjamin) 19-21

RUTH:

KINSMAN-REDEEMER



TITLE: Named after the heroine, Ruth

AUTHOR: Possibly Samuel

DATE of WRITING: During reign of David

PLACE of WRITING: Canaan

TIME COVERED: About 10 years during time of Judges. Ruth & Boaz married about 1120 BC

RECIPIENTS: Jews

KEY VERSE: *Ruth 1:15-16 "Look," said Naomi, "your sister-in-law is going back to her people and her gods. Go back with her." But Ruth replied, "Don't urge me to leave you or to turn back from you. Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God."*

KEY WORDS: "Kinsman" (14 times); "Redeemer" (9 times)

PURPOSE: To show there is a faithful remnant during times of apostasy (Judges) as well as how a Moabite woman became the great-grandmother of David and an ancestor of Jesus

THEME: Redemption illustrated by the example of the kinsman-redeemer.

Many great novels have a story within a story. Dr. Zhivago, for example, has a tender love story within a setting of violence and brutality. The same is true of the story of Ruth. Set in the time of the judges (actually the last four chapters in the book of Judges in the Hebrew Bible), the book of Ruth shows a story of love and faithfulness in a time of sin and apostasy.

RUTH'S CHOICE (chapter 1) Because of a famine in the land, Elimelech and Naomi took their sons, Mahlon and Chilion, and moved to the land of Moab. There the boys married Gentile girls, Orpah and Ruth. Both moving to Gentile land and marrying Gentile women were disobedient to God (Deuteronomy 7:1-3). Because of this God removed the father first, then the sons. This was God's discipline of death because of their continuing in sin (1 John 5:16-17; Acts 5:1-11). Since the women have no way to support themselves and their resources have run out, Naomi decides to return home. This signifies an inner turning back to God, too (1:20-21). Orpah returns home, but Ruth commits herself to stay with Naomi. Her love and loyalty to Naomi as well as to God motivate her. She refers to God as YHWH, showing a personal relationship with Him (1:15-16). She decides to stay with God as well as Naomi.

RUTH'S FAITHFULNESS (chapter 2) God made provision for poor Jews to work for food by commanding landowners to leave some grain standing around the edges of their fields which could be gathered by the needy. In this time of apostasy and greed, very few Jews let any grain stand, but a godly man named Boaz did. Ruth ended up in his field, gathering left-over grain for Naomi and herself. Her sacrificial hard work so impressed Boaz that he made sure she was safe and her needs were met. Perhaps the fact that Boaz's mother was a Gentile, Rahab (Matthew 1:5), made him more sympathetic to Ruth's plight. Instead of running after a husband, Ruth took care of aged Naomi. Because she put others first, God took care of her.

RUTH'S REDEEMER (chapter 3) Realizing they cannot continue on indefinitely in this manner, Naomi encourages Ruth to request Boaz to come to their aid and redeem their property which had been sold for money on which to live. God established the law of the kinsman-redeemer in which a near relative could take the place of the one in need by paying the price to redeem that which was

lost. “Redeem” means “to buy back” and is used of a slave owner who must purchase back a slave that was his but ran away. This is a picture of Jesus, who became one of us at the incarnation so He could do what we couldn’t do -- free us from our debt to sin. We were His by creation, then we got into sin, so He had to pay the price for us on the cross.

The kinsman-redeemer must be a near relative (Ruth 2:1,3,20; 3:13), and Christ was human like us (Philippians 2:5-8; John 1:14; Hebrews 2). He had to be willing to redeem (Ruth 2:8; 3:11) as was Christ (Matthew 20:28; John 10:28; Hebrews 10:17). In addition the kinsman-redeemer must be able to redeem the one in bondage (Ruth 2:1). Christ was able to redeem us (John 10:11, 18). That means he must be free himself. Boaz was, so was Christ (John 3:16). He had the price of redemption (Ruth 2:1) as did Christ (1 Peter 1:18-19) and paid the price in full, as did Jesus (Galatians 3:13; 1 Peter 1:18-19).

Why didn’t Boaz voluntarily do this? Why did he have to be asked? He knew there was a closer relative, he didn’t consider that a young woman like Ruth would be interested in marrying an older man like him, and the practice was all but forgotten for it wasn’t used much in those days.

RUTH’S BLESSINGS (chapter 4) As it turned out, the closer relative was interested in getting the land for himself, but when he realized Ruth came with it, and therefore any proceeds would go to her and any children she might have, he turned it down. Greed was his motive. Therefore Boaz was free to buy back Naomi’s inheritance as well as marry Ruth and provide a home for her and Naomi. They had a son named Obed, who had a son named Jesse, who had a son named David. This made Naomi the great-grandmother of David and an ancestor of Jesus. This is a beautiful example of how God gives the best to those who leave the choice to Him! If Ruth had gotten bitter at God over the death of her husband or sought to meet her own needs by trying to catch a husband, it would not have turned out as nice for her. How much blessing do you and I miss by impatiently taking things into our hands and trying to meet our own needs?

OUTLINE OF RUTH

I. RUTH’S CHOICE 1

- A. Her Background
- B. Her Choice
- C. Her Arrival in Bethlehem

II. RUTH’S FAITHFULNESS 2

- A. The Right to Glean
- B. the Results of Gleaning
- C. the Report of Gleaning

III. RUTH’S REDEEMER 3

- A. Suggested by Naomi
- B. Executed by Ruth
- C. Agreed to by Boaz

IV. RUTH’S BLESSING 4

- A. Husband
- B. Son
- C. Lineage

BIBLE OVERVIEW

12. SAUL



MAIN EVENTS: Kingdom under Saul

MAIN PEOPLE: Saul, Samuel, David

BOOKS OF THE BIBLE: 1 Samuel

BIBLE VERSE: *1 Samuel 16:7 But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The LORD does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."*

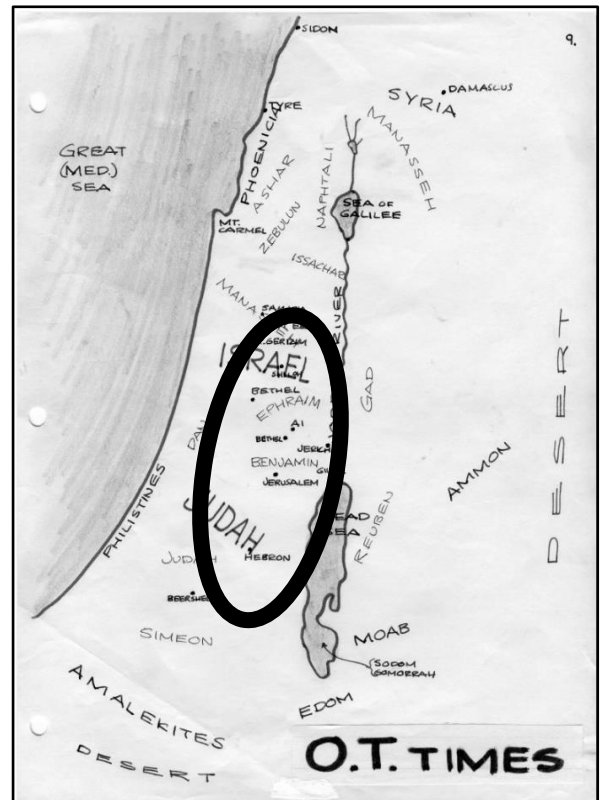
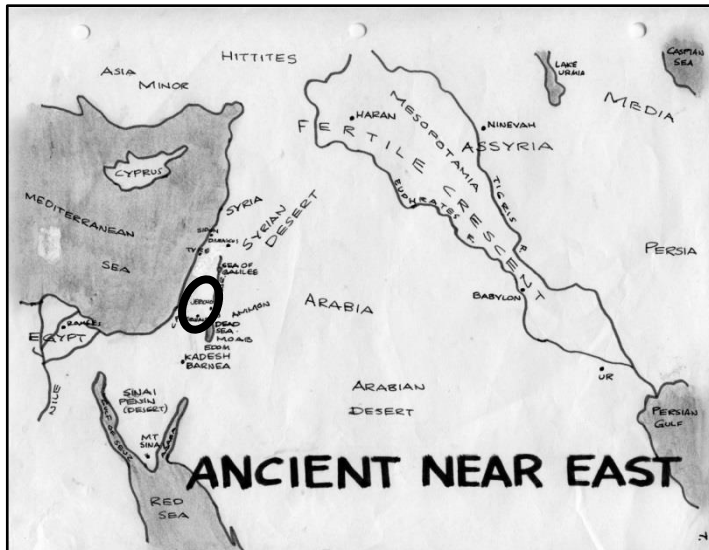
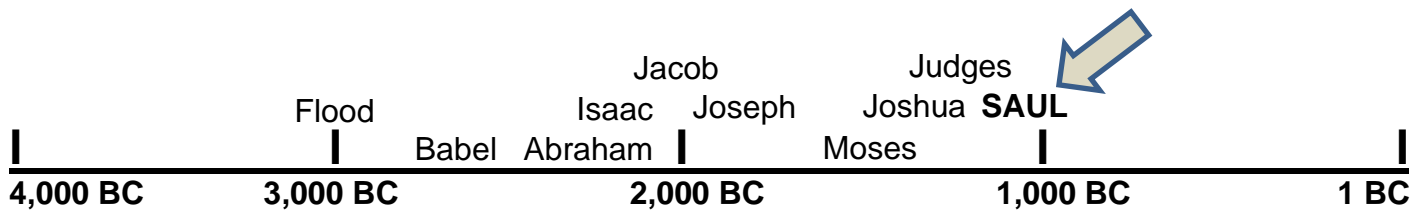
TIME: 1,050 BC

WORLD EVENTS AT THIS TIME:

Vedic period in India

End of New Kingdom in Egypt

GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION: Palestine



After Moses, then Joshua, the nation of Israel was ruled for about 400 years by a series of people who were called "judges." Eventually they wanted a king like the other nations around them had. They didn't want God to be their King any more. They wanted someone they could take pride in, someone like Saul, even though he didn't fully follow God. Saul's 40 year reign was one of defeat for him and the nation. The pattern seen from the beginning is that God reaches out to man and offers His guidance and protection, but man thinks he is better off running his own life instead of trusting God. The results are always the same – disaster.

MEET SAUL

Saul was the first king of Israel (1 Samuel 9:2-31:12; 1 Chronicles 8:1-26:28). He lived in turbulent times. For many years, Israel had consisted of a loose organization of tribes without a single leader. In times of crisis, leaders had arisen; but there was no formal government. Samuel was the leader before Saul, but he was a spiritual leader, not a king. When the people insisted on having a king, God warned them through Samuel that they would regret it. But they insisted.

Why was he chosen? Saul was exactly what the people wanted so God let them learn the hard way that He knew what was better for them than they did. Saul was a large man of attractive appearance, which led to his quick acceptance by the people. In addition, he was from the tribe of Benjamin, situated on the border between Ephraim and Judah. Because of this he appealed to both the northern and southern sections of Israel. Furthermore, he was a capable military leader, as shown by his victories early in his career. One of the most important episodes of his career was his first encounter with the Philistines. It seemed he would be defeated, but Jonathan saved the day and opened the door to victory.

Saul's first sin was his failure to wait for Samuel at Gilgal (1 Samuel 13:8-9). There he assumed the role of a priest by making a sacrifice to ask for God's blessing. Only priests could do that. His second sin followed soon afterward. After defeating Moab, Ammon, and Edom, he was told by Samuel to go to war against the Amalekites and to "kill both man and woman, infant and nursing child, ox and sheep, camel and donkey" (1 Samuel 15:3). Saul carried out his instructions well except that he spared the life of Agag, the king, and saved the best of the animals. Then he lied and told Samuel that he had followed God's instructions exactly.

God allowed him to remain king, but His Spirit departed from Saul who wanted to follow his own will and not God's will. From then on he was bothered by an evil spirit, a demon, that badly tormented him. It was during this time that Samuel anointed David as the next king.

At first Saul was friendly to David, but when David became popular because of his success against Goliath and the Philistines, Saul became jealous and tried to kill him. As time went on he turned further and further from God. Finally, after a 40 year reign, he and his sons were killed in battle.

He seemed he was full of promise at the start of his reign, but because he didn't obey God but thought he knew best, he lost everything, eventually even his life. He could have done great things for God and for Israel, instead he left the nation in a shambles politically and spiritually. If he could do it over again he would have done much differently, but God only gives us one life to live. Make sure you live it for Him!

1 SAMUEL:

LOOK INSIDE

TITLE: After Samuel ("I Kings" to Jews)

AUTHOR: Unknown (Gad or Nathan?)

DATE of WRITING: Time of Solomon

PLACE of WRITING: Israel

TIME COVERED: 56 years (1067-1011 BC)

RECIPIENTS: Jews

KEY VERSE: *1 Samuel 16:7 But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The LORD does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."*

KEY WORDS: "Anoint" "Reject" (7 times each)

PURPOSE: Continue history of Israel after the judges and to show the origin of the Kingdom.

THEME: Contrast internal godliness with external worldliness.



The poinsettia is a popular flower, especially around Christmas time. However, most people don't realize that it is really a fake. Those are red leaves, not flowers. In fact, the real flower is insignificant and unattractive. It contains no nectar or useful fruit. Ingestion can make one ill. It looks great, but is really a fake! Many people are like that, too. We call them hypocrites. Outwardly they seem great, but inside they are empty, hollow, ungodly. In our day and age outer appearance is greatly emphasized, to the exclusion of inner beauty. Jesus says inner beauty is more important than outer, though (John 7:24; 1 Peter 3:3-4). It's what's inside that counts! 1 Samuel contains many good examples of this!

HANNAH Because she didn't have a son, Hannah poured out her heart to God in prayer. Eli, the high priest, was watching her pray. By her outer appearance he thought she was drunk and reprimanded her, but he was wrong! God saw her heart, answered her prayer, and gave her a fine son - Samuel. Samuel grew up in the tabernacle under the guidance of Eli.

ELI Although a fine man of God himself, Eli let his sons go through the outer motions of being priests while inside their hearts were full of greed, lust and rebellion against God. Because they were this way, and Eli didn't work to change them, they all lost their lives and ministries!

THE NATION Because there were no godly priests to lead them, the people asked God for a king. They wanted to be like everyone else, for all the nations around them had a king. They thought this looked impressive. Being concerned only with externals, they thought this was the end of their problems. God gave them a king, knowing that they would have to learn the hard way. They should have followed Him as their King but didn't.

SAUL Saul was tall, dark and handsome with an outgoing personality, so the Jews thought he was the man for the job of being king! Inside, though, he was self-centered, insecure, and prideful. He disobeyed God by offering sacrifices (1 Samuel 13), giving a rash order (1 Samuel 14) and not killing all the Amalekites (1 Samuel 15). Then he tried to kill David. Eventually God removed him.

DAVID God's choice for a replacement king was a shepherd boy named David. Outwardly he wasn't striking as Saul was, but God passed over his good-looking big brothers in favor of David's inner

beauty (1 Samuel 16:7). David relied on inner strength, not outer, in defeating Goliath. By all outer appearances, it wasn't even a close match -- but outer appearances can be deceiving!

JONATHAN David's faithful friend, Jonathan, gave up his own claim to the throne to help his friend David. The inner love and commitment they had for each other was very strong!

MICHAL & ABIGAIL David's first wife, Michal, was outwardly beautiful and a princess. Inside, though, she was selfish, narrow and unconcerned about godly things. Abigail, while beautiful, was known for her wisdom and humility. Her inner strength helped David through hard years of hiding from Saul, while Michal deserted him and took another husband.

REVIVAL! There was one brief period when the nation turned back to God, focusing on their inner relationship with Him. They had a real desire to be close to God (1 Samuel 7:1-2), turned from their sin (1 Samuel 7:3-4) and gathered together to worship God while learning the Bible (1 Samuel 7:5). They were serious about having a deep inner, personal relationship with God (1 Samuel 7:6). God used Samuel to lead this revival (1 Samuel 7-8). God allowed their new faith to be tested by letting the Philistines attack them during this revival, but they passed the test by calling out to God for help (7:9). He gave them victory and blessed them (1 Samuel 7:10-11) and they thanked and worshipped Him (1 Samuel 7:12).

A young officer who was blinded during the war met and later married one of the nurses who took care of him in an army hospital. One day he overheard someone speaking about himself and his wife: "It was lucky for her that he was blind since he never would have married such a homely woman if he had sight!" He rose to his feet and walked toward the voices, saying, "I overheard what you said, and I thank God from the depths of my heart for blindness of eyes that might have kept me from seeing the marvelous worth of the soul of this woman who is my wife. She is the most noble character I have ever known; if the shape of her features is such that it might have masked her inward beauty to my soul, than I am the greater gainer by having lost my sight." Make sure you, too, focus on inner beauty and not outer beauty (Proverbs 31:30).

OUTLINE OF 1 SAMUEL

I. FAITHFULNESS OF SAMUEL (Last Judge) 1-8

- A. Samuel's Commitment 1-3
- B. Ark's Return 4-6
- C. Jew's Revival 7-8

II. FAILURE OF SAUL (First King) 9-15

- A. Saul's Reign 9-11
- B. Samuel's Warning 12
- C. God's Rejection 13-15

III. FAITHFULNESS OF DAVID (Second King) 16-31

- A. Saul's Replacement 16
- B. David's Reward 17-18
- C. People's Response 19-26
- D. David's Protection 27-30
- E. Saul's Removal 31

BIBLE OVERVIEW

13. DAVID

MAIN EVENTS: Kingdom under David

MAIN PEOPLE: David, Saul, Michal, Bathsheba

BOOKS OF THE BIBLE: 2 Samuel, Psalms

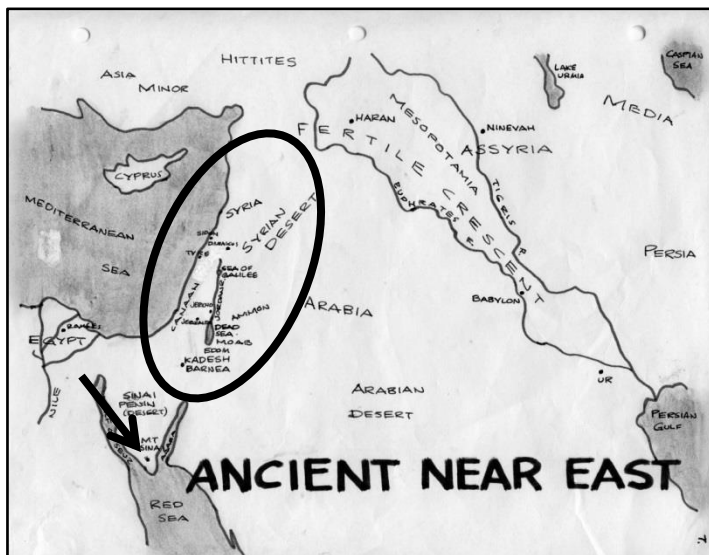
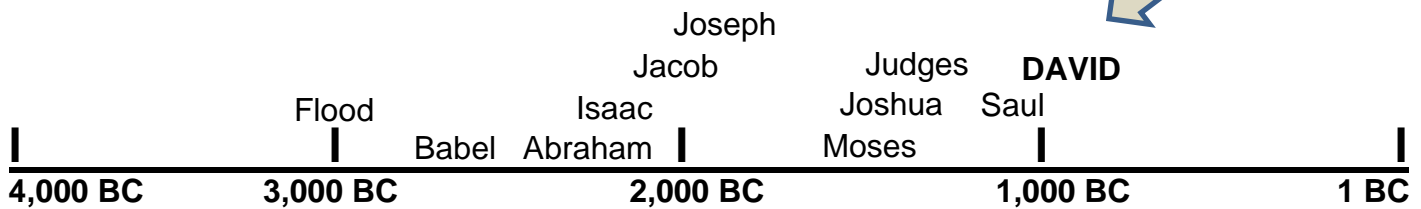
BIBLE VERSE: *2 Samuel 12:13 Then David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the Lord." Nathan replied, "The Lord has taken away your sin."*

TIME: 1,010 BC

WORLD EVENTS AT THIS TIME:

Mayan dynasty in Central America forming

GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION: Palestine



The nation Israel was at its greatest during the reign of David. In size, power and world influence the nation rose to heights never achieved before or after. This stage in our overview of the Bible is the highlight of the nation Israel. David obeyed and served God. God prospered David and the nation. Unfortunately David's sin with Bathsheba started a series of events that slowly but surely brought decrease in the nation.

MEET DAVID

David is mentioned over 1,000 times in the Bible, more than anyone else, even Jesus,

Who is called the "Son of David" 12 times. He's remembered for his greatest achievement - Goliath's death, when He was full of the Spirit, as well as his greatest failure - Bathsheba's seduction, when He was full of the flesh. One reason so many people like him is because they can identify with him in each case. Listen to his story and learn from it.

BACKGROUND David was the youngest, the 8th son, in his family. He was given charge over his father's flocks. We find him to be strong, he killed a lion and a bear which threatened his father's flock, a musician who played a harp and sang beautifully, and a young man who could capably carry out his duties whether being left alone in charge or sent off to deliver messages and gather news. However, much like Joseph in the book of Genesis, he was mocked by his brothers. And it seems his father thought little of his place in the family. Being left alone by his family so much, David had plenty of time in the fields to think on the things of God, feeding his faith and loyalty to Him, which we see evident first in his famous encounter with Goliath. The prophet Samuel anointed this teenager in the witness of his family to be the next king over Israel. But much had to happen before David would sit on the throne.

GOLIATH David burst on the national scene when he killed Goliath, the 9+ foot giant champion of the Philistines. As a result the Jewish army defeated the Philistines and regained their freedom. He became very popular, but this made King Saul extremely jealous of him. His life was in danger because of this.

COVER-UP # 1 From the ages of 17-29 David was running, hiding from Saul's wrath. He should have trusted God as he did with Goliath, but didn't. He took matters into his own hands. He fled during the night in fear, went to Samuel for advice and was promised God's protection. However He was full of fear and panic and he passed that on to Jonathan. He came up with a scheme to protect himself: ask Jonathan to lie to his father, Saul, about his whereabouts. He fled in panic, then tried to cover up his sin of fear. He didn't want to admit and confess his sin. Often the cover-up is worse than the sin itself (1 John 1:6-10). As when Joseph's brothers tried to cover up their wrong treatment of him by selling him and lying to their father, they were racked by guilt the rest of their lives and many innocent people were badly hurt.

Anyway, David went to Ahimelech, the priest, as he fled Saul. He lied again, pretending to be on a secret mission for Saul. Ahimelech believed him and helped him. Saul found this out and killed Ahimelech and 85 other priests. That was because of David's cover-up of sin.

David fled to the Philistines, his enemies, for protection. He pretended to be insane so he could stay. Instead of trusting God, he had sunk low in his attempts to cover up and not confess his sin so he could turn to God for His protection and help. When He finally did that God did help. Twice he was able to resist getting revenge on Saul. He didn't do quite so well against Nabal, but Abigail intervened and kept a disaster from happening. Truly God was with him.

COVER-UP # 2 Soon, however, he again fled to the land of the Philistines. God forbid His people to live there, but David was out of His perfect will for his life. All went smoothly at first, it seemed 'doors opened' for him. It wasn't God's blessings, though, but Satan's trap developing. Through a series of deceptions, trickery and half-truths, his followers and he got their own city, Ziklag. He was again meeting his own needs in the flesh instead of trusting God to meet them.

Soon thousands of Jews who didn't want to follow Saul had joined him in hiding from Saul. He didn't have enough food to feed them all. Instead of trusting God he came up with his own solution. He attacked neighboring tribes, killed them and stole their food. By killing everyone, there was no one to tell who did it. He told the Philistines He was killing Jews and stealing their food. The believed that other Jews were attacking their people. Again he was trying to cover up his sin, and again the cover-up was worse than the sin. Again the cover-up resulted in murder.

He almost had to help the Philistines fight the Jews (lying catches up with you). But God intervened and the Philistine army sent them home instead. When they got home they found their city Ziklag plundered and burnt. What they had been doing to others happened to them, but their families were spared and they were taken captive. David and his followers repented of their sins and

God enabled them to win back their loved ones. Meanwhile the Philistines had attacked the Jews, and Saul and his family were killed. The door was open for him to become king.

COVER-UP # 3 God did many wonderful things through David, who tried to love and serve Him with all his heart, but once again gave in to his old sin pattern. When not stopped early these sin patterns become much harder to break later in life.

He was 50 years old, half way through his 40 year reign. He was popular, loved by everyone. He had made Jerusalem his capital and gathered materials to build a beautiful temple to God. He wrote many Psalms and led in worship. He was rich and prosperous. The lands of Israel had increased 10-fold. Israel was at its high peak as a nation. He was successful, but that is when Satan likes to attack. He had been setting a trap David, sin and now he used it.

One spring David stayed in Jerusalem, enjoying his success, instead of fulfilling his God-given responsibility of leading God's army against his enemies (2 Samuel 11). Because of this he was in a position to see a woman bathing, naked. Instead of looking away and moving on, he lusted and took action to have her brought to him. Again He was trying to fill his needs himself, instead of trusting and waiting for God's provision. Again it ended in a cover-up: do whatever necessary to make it seem like her husband, who was away in his army, made her pregnant and not David. Again it ended in murder, for he had her husband killed so no one would know it wasn't the husband's baby. His life and the nation went downhill from there.

Satan had been setting up this trap for many years. First there was the pattern started as a young man of meeting his own needs his way and then covering up so he wouldn't get in trouble. Also, there was a pattern of lust that started early in his life. He was always lusty, sensual, enjoying things of the flesh -- forbidden as well as legitimate. In his 20's he disobeyed by taking several wives, indulging his sexual lusts. He had numerous wives and concubines, he didn't need Bathsheba. This continued in his 30's and 40's and culminated with his sin with Bathsheba in his 50's. Satan had been setting up this trap for 30 years, and it worked!

Watch those 'little' lusts and sins. Watch the small cracks that develop in your personality. Watch that lie that says you can meet your own legitimate needs in your way and your timing. Watch that pride that motivates you to cover up your sin instead of admitting and confessing it.

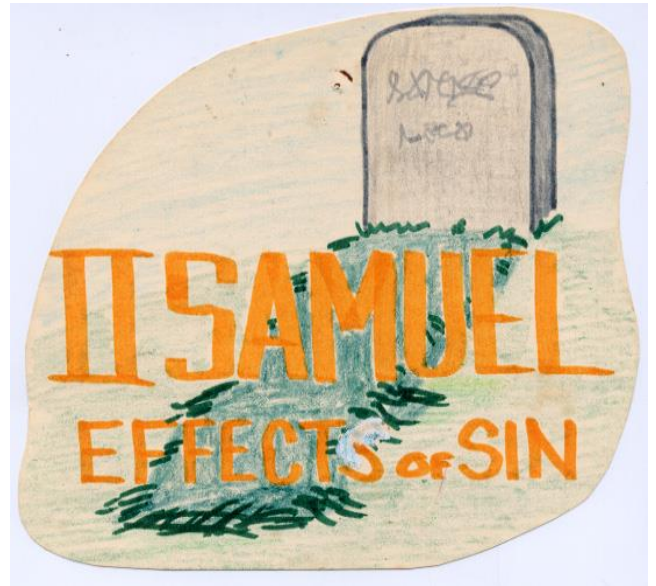
As a result of this sin David lost his testimony to Bathsheba, his friends, his servants, his family, the nation, and even to his enemies (2 Samuel 12:14). His relationship with God was broken until he humbled himself and confessed it. Consequences from this sin continued throughout his life, and even down to today. His family, and the nation, started a slow decline from this time. Never has Israel achieved the greatness it had right before this sin.

Throughout the stories of David we can also see a great love affair between man and God. David received judgment of his sins and lived with their consequences and was weighed down by them. But for the tender mercies of God he would have been utterly destroyed. God continually responded to David's great love for Him, knowing that David, in his heart of hearts, desired to do good, to live his love for God. David believed in the promises of his God, both of judgment and mercy. Though David was king of Israel, he understood and accepted that the LORD God is the one true King.

Ask God to search your heart now. "Search him, O God, and know his heart; test him and know his anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in him, and lead him in the way everlasting" (Psalm 139:23-24). Confess whatever He shows you. Don't ever cover up sin. It'll always catch up with you and cause you deep regrets. Learn from David's experience.

2 SAMUEL: EFFECTS OF SIN

TITLE: Continuation of 1 Samuel
AUTHOR: Unknown (Gad or Nathan)
DATE of WRITING: Time of Solomon
PLACE of WRITING: Israel
TIME COVERED: 40 years (1011 - 971 BC)
RECIPIENTS: Jews
KEY VERSE: *2 Samuel 11:27b But the thing David had done displeased the LORD.*
KEY WORD: "David" 280 times
PURPOSE: To explain about David's reign (it's ups and downs) and to continue the history of Israel from Saul to Solomon
THEME: Effects of sin



When Leonardo da Vinci was painting his masterpiece *The Last Supper*, he sought long for a model for his Christ. At last he located a chorister in one of the churches of Rome who was lovely in life and features, a young man named Pietro Bandinelli. Years passed, and the painting was still unfinished. All the disciples had been portrayed save one -- Judas Iscariot. Now he started to find a man whose face was hardened and distorted by sin -- and at last he found a beggar on the streets of Rome with a face so villainous; he shuddered when he looked at him. He hired the man to sit for him as he painted the face of Judas on his canvas. When he was about to dismiss the man, he said, "I have not yet found out your name." "I am Pietro Bandinelli," he replied, "I also sat for you as your model of Christ." What had happened? Sin happened. The consequences and effects of sin are awful. Man reaps what he sows (Galatians 6:7; Colossians 3:25; Job 4:8; Hosea 8:7). The life of David shows that same truth. Even a "man after God's own heart (Acts 13:22; 1 Samuel 13:14; 1 Kings 15:3)" must suffer the consequences of sin. 2 Samuel is a prime example of that.

MOVING AHEAD The first half of the book (chapters 1 - 10) shows David's triumph. He becomes ruler over the nation Israel and captures Jerusalem (still called the "City of David"), making it his capital. He expands the nation from 6,000 square miles to 60,000. He shows mercy to Mephibosheth. God blesses everything he does. He is greatly successful and prosperous. He is very rich, popular, and tremendously used by God. Unfortunately that sets him up for defeat, for it is when things are going well that we neglect our spiritual disciplines and Satan attacks.

DAVID'S SIN Half way through his 40 year reign David decides to stay home from war because things are going so well for his army (2 Samuel 11:1). When we neglect our God-given duties and responsibilities we are sitting ducks for Satan's attacks. If David had been doing as he should, leading his army, his sin wouldn't have happened.

A late-night walk on the roof of the highest building in Jerusalem led to a chance glance at Bathsheba bathing herself in the privacy of her own home (v. 2). Instead of looking away and removing the picture from his mind, David fed the thought until it became an action (v. 3). While secure against his enemies without, David's greatest enemy was within. He couldn't help the first look, and temptation isn't sin (we don't have to confess being tempted, just when we give in to it mentally or physically). It was the lust that he let build from the look that was sin, as Jesus Himself said in Matthew 5:28. He should have fled, as Joseph did from Pharaoh's wife (Genesis 39:1-13).

God always provides a way out (2 Corinthians 10:13) if we flee, but not a way through if we keep going ahead. Satan baits his traps with something that appeals to us. With David it was a woman, a “beautiful” woman (to make it that much more tempting). Watch out!

Remember that this wasn’t just a one-time sin on David’s part. Satan had been building this trap for him for almost 30 years. David had a weakness for women, a lust for them, as evidenced in his several wives & concubines (1 Samuel 27:3; 30:5). This was magnified in his son Solomon who had almost 1000 wives and concubines (1 Kings 11:3). David was a sensual person, Satan used that to set a trap for him. He tries that with everyone. It may be a lust or greed, or it may be a mental attitude sin like anger (which kept Moses out of the Promised Land), fear or bitterness. He doesn’t care what sin it is as long as it works! Make sure you know what ‘little’ sin Satan is working on in your life. God’s plan is for you to have peace and joy and to grow spiritually. Satan’s plan is to keep those from you. He can’t take away your salvation but he can take away your witness and peace.

FALLING BEHIND Everyone knows how the story of David and Bathsheba concluded (2 Samuel 11 - 12). David resorts to lying and deceit to cover up his sin (11:5-7), even to drunkenness (v. 8-13). When none of that works he uses murder (14-17), thinking he has covered over his sin. But God knew (v. 27), and so did those in his household. Before long his enemies knew and it became a terrible testimony to them (12:14). Eventually David does repent (12:1-13; Psalm 51), after a year of misery (Psalm 32). Still, the consequences continue: the baby died, he who took another’s wife has his wives taken, his children follow his example with lust, rape, murder, death and deception common in his family, and the whole nation weakened. Enemies began to prosper against Israel. He was forgiven, but had to reap what he sowed. Watch out for Satan’s traps in your lives. He has one going against each of us. Only by always staying close to Jesus and quickly fleeing every tempting thought that comes into our minds will we be safe from such devastating consequences in our lives. Proverbs 28:13 says that “He who conceals his sins does not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy.”

OUTLINE OF 2 SAMUEL

I. MOVING AHEAD, *FAME* (Obedience = Blessing) 1-10

- A. People’s Reactions 1
- B. David’s recognition 2-4
- C. Nation’s Reunion 5-6
- D. God’s Reassurance 7
- E. Enemies’ Removal 8-10

II. FALLING BEHIND, *SHAME* (Disobedience = Judgment) 11-24

- A. David’s Sin 11
- B. Nathan’s Rebuke 12a
- C. David’s Remorse 12b
- D. Sin’s Results 13-20
 - 1. Amnon’s Sin 13
 - 2. Absalom’s Rebellion 14-18
 - 3. Nation’s Regression 19
 - 4. People’s Revolution 20
- E. David’s Reminiscence 21-24

PSALMS:

WORSHIP

TITLE: "Songs Sung to the Accompaniment of a Stringed Instrument"

AUTHOR: Various (see outline)

DATE of WRITING: From 1410 - 430 BC

PLACE of WRITING: Mostly in Palestine

TIME COVERED: From Creation to 430 BC

RECIPIENTS: Some Psalms to individuals, others to Israel nation, many to mankind in general

KEY VERSE: 33:1-4 *Sing joyfully to the LORD, you righteous; it is fitting for the upright to praise him.*

Praise the LORD with the harp; make music to him on the ten-stringed lyre. Sing to him a new song; play skillfully, and shout for joy. For the word of the LORD is right and true; he is faithful in all he does.

KEY WORDS: "Praise" 176 times; "bless" 92 times

PURPOSE: Israel's inspired book of prayer & praise to God

THEME: Worshipping God



Why do you go to church? Honestly. Not why SHOULD you go, but why DO you go? What motivates you to go? What do you think about as you sit awaiting the start of church?

In all truthfulness, people go to church for many reasons. The best reason, though, is to go to worship God. He wants our minds occupied with Who and what He is. He wants our hearts full of love and thankfulness and praise.

Martin Luther said two things were needed to have a church service: a Bible and a hymn book. God speaks to us through His Word. We speak to Him in music and song. That's how we express our love and thankfulness and praise. The Bible and the hymn book.

The book of Psalms was the Jewish hymn book. Actually it was an accumulation of five hymn books put together. Most churches have favorite hymns they love and sing often. They also have some praise songs they like to use. In addition there may be some choruses or contemporary Christian music. We may come across another song book that had music in it we like and use. Take the best from all these sources and put them into one and you have an accumulation similar to the book of Psalms.

HEBREW POETRY In our music today most songs have words that rhyme. Jewish poetry never rhymed words (or it would be lost in translation into English) but rhymed thoughts. Some thing would be said and then repeated in different words to reinforce the thought (Synonymous Parallelism; 24:1-3). The opposite was sometimes done, with the second line being in contrast to the first to emphasize the truth being stated (Antithetic Parallelism; 1:6; 37:9). Another form of poetry was to have the second line add to and explain the first line (Synthetic Parallelism; 19:7-9). To see what kind of poetry is being used, see how the second line relates to the first. This will help you interpret the Psalms better.

Actually this doesn't apply just to the psalms but to all Hebrew poetry. This includes Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon, Lamentations, and many parts of other Old Testament books. All in all nearly 50% of the Old Testament was written in poetic style, but much of that has been lost in translation to English.

TYPES OF PSALMS Praise singing is quite popular in many churches today, supplementing the standard hymns which are known mostly for teaching. Other songs are good for expressing our trials and sufferings in life. Psalms contains songs about all these subjects, too.

Praise songs are the most prevalent. Some are an individual praising God (18, 30, 34, 40, 106, 116, 138) while others are written for the whole nation to worship God together (33, 36, 105, 111, 113, 117, 135, 136, 146, 147). Each of these follow the same pattern: the reason for praising God is given, then the praise itself.

Lament songs are also quite common. The trial or problem is described followed by a profession of trust in God and a request for deliverance. Then comes a closing declaration of faith in God. These, too, are either by individuals (6, 12, 13, 26, 28, 52, 58, 59, 69, 109, 140, 142) or the nation as a whole (13, 44, 60, 74, 80, 83).

Psalms about the Messiah abound as well. Some are Messianic Psalms, about the Messiah's first coming, death, burial, resurrection and ascension (16, 22, 45, 69, 72, 89, 118, 132). Royal Psalms praise the Messiah as reigning over God's Kingdom (2, 4, 7, 8, 20, 21, 45, 47, 72, 89, 93, 96, 97, 98, 101, 110, 144).

There were other kinds of Psalms, too. Confession of Sin songs confessed sin and asked for forgiveness, then praised God for it and exhorted all to live a holy life (3, 6, 25, 32, 38, 39, 40, 51, 102, 130). Pilgrim songs were sung by the people walking to Jerusalem or home (120-134). History songs taught Jewish history with a challenge to praise & thank God for His faithfulness in the past (78, 80, 81, 105, 106, 135, 136).

As you read Hebrew poetry, especially the book of Psalms, look for the types of parallelism as well as the type of Psalm it is. Some may be hard to determine, but for the most part this will really help you enjoy and get more out of the book of Psalms. Read them as prayers, sing them in your heart as praise. Memorize them. Absorb yourself in them. I'll bet you'll find yourself singing them in heaven -- so get familiar with them now!

OUTLINE OF PSALMS

Psalms 1: Introduction to the book of Psalms

I. WORSHIP PSALMS Mainly by David) 1-41

Like Genesis: creation and man

Doxology 41:13

II. WORSHIP PSALMS Mainly by David & Korah 42-72

Like Exodus: deliverance and redemption

Doxology 72:18-19

III. WORSHIP PSALMS Mainly by Asaph 73-89

Like Leviticus: worship and sanctuary

Doxology 89:52

IV. WORSHIP PSALMS Mainly Anonymous 90-106

Like Numbers: wilderness wanderings

Doxology 106:48

V. WORSHIP PSALMS Mainly by David 107-150

Like Deuteronomy: Scripture and praise

Doxology 150:6

Psalms 150: Conclusion to book of Psalms

BIBLE OVERVIEW

14 . SOLOMON



MAIN EVENTS: Kingdom under Solomon

MAIN PEOPLE: Solomon

BOOKS OF THE BIBLE: 1 Kings, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon

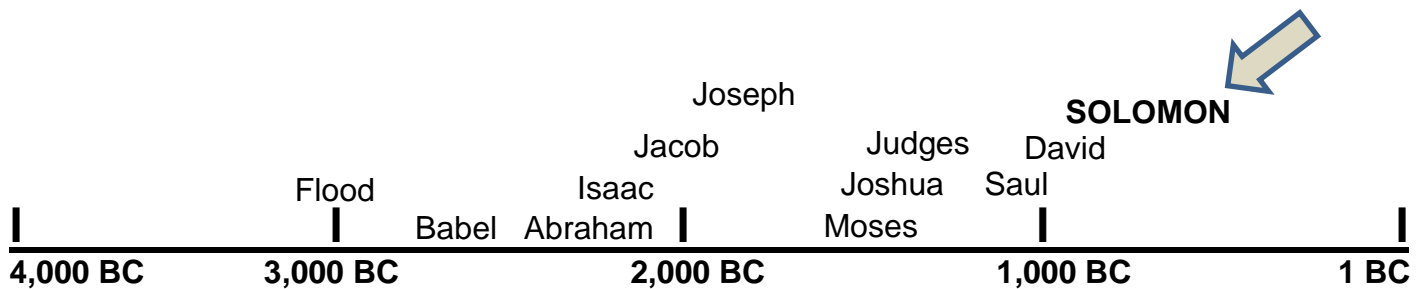
BIBLE VERSE: *1 Kings 10:23-24 King Solomon was greater in riches and wisdom than all the other kings of the earth. The whole world sought audience with Solomon to hear the wisdom God had put in his heart.*

TIME: 970 BC

WORLD EVENTS AT THIS TIME:

Iron Age in India

GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION: Palestine



Our Bible overview continues with Solomon, son of David, who also reigned 40 years. While Saul wasn't fully committed to God, David was, but Solomon was only partway committed. This time period ends the prosperous days of Israel, for after this they will be divided into two nations and then go into captivity. Solomon was wiser and richer than anyone else, but because he didn't obey God in all things the nation started in decline.

MEEET SOLOMON

If we had to describe Solomon in one phrase it would be "very wise but also very imprudent." He was both. The name Solomon means 'peaceable.' When his father David died he became king in his place (1 Kings 1:33-39). David had given Solomon instructions as to how to govern God's people (1 Kings 2:1-9). He knew it would take great wisdom to lead the people as God wanted so when he was asked what he wanted from God it was wisdom he requested (1 Kings 3:5-15).

Wisdom became very important to Solomon, and God showered it on him (1 Kings 4:29-34). He even wrote a book called Proverbs which contains 917 proverbs conveying some of his wisdom. Only Jesus had greater wisdom than he had (Matthew 12:42) but God will share His wisdom with us if we ask (James 1:5). God enabled Solomon to use wisdom in his duties as king (1 Kings 3:16-28).

His father, David, had made plans for a temple to God but was not allowed to build it. Solomon was given that privilege (1 Kings 8:12-21). God was pleased, and promised to bless him and his descendants if they lived in obedience to Him (1 Kings 9:1-9).

Not only did God make Solomon the wisest person on earth, He also made him the richest even though he hadn't asked for riches (1 Kings 10:14-15, 23-29). Because of his great riches and the wonderful kingdom his father David had left to him, he had many opportunities to marry women from other countries. This was a way to seal friendship or treaties with them. Here's where his poor judgment showed itself – he married 700 wives and 300 concubines, women who weren't followers of Jehovah God, and they led him astray (1 Kings 11:1-6). This was against God's laws and commands (Deuteronomy 17:14-17). God became very angry because of this (1 Kings 11:9-13, 31).

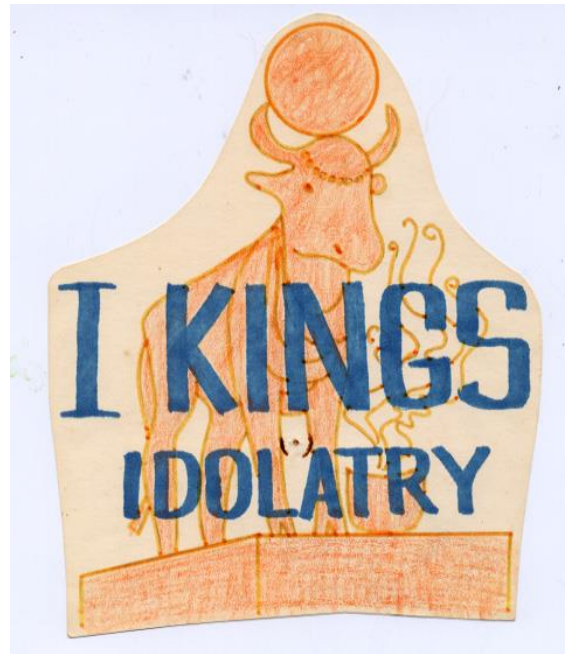
Another unwise thing he did was to keep raising taxes to finance his extravagant life style. That led to problems among the people, and eventually to the nation splitting after his death. He had the privilege of ruling in Jerusalem for 40 years before he died (1 Kings 11:41-43).

So now you can see how he was wise but also unwise. Disobeying God is always senseless, no matter how much wisdom or money you have. Solomon had more of each of them than anyone alive, but they didn't make up for his failure to stay true to God.

What tempts you to stray from God? Despite His many blessings on you, where do you drift from Him? Don't be unwise, always do what He says for He knows what He is talking about!

1 KINGS: IDOLATRY

TITLE: After Israel's Kings
AUTHOR: Unknown (Jeremiah?)
DATE of WRITING: Over many years
PLACE of WRITING: Israel - Judah
TIME COVERED: 130 years (791-841 BC)
RECIPIENTS: Jews
KEY VERSE: 1 *King 11:1-8 King Solomon ... had seven hundred wives of royal birth and three hundred concubines, and his wives led him astray.*
KEY WORD: "King" 250 times; "Prophet" 43 times
PURPOSE: To show the history of Israel from David through the split
THEME: The results of turning from God to idolatry.



There used to be a TV commercial that began with a close-up of a man most didn't know. "You probably don't know me," he says. "I created the Muppets." Then the background suddenly comes alive with fuzzy little creatures who say in unison, "Big deal!" The man continues, "Everyone knows them, but nobody knows me." That's why wherever I go I carry my American Express credit card." At that point "Jim Henson" is visually typed on the card.

What was true there is also true today. God created man and the whole world, yet He hardly gets the credit or recognition He deserves. We know the creation better than the Creator. When the creation gets more recognition than the Creator this is idolatry! Whatever we put before God becomes an idol: money, things, happiness, family, sex, popularity, food, education, music, love, etc. 1 Kings is a serious warning against this!

SOLOMON'S SUCCESS After his sin, David went downhill fast. Solomon replaced him as king of Israel when he was just 20. David advised Solomon to stay close to God. David had been very close to God and very far from God, and he certainly knew close was better! Unfortunately, man rarely takes advice from his parents. We don't seem to learn from the mistakes of the previous generation. Solomon didn't, either.

Solomon started off very well. When God told Solomon he could have anything he wanted Solomon didn't ask for money or popularity or power but wisdom to properly lead God's people. As a result God gave him riches and popularity along with the wisdom.

Solomon had the privilege of building the temple which David had designed. This was the highpoint of Israel spiritually. You know, it is naturally built into man to worship something or someone. Everyone worships something. We all have something we live for, put our trust in, turn to for satisfaction and meaning, and look to for solace and comfort. Unfortunately most people have replaced the Creator with what he has created. That is idolatry.

During Solomon's reign the nation of Israel got very rich. Trade with many parts of the world made them strong and prosperous. There weren't wars to enlarge Israel, but the armies kept all the territory David had conquered. This was a time of peace and prosperity such as Israel never had before or since. However, the seeds of destruction were being sowed.

SOLOMON'S SIN Instead of trusting God to keep the peace with other nations Solomon resorted to the common treaty-making practices of the day where daughters were given as wives to other kings

to assure peace. Solomon accumulated 700 wives and 300 mistresses. David's appetite for women and having more than one wife set the groundwork for Solomon to take this to the extreme. Worst of all, these women weren't believers in Jehovah. They brought their foreign gods with them, continued their idolatrous worship, taught their children the same pagan practices, and slowly but surely influenced Solomon into idolatry and immorality (for that is the form their worship took).

SOLOMON'S SORROW By the time Solomon turned 60 (Saul, David and Solomon all ruled for 40 years) his life and kingdom was falling apart. The man who wrote the Song of Solomon about faithfully loving one wife when he was a young man has changed. The wisdom of Proverbs written in his mature years warned against idolatry and immorality, but he didn't take his own advice. Ecclesiastes, showing how empty life is without God, even if there is power and money, expressed what had happened to Solomon. What a sad end to a fine life! While Saul had no heart for God and David had a whole heart for God, Solomon only had a half heart.

CONSEQUENCES OF IDOLATRY After Solomon's death the nation of Israel split into two over greed for money and power -- idols which still destroy people today. The northern 10 tribes, Israel, went headlong into gross idolatry and immorality, building two golden calves to worship. The southern 2 tribes, Judah, had the temple but weren't much better. Despite a revival during the time of Elijah, the nation continued its downward slide from God, all because they put the creation before the Creator.

What is first in YOUR life: the Creator or some part of His creation? God's warning is clear, worship the Creator only, keep from idols (1 John 5:21).

OUTLINE OF 1 KINGS

I. SOLOMON - PEACE 1-11

- A. David's Death 1-2
- B. Solomon's Wisdom 3-4
- C. Solomon's Territory 5-8
- D. Solomon's Reputation 9-10
- E. Solomon's Death 11

II. DIVIDED KINGDOM – DISASTER 12-22

- A. Israel's Rebellion 12
- B. Jeroboam's Revolt 13-14
- C. Elijah's Victory Over Baal 15-22a
- D. Nation's Turn from God 22b

SONG OF SOLOMON: MARRIED LOVE

TITLE: A song of love by Solomon

AUTHOR: Solomon, when young

DATE of WRITING: about 970 BC

PLACE of WRITING: Jerusalem (?)

TIME COVERED: Several years of Solomon's marriage to an unnamed Shulammite maiden (Song of Solomon 6:3)

RECIPIENTS: Not specifically stated, but to young lovers of their day

KEY VERSE: 2:16 *My lover is mine and I am his; he browses among the lilies*

KEY WORDS: "Beloved" 32 times; also "love," fair," "come"

PURPOSE: To glorify marriage and wedded love (emotional and physical)

THEME: The tender love of the husband and wife for each other is pleasing to God and necessary for a good marriage



Throughout the centuries men and women have used various means of expressing their love for one another. One of the most common is writing a song or poem for the one you love. When in love it is natural to want to write of one's love in a private, personal way which is meant only for the eyes of the loved one. Suppose, though, your personal love notes and reflections were found and printed for the whole world to read? That is exactly what the Song of Solomon is: a love story written by the husband but using the woman's memories. It reminisces about their courtship, wedding and early struggles. It's private and personal, but God included it in the Bible for us to study.

A LOVE STORY The Song of Solomon is a lyric idyll, actually 14 short love songs that trace the development of their married love. They aren't all in chronological order, though. The book is more like a movie with flashbacks filling in spaces. It's hard to technically analyze a love poem, it must be viewed as poetry. What can make this harder to understand is that the language is foreign to us today. Each couple develops their own 'love language,' incorporating terms from their culture and coining phrases unique to them. Medical terms to express sex are cold, clinical and lacking in love. Cultural slang is usually crude, dirty and impersonal. Thus much is missed when just quickly reading through this book.

Remember that God created sex before sin entered the world. He inspired this book and included it in the Bible. Sex between two married people of the opposite sex is wonderful and beautiful in His sight. Our culture today has taken away our innocence and purity in this area so that it is hard to think of a couple entering marriage with only positive, clean, wholesome thoughts about sex. Because sex is God's wedding gift to a married man and woman, and because it so beautifully exemplifies God's union with His church, Satan has worked hard at tarnishing and staining our thoughts of it. We don't talk or pray about this issue at church. It is unacceptable and embarrassing. For Solomon and his bride, the Shulammite woman, this was not so. We must read the book, looking at sex from their virtuous and pure eyes, and ask God to restore that innocence to us.

WEDDED LOVE (1:1-5:1) The first half of the book talks about their wedding day and night. Solomon evidently met the Shulammite woman when he went north to Galilee to take care of business interests. She was different from the big-city, high-society girls who were so available to him in Jerusalem. Her freshness and open honesty won his heart and he came to see her whenever he

could. They used this time to work through problems (defeat the “little foxes”) and strengthen their relationship for when they would wed. Clearly they abstained from sex before marriage, in fact three times the reader is warned that no physical desires must be even aroused before marriage (2:7; 3:5; 8:4). Where does God draw the line before marriage? Nothing can be done or said to in any way start what should ultimately lead to sex. How far to go? God says don’t even start anything at all! That’s the way Solomon and the Shulammite woman were.

Thus when the wedding night came, it was a time of joy and beauty. The wedding itself was not their main focus (as it has become today). Instead, everything pointed to their first night together. What they said, how they felt and all they did is explained in detail (1:15-2:7; 4:12-5:1). It is beautiful and loving. In fact, God Himself encourages them to really completely enjoy each other as He watches them and gives His 100% approval of all they are doing (last sentence in 5:1).

MARRIED LIFE (5:2-8:14) As in all relationships, things aren’t always perfect. She was homesick, he was gone a lot, and they neglected each other. This affected their sex life. They had to learn to remember why they married the person and make sure they had realistic expectations. That had to return to focusing on meeting their mate’s needs instead of thinking how their needs should be met by their mate. They rekindled their wedding night love. What a tremendous book this is for our sex-sick culture and time, a real ‘cure for what ails us.’

OUTLINE OF SONG OF SOLOMON

I. COURTSHIP (In Lebanon)

II. WEDDING (In Jerusalem Palace)

- A. Wedding Procession 3:6-11
- B. Wedding Preparations 1:1-8
- C. Wedding Feast 1:9-14
- D. Wedding Night - I 1:15 - 2:7
- E. Wedding Night - II 4:1 - 5:1

III. MARRIED LIFE

- A. Sexual adjustments (in Jerusalem Palace) 5:2-8
 - 1. Wrong Attitude 5:2-8
 - 2. Right Attitude 5:9 - 6:3
 - 3. Unconditional Acceptance 6:4-10
 - 4. Total Commitment 6:11-13a
 - 5. Total Delight 6:13b - 8:4
- B. Putting the Other First (in Lebanon) 8:5-14

PROVERBS: WISDOM



TITLE: "To be like, to represent" in Hebrew

AUTHOR: Solomon & others (see chart)

DATE of WRITING: 950-700 BC

PLACE of WRITING: Mostly in Judah

TIME COVERED: 950-700 BC

RECIPIENTS: Specifically Solomon's son (1:8; 2:1)
but applies to all mankind (8:1-5)

KEY VERSE: 1:1-7 *The proverbs of Solomon son of*

David, king of Israel: for attaining wisdom and discipline; for understanding words of insight; for acquiring a disciplined and prudent life, doing what is right and just and fair; for giving prudence to the simple, knowledge and discretion to the young-- let the wise listen and add to their learning, and let the discerning get guidance-- for understanding proverbs and parables, the sayings and riddles of the wise. The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and discipline.

9:10 *"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.*

KEY WORDS: "my son" 22 times; "wise/wisdom" 119 times; "instruction" 26 times

PURPOSE: To give common sense wisdom expressed in short, crisp form

THEME: Principles from heaven for life on earth

What is wisdom? Do you have it? How do you know if someone is wise? Where can a person get wisdom? Although not valued in our time and culture as it should be, wisdom is of supreme importance. Having wisdom means being able to make a decision as God would, view a matter as God does, have the attitude God would have. It means having the mind of Christ, thinking and doing what Jesus would do where He here, what is best in the long run.

The book of Proverbs contains wisdom: short, wise sayings and principles drawn from experience and a godly perspective. They are true principles, but not promises.

WHAT IS WISDOM? In the first 7 verses, Solomon tells what real wisdom is.

First, he says it is knowledge of God (1:4). Having facts doesn't make one wise. Wisdom is the correct use of those facts. But the facts, the raw material, is necessary to become wise. This is especially true of knowledge of God. Knowing God and His Word gives a good base of facts and truth which can be formed into wisdom. Much wisdom can be learned from listening to others or from reading about people from the past (history). This is an excellent way of gaining knowledge of life which leads to wisdom.

Next, Solomon tells his son that insight and understanding (1:2b; 2:2; 14:33) are part of wisdom. The ability to discern between good and evil (Heb 5:14) in particular circumstances is wisdom. Actually it comes from God's Holy Spirit nudging and giving insight (James 1:5). We must be alert to God's Spirit as He directs. Being sensitive is more important than being smart.

Third, self-discipline (1:2) is necessary for wisdom. It takes self control to resist the easiest path which the flesh screams out for. It takes self control to learn to think and not just respond by emotions, to ask questions, to patiently await insight, to be totally objective and honest, to stick with a wise decision and not change it, to admit the need for wisdom and ask others for help. Self-discipline is an important ingredient of wisdom.

Common sense is also part of wisdom (1:3a). Wisdom is not some far away, unapproachable, deep truth. It is common sense. Proverbs as well as Jesus' teachings are just common sense statements when you really think about them.

HOW CAN WE GET WISDOM? Although we are the best-education nation ever, we lack wisdom. We don't seek it, we don't even know how to get it if we want it. Proverbs tells us:

Ask God for it is the basic advise given (2:6). He wants us to have wisdom (Luke 21:15). When given his choice of asking God for anything at all, Solomon asked for wisdom. Job, the oldest book in the Bible, asks this question (20:12,20), concluding that man doesn't naturally possess wisdom (20:13) and it can't be bought (20:14-19) but only comes from God. Instead of always just asking God for certain direction, ask Him to make you more like Jesus, to have the mind of Christ (Proverbs 1:7). The better you know someone the more likely you are to know what they will think about a certain thing. The same is true with Jesus.

In order to receive wisdom you must be humble (James 3:13-18). It takes the open attitude of a child to receive advice from others and from God.

Of course, we must always rely on the Holy Spirit as said earlier (1 Corinthians 12:8) and be sensitive to His leading and impulses within.

Learning from the past is important as well. Wisdom doesn't just 'happen' overnight. Keep a record of things God is teaching you so you can apply them as time goes on.

Also, learn from others. Woodrow Wilson said "I use not only all the brains I have but all I can borrow." Anyone who thinks he doesn't need others opinions is really a fool (Job 8:8-10; Proverbs 19:20). Solomon gives great wisdom in the book of Proverbs -- avail yourself of it!

Finally, always remember to view everything in light of eternity. Instead of thinking what is easiest or best for now, ask yourself what you will wish you had done when you look back in 20 years, or 50 year, or 100 years! That will help keep things in perspective.

OUTLINE OF PROVERBS

Prologue: Purpose of Writing 1:1-7

I. IMPORTANCE OF WISDOM 1-9

- A. Principles for Youth (by Solomon) 1-7
- B. Principles for All (by Solomon) 8-9

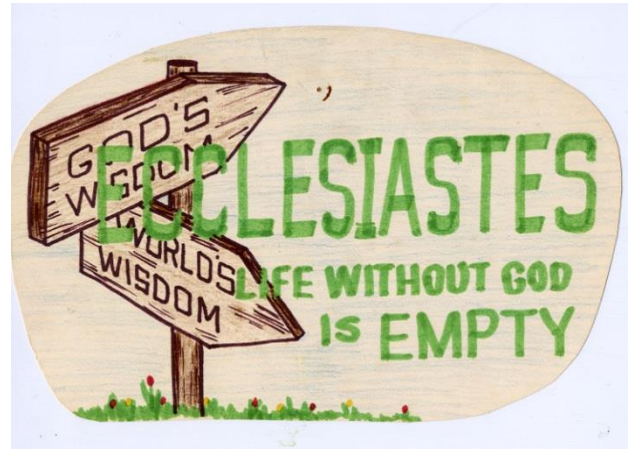
II. PROVERBS OF WISDOM 10-29

- A. Proverbs About Godly Living (by Solomon) 10-22
- B. Proverbs About People (by Wise Men) 23-24
- C. Proverbs About Relationships (by Solomon) 25-29

III. DAILY USE OF WISDOM 30-31

- A. Practices of All (by Agur) 30
- B. Practices of Wives (by Lemuel) 31

ECCLESIASTES: LIFE WITHOUT GOD IS EMPTY



TITLE: "Preacher" (Greek)

AUTHOR: Solomon (aged)

DATE of WRITING: about 935 BC

PLACE of WRITING: Judah

TIME COVERED: Solomon's later years

RECIPIENTS: Solomon's sons (12:12)

KEY VERSE: 1:12-14 *I, the Teacher, was king over Israel in Jerusalem. I devoted myself to study and to explore by wisdom all that is done under heaven. What a heavy burden God has laid on men! I have seen all the things that are done under the sun; all of them are meaningless, a chasing after the wind. ... 2:11 Yet when I surveyed all that my hands had done and what I had toiled to achieve, everything was meaningless, a chasing after the wind; nothing was gained under the sun.*

KEY WORD: "wise/wisdom" 49 times; "vanity/empty/meaningless" 37x; "under the sun" 31x

PURPOSE: to show that nothing in this world can satisfy, only God

THEME: The emptiness of life and everything in it without God

Why are you alive? What is the purpose of your existence? What is life all about, anyway? Is there any reason or purpose to it? Shakespeare said life is a "tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing." Benjamin Disraeli said, "Youth is a mistake, manhood a struggle and old age a regret." Others have said: "Man is a sick fly, taking a dizzy ride on a gigantic wheel." "Man's life has no more meaning than that of the humblest insect, crawling from one annihilation to another." "Men are but tiny lumps of carbon and water who crawl about for a few years until they are dissolved again into the elements of which they are composed." Without the reality of God as an anchor and guidepost, life is empty and meaningless, temporary and fragile. Solomon himself, the wisest man who ever lived, said that life is "meaningless" (1:12-14; 2:11). He was referring to life without God, without any spiritual element ("under the sun" 2:11). The word translated "meaningless" (sometimes translated "empty" or "void") refers to vapor, our breath that comes out on a cold day and immediately disappears. What a picture of life!

If life without God is so empty, how can people without Him go on living? The answer is simple: substitutes. None of the substitutes replace Him or satisfy, but they do give temporary hope. When one is found to not work, there are many others to choose from.

WORLD'S WAY (SUBSTITUTES) In the first half of the book Solomon lists 7 substitutes that don't work. Worldly wisdom says that this is what life is all about, this is what brings meaning and satisfaction. These include fun (sensuality 2:1-11), work (human labor 2:18-23; 4:4-6), ego (man his own god 2:24 - 3:27), poverty (4:1-3), asceticism (9:7-10), riches (materialism 4:7-12; 5:10-20; 6:1-12), social status (popularity 4:13-16) and going through the motions of religion (5:1-7).

GOD'S WAY (REALTHING) Solomon concludes with what He has learned through his life: only God satisfies! These 7 upward steps are more narrow and harder to climb while the world's way is broad and easy going (downhill to emptiness). Only God's upper path leads to victory, though. These steps are humility (taking advice from the wise 7:5-7), patience in trials (7:8-10), self-discipline (fruit of Holy Spirit to overcome world, flesh, Satan 7:19-22), submission to God in all things (8:1 -

9:12), faith in God (10:1-20), helping others (not self-centered but other centered 11:1-8) and joy (from God's inner peace 11:9 - 12:7).

In effect what we have here is God's world view versus other world views. The Biblical world view says there is a reason and purpose for everything, including life itself. We are here to serve God and others. This life isn't all there is. God's Word is true and gives us final absolutes on moral and ethical areas. In contrast, the world's 'world view' is that man is the final authority in all things, this life is all there is, truth is different for each person, and each one is on his own to find some pleasure in any way he chooses. No wonder this is called 'empty.'

How do you view life? What do you live for? What motivates you? What do you turn to to find meaning and purpose in life? There are basically two ways to view life: by God's wisdom or by the world's wisdom. Which are you following?

OUTLINE OF ECCLESIASTES

I. THE PROBLEM 1-6

- A. Life Without God Is Empty 1-2
- B. Life is Boring 3a, 4b
- C. Life Isn't Fair 3b, 4a, 5a
- D. 'Things' don't Satisfy 5b-6

II. THE SOLUTION 7-12

- A. Use Money Wisely 6
- B. Be Wise 7-8
 - 1. Wise Living 7
 - 2. Wise Leaders 8
- C. Don't Be Foolish 9-10
 - 1. Life and Death 9
 - 2. Fools and Foolishness 10
- D. Be Faithful 11-12
 - 1. Faith and Faithfulness 11
 - 2. Truth and Justice 12

BIBLE OVERVIEW

15. SPLIT

MAIN EVENTS: Nation splits into Israel and Judah

MAIN PEOPLE: Rehoboam, Jeroboam, Elijah, Elisha

BOOKS OF THE BIBLE: 2 Kings, 1 & 2 Chronicles

BIBLE VERSE: *2 Kings 17:21-22 When the Lord tore Israel away from the house of David, they made Jeroboam son of Nebat their king. Jeroboam enticed Israel away from following the Lord and caused them to commit a great sin.*

TIME: 930 BC

WORLD EVENTS AT THIS TIME:

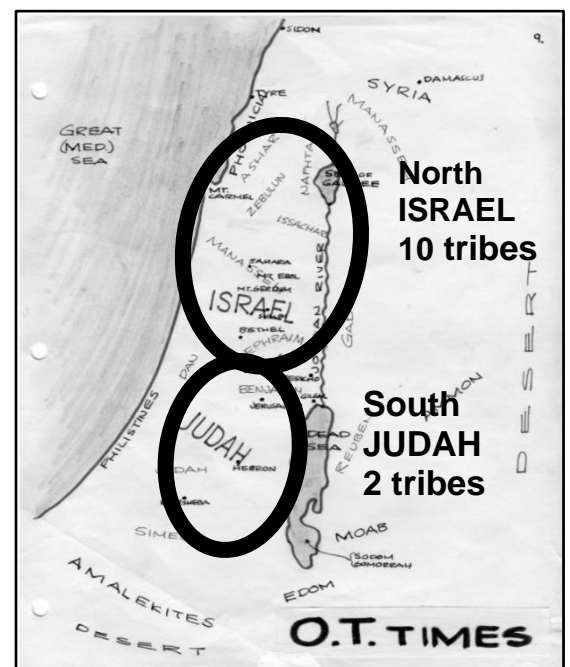
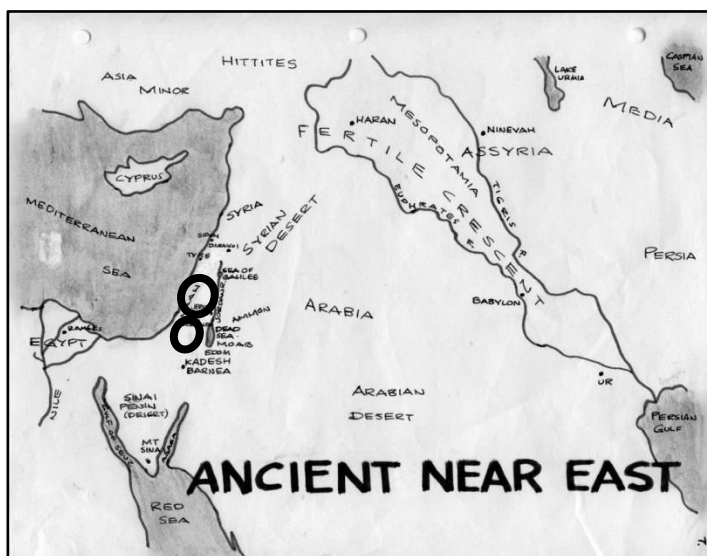
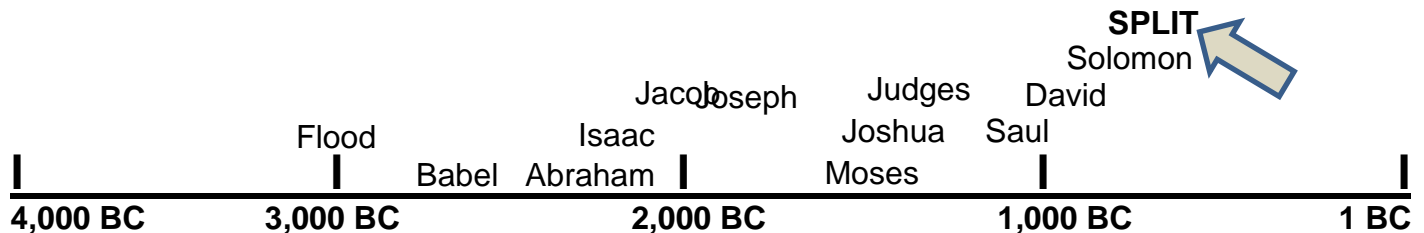
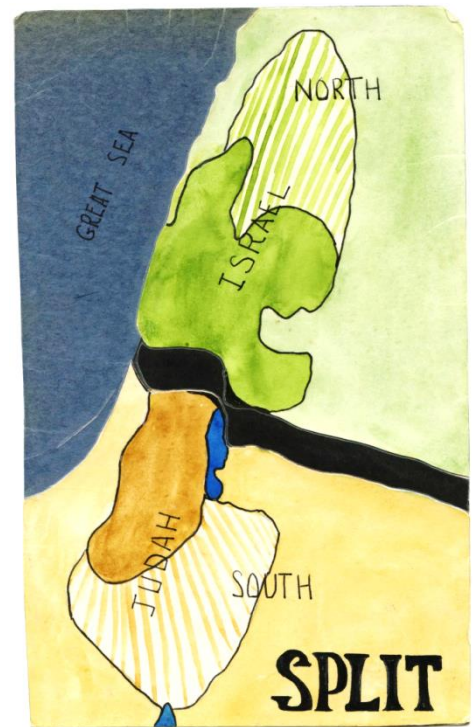
Carthage founded by Phoenicians

First Olympic Games in Greece

Founding of Rome

Homer writes in Italy

GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION: Palestine



This time period called the “Split” is when the nation divided into the Northern Kingdom (Israel, 10 tribes) and the Southern Kingdom (Judah, 2 tribes). Solomon had put a very heavy tax burden on the people to support his building projects, and when he died the people needed relief, but instead of giving it his son, Rehoboam, greatly increased the tax burden. As a result, the northern 10 tribes broke away to form their own nation. The north and the south each had their own king and capital. Sometimes they even fought each other in battle. What a sad end to David’s glorious kingdom, and it only took 60 years for it to happen. Despite His goodness and many blessings, mankind in general and the Jews in particular, still continue to turn from Him in rebellion.

ISRAEL – NORTHERN 10 TRIBES First King

JEROBOAM, king for 22 years when the nation split after the death of Solomon (1 Kings 11:26-14:20; 2 Chronicles 9:29-13:22). He was a servant of Solomon. The prophet Ahijah tore a garment into 12 pieces and gave 10 to Jeroboam, signifying the nation would be torn after Solomon’s time and he would rule the 10 northern tribes. So he wouldn’t be killed because of this prophecy he fled to Egypt. He returned when Solomon died and Rehoboam raised the taxes. The northern 10 tribes asked him to be king. He built 2 gold calves so the people would not go to Jerusalem, which was in the southern kingdom, to worship. Thus he set an idolatrous pattern for the north. He was told to repent by several prophets: Ahijah, Iddo, an old unnamed prophet and another prophet who predicted his death. He didn’t repent and was stricken by God and died.

JUDAH – SOUTHERN 2 TRIBES First King

REHOBOAM was the first king of the south and reigned 17 years (1 Kings 11:42-14:31; 2 Chronicles 9:31-12:16). He was the son and successor of Solomon but because he rejected the advice of his older advisors and followed the suggestions of his young friends, his greed led to the country breaking in two. Solomon had heavily taxed the people and they needed relief but Rehoboam increased the tax load, thus causing the ten northern tribes to pull away in 922 BC. God’s prophet **SHEMAIAH** advised him to not try to force the north to stay. Judah, some of Benjamin, and later Simeon stayed faithful. Jerusalem stayed their capital. The south was soon attacked by Egypt, who took away the vast riches Solomon had accumulated. Even though they seemingly stayed faithful to God, they still set up high places for Baal worship and made wooden images to bow down to and worship.

2 KINGS: JUDGMENT

TITLE: About the Kings of Judah & Israel

AUTHOR: Unknown (Jeremiah?)

DATE of WRITING: Over many years

PLACE of WRITING: In Judah and Israel

TIME COVERED: 267 years (853 - 586 BC)

RECIPIENTS: Jews

KEY VERSE: *2 Kings 17:7-8, 18-23 All this took place because the Israelites had sinned against the LORD their God. They worshipped other gods and followed the practices of the nations the LORD had driven out before them, as well as the practices that the kings of Israel had introduced. So the LORD was very angry with Israel and removed them from his presence. Only the tribe of Judah was left, and even Judah did not keep the commands of the LORD their God. They followed the practices Israel had introduced.*

KEY WORD: "King" 340 times; "Prophet" 31 times

PURPOSE: To show how and why Judah and Israel went into captivity.

THEME: God judges sin.



Every year thousands of taxpayers receive a letter beginning: "Dear taxpayer, in processing your return, we need more information about certain items." People think they won't get caught, so they can 'get away' with something. But some times their sins catch up with them. That's not how it is with God. There is no statute of limitations, and NO ONE gets away with sin. A person can get away with things from the IRS, but not from God!

JUDGMENT FOR ISRAEL (chapters 1 - 17) Because of their sin, God warns his people of coming judgment and calls them to repentance. Elijah was one such man. He had ministered for 50 years and then was taken to heaven in a flaming chariot.

Elisha replaced Elijah as God's main messenger (chapter 2 - 8). He, too, performed many miracles (including bringing a dead boy back to life). Both Elijah and Elisha ministered to the northern kingdom, Israel. Of their 19 kings, none followed God. In the south, Judah, 8 of the 20 kings followed God for at least part of their reigns.

Jehu (chapter 9-10) started off all right, under Elisha's influence, and cleansed the land from Ahab's family and influence, but then fell into idolatry himself. Ahab's removal is another example that we all will "reap what we sow" (Gal 6:7). "Be sure your sins will find you out" (Num. 32:23) is exemplified by Ahab & Jezebel, who died an awful death (chapter 9).

Long ago there was a famous black smith who was put into a prison dungeon. He began to examine the chain that bound him looking for a flaw so he could escape. His hope was in vain for he found his own mark upon it -- he had made it and it had been his boast that none could break a chain that he had forged. Ahab had forged his own chains of sin and was caught in them. They, too, were unbreakable. Under Joash, Judah returned to God (chapter 11), but soon relapsed (chapter 12). Israel, meanwhile, turned further from God (chapter 13). Uzziah brought Judah back to God, but then fell to pride (chapter 14-16). Finally Israel was removed (chapter 17). The godly remnant from Israel had all moved to Judah, so the twelve tribes continued on in Judah.

JUDGMENT FOR JUDAH (chapters 18 - 25) Judah continued for about 150 years after Israel fell. Between two of the worst kings was one of the best - Hezekiah (chapters 18 - 20). His son, Manasseh, offered his children as sacrifices (chapter 21). Josiah, his son, was the opposite again,

being one of the most godly kings (chapter 22), but the final kings of Judah all did evil (chapter 24). Finally Judah, too, was removed, taken into captivity by Babylon (chapter 24 - 25).

Some years ago in the mountainous region of Europe an avalanche of snow came down from the mountain and dammed up the river. Water couldn't flow so it formed a lake behind the snow, threatening to burst through snow and ice and ruin villages below. It held a long time, and people were lulled into false security. The longer wait, though, just meant more destruction when it did burst, and that is what happened. Sin works the same way.

TRUTH The Bible clearly says that God will judge sin. Galatians 6:7-8 Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. Proverbs 1:31 They will eat the fruit of their ways and be filled with the fruit of their schemes. Proverbs 5:22-23 The evil deeds of a wicked man ensnare him; the cords of his sin hold him fast. He will die for lack of discipline, led astray by his own great folly. Proverbs 22:8 He who sows wickedness reaps trouble.

God's people especially must turn from sin. We are not exempt, instead we are more accountable (Matthew 3:9-10). "Judgment begins at the house of God" (1 Peter 4:17). Luke 12:47-48 says "That servant who knows his master's will and does not get ready or does not do what his master wants will be beaten with many blows. But the one who does not know and does things deserving punishment will be beaten with few blows. From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked." We can't lose salvation (Romans 8:1), but that is no excuse to sin.

One day in Colorado a great stalwart tree fell down. It was four hundred years old. It was a sapling when Columbus landed at San Salvador. It had been struck by lightning fourteen times. It had braved undaunted the storms of four hundred years. It had defied earthquakes and hurricanes. It had laughed in scorn at the winter's blasts and blizzards that would have destroyed it. But in the end the tiny little beetles killed it. They bored under the bark, dug into its heart, ate away its mighty fiber and one day down came the mighty king of the forest.

OUTLINE OF 2 KINGS

I. JUDGMENT FOR ISRAEL 1-17

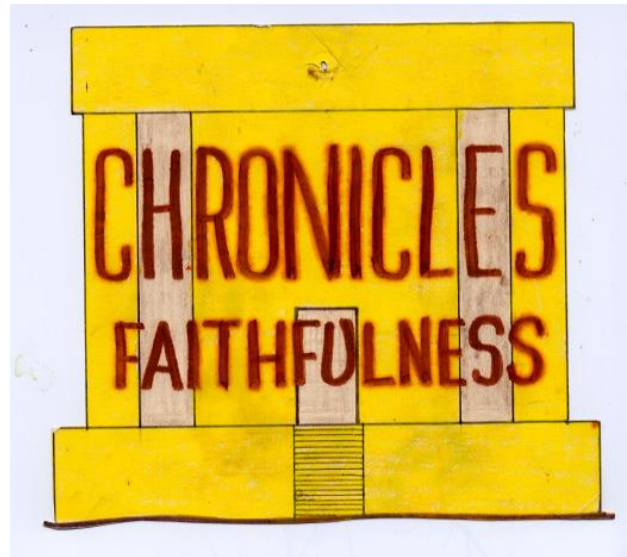
- A. Elijah's Death 1-2
- B. Elisha's Ministry 3-8a
- C. Enemies Revolt 8b
- D. Jehu's Revival 9
- E. Ahab's Sin 10
- F. Judah's Repentance 11
- G. Judah's Decline 12
- H. Israel's Decline 13a
- I. Elisha's Death 13b
- J. Israel & Judah's Further Into Sin 14-16
- K. Israel's Removal 17

II. JUDGMENT FOR JUDAH 18-25

- A. Hezekiah's Reforms 18-20
- B. Judah's Decline 21
- C. Josiah's Reforms 22
- D. Judah's Decline 23
- E. Judah's Rebellion 24
- F. Judah's Removal 25

1 & 2

CHRONICLES: FAITHFULNESS



TITLE: Latin Vulgate title (all 1 book to Jews)

AUTHOR: Many, compiled by Ezra

DATE of WRITING: After return from Babylon

PLACE of WRITING: Judah

TIME COVERED: Adam to Cyrus (536 BC)

RECIPIENTS: Jews back from Babylon

KEY VERSE: *1 Chronicles 17:10 and have done ever since the time I appointed leaders over my people Israel. I will also subdue all your enemies. "I declare to you that the LORD will build a house for you:*

KEY WORD: David (180 times), Temple & House of God (148 times), priest (80 times)

PURPOSE: to show the history of Israel from a spiritual point of view, showing the importance of the temple and of being faithful to God who has always been faithful to them.

THEME: Faithfulness of God

Faithfulness to others is not seen as an important virtue today. Everything teaches us to be loyal only to ourselves, to put our needs and wants first, to make selfishness and self-centeredness a virtue. Faithfulness to mate, family, job, country, favorite sports team, etc., only seems to last as long as it is profitable. When things get hard people seem to move on quickly. Fortunately God isn't that way. 1 & 2 Chronicles proves that.

Originally one book in the Hebrew canon, Chronicles covers basically the same information as 1 & 2 Samuel and 1 & 2 Kings, but from a different perspective. While they show the civil and political happenings from a human viewpoint, Chronicles shows it from God's view point. For example, 1 Samuel 31 tells of the death of Saul from man's viewpoint - how he died. 1 Chronicles 10 tells the same story, but from the divine perspective - how and why God removed him. 1 & 2 Samuel and 1 & 2 Kings shows how man is unfaithful, but 1 & 2 Chronicles shows how God is faithful, no matter how man is (similar to the theme of Deuteronomy).

LISTS OF JUDAH'S KINGS (1 Chronicles 1 - 9) traces the genealogy from Adam to the Babylonian captivity. It shows the fulfillment of God's promise to send a Messiah from the seed of the woman (Genesis 3:14-15) as God promised. He sets the groundwork to prove that Jesus is that Messiah (Matthew 1, Luke 3). Especially this section shows the faithfulness of God to Abraham (many nations did come from him), to David (whose descendants did rule Judah) and to everyone, for God knows and remembers all by name.

LIVES OF JUDAH'S KINGS (1 Chronicles 10 - 2 Chronicles 36) hits some highlights of the kings in David's line, especially the godly ones.

This section starts with David returning the ark to Jerusalem and all the praise and worship that came with it (1 Chronicles 10-16). David's sin with Bathsheba isn't mentioned in Chronicles, it is forgiven and gone. The focus is on God's faithfulness, not man's unfaithfulness. God's promises are reaffirmed to David, stating that God would faithfully keep His promise to have David's descendants as the kingly line, right up to the Messiah (1 Chronicles 17-21). David's preparations for the temple

are elaborated, too (1 Chronicles 22-27), and so is Solomon's building of the temple (2 Chronicles 1-9). There is so much about the temple in these chapters because it is the people's link with God. It reminds them that all they have comes from God and it isn't anything they earned or deserve. The temple calls man to be faithful to God in response to His faithfulness to man. It's not just a building, it's a way of life!

When the nation splits, Chronicles only follows the kings of the southern tribe, Judah. The unfaithful north is ignored. True believers from there moved down to the south, so the southern kingdom had the godly remnant, the representatives of all 12 tribes. God's faithfulness to Judah is seen in his enabling Abijah to defeat Jeroboam (2 Chronicles 13), Asa defeat the Ethiopians (14), Jehosaphat defeating the Moabites (20) and Hezekiah's deliverance from Sennacherib (31). The Jews response of revival (15) and repairing the temple and returning to God every time an evil king led them astray (23-24, 30, 35) shows their response of faithfulness to Him. Unfortunately their times of unfaithfulness were greater and eventually God let the Babylonians take them into captivity. Still God was faithful, preserving a remnant and giving promises of future deliverance and restoration.

"Old Faithful" is a famous geyser in Yellowstone National Park. It shoots 10 to 12 thousand gallons of boiling water 150 feet into the air. There are other geysers who send out more water, and send it higher. Why, then, is this one more famous and more visited? It's because of it's 'faithfulness' -- every 65.5 minutes it erupts. It can be counted on. No one knows when the others will erupt. God is like that -- totally dependable and consistent. We can always count on Him. He is the original "Old Faithful." God wants us to respond to His faithfulness to us by our being faithful to Him in return. Thank God for His faithfulness to you Be faithful to Him. "It is required that a man be found FAITHFUL" (1 Corinthians 4:2).

OUTLINE OF CHRONICLES

I. LISTS OF JUDAH'S KINGS 1 Chron. 1-9

- A. The Royal Line 1-4
- B. The Related Lines 5-9

II. LIVES OF JUDAH'S KINGS 1 Chron. 10-19; 2 Chron. 1-26

- A. David's Throne 1 Chron. 10-29
 - 1. God's Ark 10-16
 - 2. God's Covenant 17-21
 - 3. God's Temple 22-27
 - 4. David's Message 28-29
- B. Solomon's Temple 2 Chron. 1-9
 - 1. Solomon's Temple 1-5
 - 2. Solomon's Worship 6-9
- C. Judah's Tragedy= 2 Chron. 10-26
 - 1. Decline (Divided Kingdom) 10-11
 - 2. Reform & Decline (Southern Kingdom) 12-26

BIBLE OVERVIEW

16. PROPHETS

MAIN EVENTS: Prophets Warn and Encourage

MAIN PEOPLE:

- to north (Israel): Hosea, Amos, (Elijah, Elisha)
- to south (Judah): Joel, Isaiah, Micah, Zephaniah, Habakkuk
- to Nineveh (Assyria): Jonah, Nahum
- to Edom: Obadiah

BOOKS OF THE BIBLE: see above

BIBLE VERSE: *Isaiah 59:20 "The Redeemer will come to Zion, to those in Jacob who repent of their sins," declares the Lord.*

TIME: 931-586 BC

WORLD EVENTS AT THIS TIME:

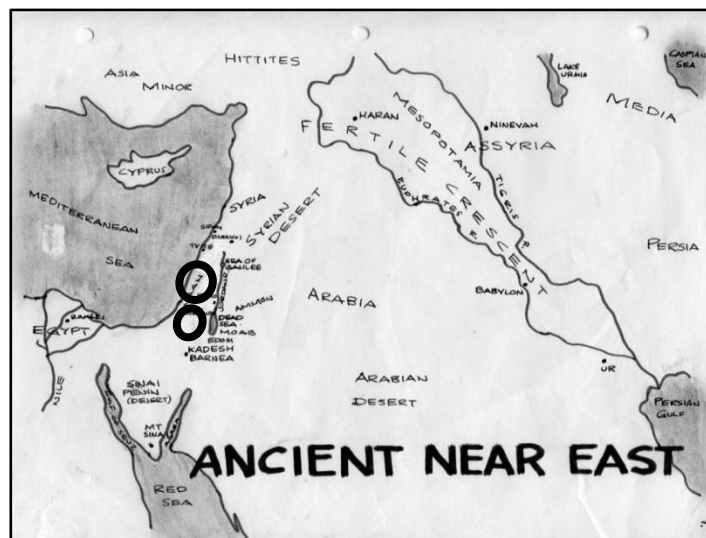
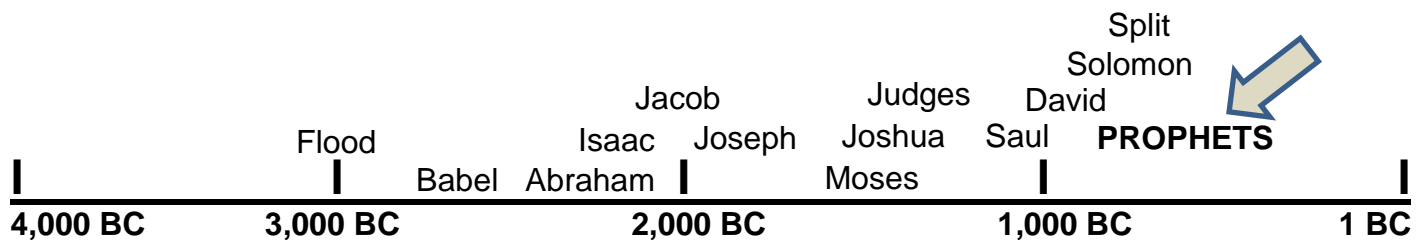
In India Mahabharata and Ramayana composed
Upanishads written in India

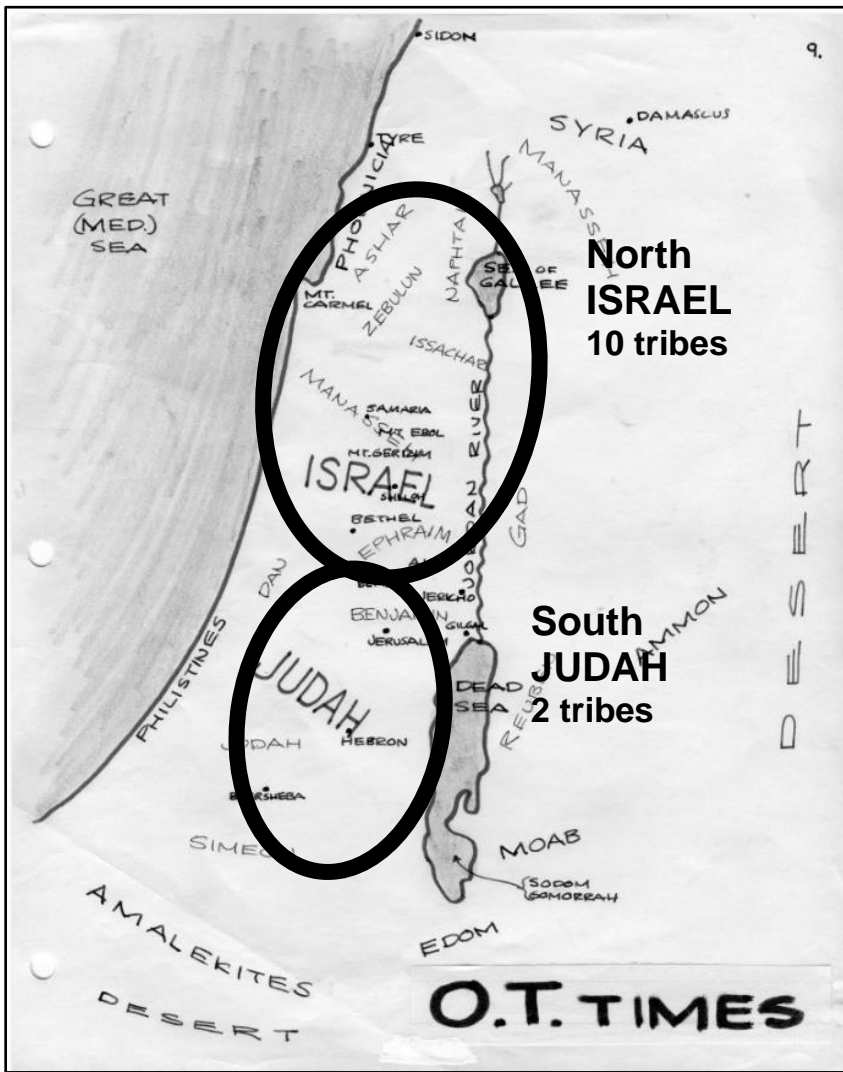
GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION: Palestine

PROPHETS

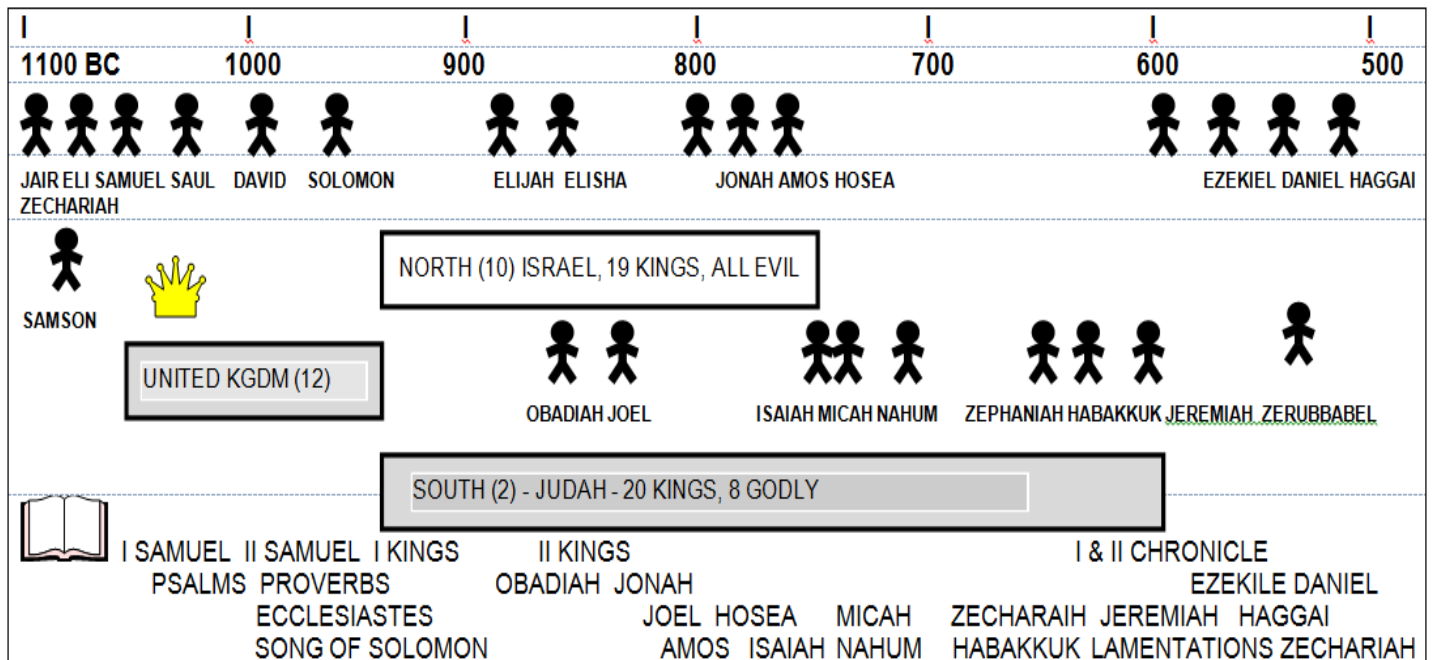


Reap what you sow





This long but sad time in Bible history is called the Prophets because God used these godly men to try to reach His people and turn them back to Him. It was during this time that 19 evil kings ruled Israel (northern 10 tribes) and 20 kings (only 8 weren't totally evil) ruled Judah (southern 2 tribes). The prophets warned of the coming judgment for disobedience but also gave hope of a future restoration of Israel when God would be recognized as their King. While most people during this time, especially in the north, did not follow God, there was always a faithful remnant which remained true to Him.



MEET THE KINGS & PROPHETS OF ISRAEL (North)

Does God judge sin among His people? He certainly does. He is patient beyond belief, but His standards of purity are not to be taken lightly. The history of Israel, the northern 10 tribes, shows this clearly. We'll look at a quick overview of the kings and the prophets during that time. There were many prophets God sent, listed below are only the ones recorded in the Bible.

JEROBOAM, king for 22 years when the nation split after the death of Solomon (1 Kings 11:26-14:20; 2 Chronicles 9:29-13:22). He was a servant of Solomon. The prophet Ahijah tore a garment into 12 pieces and gave 10 to Jeroboam, signifying the nation would be torn after Solomon's time and he would rule the 10 northern tribes. So he wouldn't be killed because of this prophecy, he fled to Egypt. He returned when Solomon died and Rehoboam raised the taxes. The northern 10 tribes asked him to be king. He built 2 gold calves so the people would not go to Jerusalem, which was in the southern kingdom, to worship. Thus he set an idolatrous pattern for the north. He was told to repent by several prophets: Ahijah, Iddo, an old unnamed prophet and another prophet who predicted his death. He didn't repent and was stricken by God and died.

NADAB, son of Jeroboam, was king for 2 years (1 Kings 15:25-28). He was an evil king and was assassinated by Baasha who succeeded him.

BAASHA, son of Ahijah who tore the garment into 12 pieces, was king for 24 years (1 Kings 24:27-16:7; 2 Chronicles 16:1-6). He assassinated Nadab and everyone in the royal house. He led the north to war with the south, Judah.

ELAH, son of Baasha, ruled for 2 years (1 Kings 16:6-14). As was true of all the kings in the north, he was evil and never followed God. Elah was especially wicked and was assassinated while drunk.

ZIMRI killed Elah and made himself king (1 Kings 16:9-20). He was the Captain of the Chariots and only ruled for 7 days. Omri attacked him and burned the king's house with him in it.

OMRI. Army Captain, who killed Zimri, then ruled for 12 years (1 Kings 16:15-28). He built Samaria and made it the capital of the north. He had good vision and wisdom but did not follow God. He lost a lot of his territory to Syria.

TIBNI ruled during the same time as Omri and tried to overtake the throne but lost.

AHAB, son of Omri, followed his father and ruled for 22 years (1 Kings 16:28-22:43; 2 Chronicles 18:1-34). He was a capable leader and ambitious builder, but he did not follow God. He was one of the worst kings Israel had (1 Kings 16:29-33). Jezebel, an evil Gentile woman who worshipped Baal, married Ahab and dominated him, influencing him to even more evil (1 Kings 21:25-26). God sent ELIJAH to warn them but they tried to kill him. Instead, they died under God's judgment.

AHAZIAH, son of Ahab, ruled after him for 2 years (1 Kings 22:40-2 Kings 1:18; 2 Chronicles 20:35-37). He followed his mother Jezebel's pagan influence. He tried to kill **ELIJAH** but his soldiers were destroyed by fire. He made an alliance with Judah, but God doomed it because they were not following Him. Elijah foretold his death, which happened when he fell through a lattice.

JORAM, another son of Ahab and Jezebel, next ruled for 12 years (2 Kings 3:1-9:25; 2 Chronicles 22:5-7). He was very evil, but did somewhat restrain Baal worship. When the Syrians attacked, **ELISHA** said God would deliver him and He did. He was killed by Jehu and his body thrown into Naboth's vineyard, thus fulfilling prophecy and ending the evil line of Ahab.

JEHU was anointed by Elisha the prophet as king and reigned for 28 years (2 Kings 9:1-10:36; 2 Chronicles 22:7-12). He was a corrupt man who weakened the nation. He destroyed anyone he could find from Ahab's family, including his 70 sons and all his advisors. He was the one who killed Jezebel by throwing her out a window. He wiped out Baal worship in Israel and claimed to worship God but left the golden calves to be worshipped. He disobeyed God. In battle he lost much land to the Syrians.

JEHOAHAZ was a son of Jehu and was king for 17 years (2 Kings 13:1-9). He had a disastrous reign. Syria dominated Israel so he turned to God for help, but when God delivered them he returned to idolatry.

JOASH (also called **JEHOASH**), was a son of Jehoahaz and reigned 16 years (2 Kings 13:10-14:16; 2 Chronicles 25:17-24). The nation broke free from the Syrians during his reign but he was spiritually bankrupt and continued in the evil ways of the kings before him.

JEROBOAM II, son of Joash, reigned for 41 years (2 Kings 14:23-29). He recaptured lands lost to Syria. The people were poor and oppressed. Dishonesty and greed were everywhere. Worship was hypocritical. **HOSEA**, **AMOS** and **JONAH** were alive and ministering during this time. Jonah traveled to Nineveh, Assyria to deliver God's message to them. Amos was a shepherd in Judah whom God sent north to denounce the people for their idol worship, greed, corruption and oppression of the poor. He was very courageous and faithful. Hosea was a member of the upper class who was deeply committed to God and lived His message by marrying a prostitute named Gomer who was unfaithful to him. Despite that he bought her back as his wife, a picture of God and His rebellious people.

ZECHARIAH was the last from the house of Jehu to rule and only ruled 6 months (2 Kings 14:29-15:12). He was a son of Jeroboam II and was assassinated by Shallum.

SHALLUM, another in a long line of evil kings, ruled just 1 month (2 Kings 15:10-15) was in turn assassinated by Manahem.

MANAHEN, a military commander, ruled for 10 years (2 Kings 15:14-22). He was a cruel, evil man.

PEKAHIAH, son of Manahem, ruled 2 years (2 Kings 15:22-26). He was evil and continued to lead the nation into idolatry. He was killed by his military commander, Pekah.

PEKAH, a military leader, ruled 20 years (2 Kings 15:27-31; 2 Chronicles 28:5-8). He continued idol worship in Israel. God used him to discipline Judah. God also used Assyria to take much land from Israel and discipline them in turn. Half of the nation was killed or destroyed during his reign. He was assassinated by Hoshea.

HOSHEA, the 19th and last king of Israel, ruled for 9 years (2 Kings 15:30-17:6). He was evil, but not as bad as the previous kings. He didn't officially sanction idolatry, but he didn't remove the idols, either. He became a puppet king controlled by Assyria until he rebelled against them. He was defeated and imprisoned. The nation was taken into captivity by Assyria.

For many years the believers in God who lived in the north had moved to the south, so in effect the south, Judah, became the real nation with the godly remnant from all twelve tribes living there. Unfortunately they, too, turned from God.

MEET THE KINGS & PROPHETS OF JUDAH (South)

The northern kingdom, Israel, had 19 kings, all evil, and was taken to captivity in Assyria, never to return. The southern, Judah, had a few kings who were good or partly good. They lasted longer than Israel but eventually went into captivity in Babylon because of their sin and disobedience.

REHOBOAM was the first king of the south and reigned 17 years (1 Kings 11:42-14:31; 2 Chronicles 9:31-12:16). He was the son and successor of Solomon, but because he rejected the advice of his older advisors and followed the suggestions of his young friends, his greed led to the country breaking in two. Solomon had heavily taxed the people and they needed relief, but Rehoboam increased the tax load, thus causing the ten northern tribes to pull away in 922 BC. God's prophet **SHEMAIAH** advised him to not try to force the north to stay. Judah, some of Benjamin, and later Simeon stayed faithful. Jerusalem stayed their capital. The south was soon attacked by Egypt, who took away the vast riches Solomon had accumulated. Even though they seemingly stayed faithful to God, they still set up high places for Baal worship and made wooden images to bow down to and worship.

ABIJAM, son of Rehoboam and grandson of Absalom, reigned for 3 years (1 Kings 14:31-15:8; 2 Chronicles 13:1-22). He had fourteen wives, twenty two sons and sixteen daughters. **IIDDO** the prophet ministered to him.

ASA, son of Abijam, ruled for 41 years (1 Kings 15:8-24; 2 Chronicles 14:1-16:14). The first ten years of his reign were peaceful and he removed the idols and images that were built. **AZARIAH** the prophet encouraged him to follow God and he did so. The Ethiopians attacked and God protected them. Instead of trusting God, they paid the Syrians to help them fight Israel. **HANANI** the prophet rebuked him for doing that, so Asa put him in jail. He got a foot disease and didn't turn to God, so he died two years later. His reign was mostly but not entirely good.

JEHOSHAPHAT, son of Asa, ruled 25 years (1 Kings 22:41-50; 2 Chronicles 17:1-20:37). He was a godly king with a good heart for God. He attacked idolatry and sent teachers to teach the people about God. When he faced danger from his enemies he turned to God and received his help. He restored God's high standards of justice and fairness. His mistake, though, was to marry his son to a daughter of Ahab and Jezebel, for she was very ungodly.

JEHORAM was a son of Jehoshaphat and was king for 8 years (2 Kings 8:16-24; 2 Chronicles 21:1-20). He started as a godly king but his wife, Athaliah, daughter of Ahab and Jezebel, led him into sin. He was killed by Jehu when Ahab's entire family was destroyed.

AHAZIAH only reigned one year (2 Kings 8:24-9:29; 2 Chronicles 22:1-9). He was a son of Joram and nephew of Ahaziah. He became king when he was 22 but was very evil, having been influenced by his evil mother Athaliah. He also was killed by Jehu.

ATHALIAH herself ruled for 7 years after her husband and son were killed (2 Kings 11:1-20; 2 Chronicles 22:1-23:21). She was a daughter of Ahab and Jezebel and very evil. She killed all her grandsons so they wouldn't challenge her rule. Only Joash remained because he was safely hidden and unknown to her. She brought in Baal worship and destroyed part of the temple. The High Priest Jehoiada declared Joash king and killed her.

JOASH was a son of Ahaziah and ruled for 40 years (2 Kings 11:1-12:21; 2 Chronicles 22:10-24:27). He was seven years old when he became king. He was the only descendant of David not killed, and that is because he had been hidden. He repaired the temple and restored worship to God. He destroyed Baal worship. Jehoida, his advisor, kept him close to God. When Jehoida died, Joash drifted into idolatry. **ZECHARIAH** the prophet was stoned for rebuking him. When Syria invaded he

was wounded, then died. **JOEL** the prophet lived during this time as well. He was a citizen of Jerusalem, perhaps a priest who spoke in the temple.

AMAZIAH, son of Joash, was king for 29 years (2 Kings 11:1-12:21; 2 Chronicles 22:10-24:27). He personally followed God but he allowed idol worship to remain. He had a great victory over Edom but then brought in their gods. He was proud of this victory and then attacked Israel but lost. This was God's judgment on him for his idolatry. **OBADIAH** the prophet went to Edom to pronounce judgment against them because they attacked Jerusalem during its time of distress.

AZARIAH (UZZIAH), a son of Amaziah, became king when he was 16 and ruled for 52 years (2 Kings 15:1-7; 2 Chronicles 26:1-13). He reigned longer than any king before him. Sometimes he co-reigned with his father, then later his son. He was a wise, pious, powerful king who extended Judah's territory and brought in prosperity. He reinforced Jerusalem and had a strong army. He was spiritually sensitive and sought God's will and guidance through a prophet. However he had a problem with pride and saw himself as a god, as the pagan kings did. He once entered the temple to burn incense and got angry when the priests challenged him. He did not repent so God struck him with leprosy and he lived the rest of his life isolated from everyone. **ISAIAH** and **MICAH** ministered during these times. Micah was a country boy who used images from country life.

JOTHAM, son of Azariah, was king for 16 years (2 Kings 15:32-38; 2 Chronicles 27:1-9). He was a godly king but the people stayed in idolatry. He built up Jerusalem and other places, defeated the Ammonites, and prospered because he depended on God. **ISAIAH**, **MICAH** and **HOSEA** ministered during his reign and encouraged him.

AHAZ, son of Jotham, reigned 16 years (2 Kings 16:1-20; 2 Chronicles 28:1-27). He was ungodly and promoted the worship of Molech, pagan rites and human sacrifice. He made images of Baal and burned his baby sons. He was attacked by Israel and other neighboring nations when 120,000 were killed and 200,000 captives taken. He was defeated by the Philistines and Damascus, killed, and buried without honor because he was not worthy of the royal tombs. **ISAIAH**, **MICAH** and **OBED** ministered during his reign and encouraged him.

HEZEKIAH, son of Ahaz, reigned for 29 years (2 Kings 18:1-20:21; 2 Chronicles 29:1-32:33). He was a very godly son of a very ungodly father. He reopened the temple and revived the priesthood. The high places and bronze serpent were destroyed. It was the most thorough reformation in Judah's history. During this time the north fell captive to Assyria, but the godly remnant of Jews from each of the ten tribes in the north moved south, making the south the total nation again. When he showed off his wealth to a Gentile king he was rebuked by **ISAIAH**. He had a serious illness, but God promised him fifteen more years of life. He rebelled against the authority of Assyria and was attacked by them, and the Angel of the Lord killed 185,000 Assyrians. **ISAIAH** and **MICAH** ministered during his reign and encouraged him.

MANASSEH, son of Hezekiah, reigned 55 years, longer than any other Israelite king (2 Kings 21:1-18; 2 Chronicles 33:1-20). When he was 12, he started ruling and removed all worship of God. He was Judah's most wicked king. He rejected his godly father and followed his ungodly grandfather Ahaz. He restored the Baals and Asheraths. He set up worship of the sun, moon and stars. Molech, the very evil Ammonite god, was restored. He became more evil than the pagans the Jews drove out of the land. He was captured and taken to Egypt. This humbled him and he repented while there. When released he went back to Jerusalem and tried to reverse his evil deeds but it was too late. When he died his own son reversed the few improvements he had made. **ISAIAH** ministered and died during his reign. During this time also **NAHUM** went to Ninevah. The revival there under Jonah had been short lived and they fell back into sin, so God sent Nahum to announce that judgment was coming.

AMON, son of Manasseh, was king for 2 years (2 Kings 21:19-26; 2 Chronicles 33:21-25). He was very evil and idolatrous, so bad that his own servants killed him.

JOSIAH, son of Amon and grandson of Manasseh, became king at 8 years of age and reigned for 31 years (2 Kings 22:1-23:30; 2 Chronicles 34:1-35:27). He had godly advisors who kept him obedient to God. At 16, he started his own relationship with God. When he was 18 he found a copy of God's Word and started applying it. He brought peace, prosperity and reform. When he was 20, he started to cleanse the land from evil. At 26 he reinstituted God's law and worship of God. He died in battle against the Egyptians. **JEREMIAH** prophesied and ministered during this reign. **ZEPHANIAH** started his ministry the same year as Jeremiah and was a descendant of David and Hezekiah,

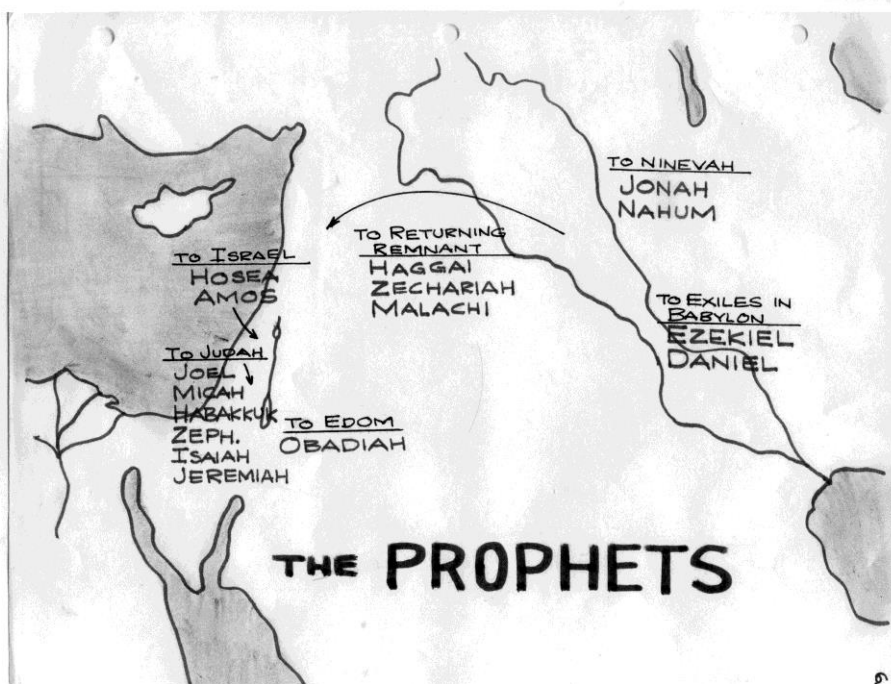
JEHOAHAZ, son of Josiah, only reigned for 3 months (2 Kings 23:31-33; 2 Chronicles 36:1-4). He was taken away to Egypt. **JEREMIAH** prophesied and ministered during this reign.

JEHOIAKIM, son of Josiah, ruled for 11 years (2 Kings 23:34-24:5; 2 Chronicles 36:5-7). He did evil in God's sight, so much so that **JEREMIAH** condemned him and said no one would mourn his death. Actually Jeremiah prophesied for 40 years during the reigns of the last five kings of Israel. He burnt Jeremiah's prophecies and allowed Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, to take over the country and make him a vassal king. Three years later he rebelled and was taken captive to Babylon. He also killed **URIJAH** the prophet. **HABAKKUK** also ministered during this time. Habakkuk was very courageous and had deep emotional strength. He was both a prophet and poet.

JEHOIACHIN, son of Jehoiakim, reigned 3 months (2 Kings 24:6-16; 2 Chronicles 36:8-10). He was very evil and was taken to Babylon by the armies of Nebuchadnezzar. **JEREMIAH** and **HABAKKUK** prophesied and ministered during this reign.

ZEDEKIAH, son of Josiah, was the last king of Judah and ruled 11 years (2 Kings 24:17-25:30; 2 Chronicles 36:11-21). He was placed on the throne by Nebuchadnezzar and never fully accepted as king by the people. Many false prophets said Judah would break free from Babylon. When Egypt, Moab, Ammon and Edom rebelled, they wanted Judah to join them. When they rebelled Babylon attacked, surrounded and put the city to a deadly siege. In July, 586 BC, the wall of

Jerusalem was broken, the city destroyed and Zedekiah was caught while trying to escape. He was forced to watch his own sons killed, then he was blinded and led away to Babylon. **DANIEL** was also taken to Babylon then. **EZEKIEL** had been taken earlier. **JEREMIAH** prophesied and ministered during this whole time. Called the "weeping prophet" because of his tears over the destruction of Jerusalem, he described it all in the book of Lamentations. He was often beaten, opposed, arrested and kidnapped. Eventually he was forced to go to Egypt and was killed there.



OBADIAH: RETRIBUTION

TITLE: After prophet who wrote it

AUTHOR: Obadiah ("Worshipper of God")

DATE of WRITING: 586 - 585 BC

PLACE of WRITING: Canaan

TIME COVERED: Obadiah's day to Jesus' return

RECIPIENTS: Edom (Arabs)

KEY VERSE: 1:15 *"The day of the LORD is near for all nations. As you have done, it will be done to you; your deeds will return upon your own head."*

KEY WORDS: "Edom" (9 times) "cut off" (3 times)

PURPOSE: Warn Edom of judgment because of their pride and malicious treatment of Judah when Judah was having troubles

THEME: Retribution for Edom



Some of the most severe words in the whole Bible are addressed to the proud, be they believers or unbelievers. Proverbs especially has much to say about the dangers of pride (3:34; 6:16-17; 8:13; 10:17; 11:2,12; 12:9,15; 13:10; 14:21; 15:5,10,12,25,32; 16:5,18-19; 17:19; 18:11-12; 20:6; 21:4, 24; 25:14, 27; 26:5, 12, 16; 27:2; 28:11, 25; 29:8, 23; 30:12-13). Pride is so bad because it is the root of all sin. Pride is self-centeredness, and all sin can be traced back to that. In fact, pride was the reason Lucifer rebelled and was cast out of heaven (Isaiah 14:12-21; Ezekiel 28:11-19). All pride brings judgment. Many times we don't think we are 'proud' because we only define pride as thinking we are better than everyone else. Basically, though, pride is thinking of ourselves before God. The cartoon character Charlie Brown is a proud person, not because he thinks he's better than others, but because he is self-centered. Everything in life is viewed in light of how it will affect him. Thinking we are inferior to others is as prideful and untrue as thinking we are superior to others. They are two sides of the same coin. Any self-centeredness or self-sufficiency is pride and therefore sin.

OBADIAH is a book about the judgment that comes to those who are proud. It's the shortest book in the Old Testament as well as the first of the prophets in chronological order. Obadiah's name means "servant/worshipper of God." Nothing else is known about him. He is the most obscure of all the prophets. We do know that he lived about 100 years after the split of the nation into north and south. He is the first prophet to write down his message.

EDOM is the nation that Obadiah preached to. Although he was a Jew, he was sent to his Gentile neighbors to warn them of God's coming judgment, much as in the case of Jonah. The Edomites were harsh enemies of the Jews. The enmity started in Rebekah's womb, where Jacob and Esau struggled against each other (Genesis 25:20-23). This rivalry was revealed at birth (Genesis 25:24-26). They fought over the birthright and then blessing. They were in conflict their whole lives. This antagonism continued in the following generations. The Edomites wouldn't let Moses and the Jews walk through their land. Saul fought them. David conquered them. They joined Ammon and Moab in fighting the Jews. One of the reason Herod was so disliked by the Jews was that he was an Edomite. Today they are part of the Arab people. Always, though, they have been characterized by self-centeredness (pride). Obadiah was sent to warn them that this would bring God's judgment.

THE DESTINY OF SINNERS is shown first (verses 1-9). In their pride the Edomites thought they were impregnable because of their rock-like fortresses in the land east of the Jordan. It is easy today, too, to put our faith in our government and military, thinking they will protect us. However, God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble (James 4:6; 1 Peter 5:5). Edom took advantage of others in their times of weakness, so God would have them reap what they sow. The same would happen to them. Edom was famous for great statesmen, counselors and government officials. They took pride in this. God would have these men become like fools, for they would have no real understanding of their present dangerous situation. Their brave soldiers would become cowardly. Now that he has their attention, Obadiah tells them why this will happen.

THE DESCRIPTION OF SIN is given next (10-14). The Edomites are violent and belligerent, especially to the Jews (God's people). In their self-sufficiency they feel indifferent, apathetic, even aloof from those who are in need. Finally, they are greedy. Like vultures, they are quick to plunder weaker, vulnerable and defeated neighbors. In their pride they thought only of themselves.

THE DAY OF JUDGMENT concludes the book (15-21). The coming judgment on Edom will be bad, but the future judgment will be worse. In the Day of the Lord (specifically the battle of Armageddon) it will be much worse, for they will be totally annihilated. Despite all this, there is a time of coming restoration for those who turn to God for mercy and forgiveness. This will be the Millennium. The Jews as a nation then will be restored and enjoy peace and prosperity like never before. All they lost will be returned. Opposing God's people just wasn't/isn't wise!

The message from this book is clear: we will reap what we sow if we only sow in sin and unrighteousness. Those who never turn to God for salvation, but instead live in selfishness and self-centeredness, WILL BE JUDGED!

OUTLINE OF OBADIAH

I. DESTINY OF SINNERS 1-9

- A. Pride 1-5
- B. Dishonesty 6-7
- C. Fear 8-9

II. DESCRIPTION OF SIN 10-14

- A. Belligerence 10
- B. Indifference 11-12
- C. Greed 13-14

III. DAY OF JUDGMENT 15-21

- A. Retribution 15-16
- B. Restoration 17-18
- C. Recovery 19-21

JOEL:

DAY of the LORD

TITLE: After prophet who wrote it

AUTHOR: "Joel" "Jehovah is God/Elohim"

DATE of WRITING: About 838 - 756 BC

PLACE of WRITING: Judah

TIME COVERED: Joel's' day to Millennium

RECIPIENTS: Judah (south)

KEY VERSE: 2:28-32 *'And afterward, I will*

pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days. I will show wonders in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and billows of smoke. The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD. And everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved; for on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there will be deliverance, as the LORD has said, among the survivors whom the LORD calls.

KEY WORD: "Day of the Lord" (5 times)

PURPOSE: Present locust plague is a picture of worse judgment to come if no repentance.

THEME: Christ will return and rule the world, bringing peace.



It's the middle of the night and you are awakened from sleep by the raucous ringing of your smoke alarm. Are you pleased or perturbed? A red light on your dashboard glows menacingly, informing you the oil level in your car is dangerously low. Do you resent the interruption or are you relieved to discover the problem?

In Joel's day God used locusts to wake up His people and alert them to the condition of their nation so they could turn back to God before even worse things happened. Instead of responding with gratitude and repentance, though, the people complained and blamed God.

DESTRUCTION IN THE DAY OF THE LORD (1:1 - 2:17) Locust plagues are devastating. Locusts collect 5" thick on the ground and eat their own weight each day, devouring everything but rocks and tree trunks. They can cover over 400 square miles and travel across oceans. Devastation and famine always follow in their wake. God sent these locusts to get the Jews attention, so they'd repent and turn to Him before the next hoard came through. The army of Assyrians would bring worse destruction than the locusts brought. All this points to a future time of devastation even worse. It is when the Antichrist's army comes through and brings worse death and destruction than the locusts or even the Assyrians. The only way to be free from any of these three plagues is by repentance and confession of sin. Unfortunately the Jews don't repent from any of them, and suffer miserable consequences. Following the final one, though, there will come deliverance. Thus Joel's attention turns from the present oppression to that which will come in the Day of the Lord.

DELIVERANCE BY THE DAY OF THE LORD (2:18 - 3:21) The Day of the Lord is that time which starts in the middle of the tribulation and continues through the Millennium and on into eternity. It will take the awful suffering of the tribulation to do what the locusts and the Assyrians haven't been able to do -- turn the Jews back to God. Then, however, there is a time of peace and prosperity promised, such as the world has never known. That is the Millennial Kingdom which then goes on for all

eternity. What a blessed hope that was for oppressed people! As our world today drifts further and further from God, this blessed promise of future deliverance and restoration becomes our hope, too.

OUTLINE OF JOEL

I. DESTRUCTION BY THE DAY OF THE LORD 1:1-2:17

- A. Type of the Destruction 1:1-12
- B. Reactions to the Destruction 1:13-14
- C. Picture of the Destruction 1:15-20
- D. Prophecy of the Destruction 2:1-11
- E. Exhortation because of the Destruction 2:12-17

II. DELIVERANCE BY THE DAY OF THE LORD 2:18-3:21

- A. Immediate Deliverance 2:18-27
- B. Future Deliverance 2:28-3:21

JONAH: OBEDIENCE

TITLE: After prophet who wrote it

AUTHOR: "Jonah" means "dove"

DATE of WRITING: About 810 BC

PLACE of WRITING: Nineveh

TIME COVERED: A few months in 810 BC

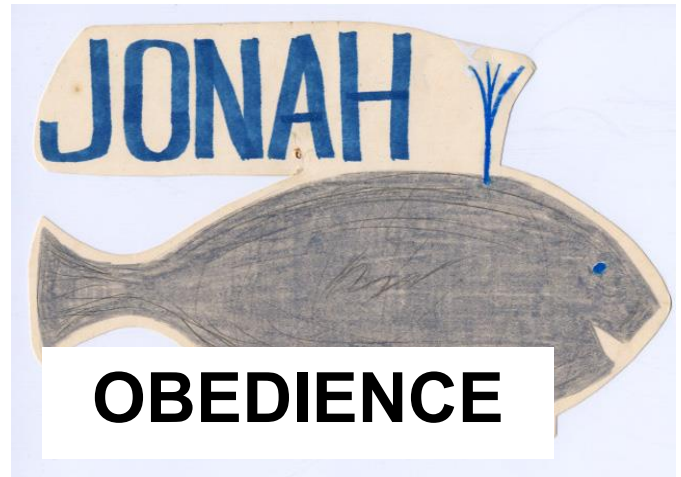
RECIPIENTS: Nineveh, Assyria

KEY VERSE: 3:10 *When God saw what they did and how they turned from their evil ways, he had compassion and did not bring upon them the destruction he had threatened.*

KEY WORD: "prepared" 4 (God prepares a wind 1:4, storm 1:4, fish 1:17, gourd 4:6, worm 4:7, east wind 4:8)

PURPOSE: to show God's love for Gentiles and how He deals with His disobedient servants

THEME: God's resurrection power conquers all



Have you ever had to learn something the hard way? I'm sure all of us have. Jonah certainly did! Sometimes the most familiar stories lose their impact because we've known them so well for so long. There's a good reason that they are the ones we teach children and remember so well. They are very special in their meaning and significance. Pretend you don't know the story of Jonah. Look at it with fresh eyes. It'll mean a lot more to you.

JONAH FLEEING (chapter 1) Jonah came from Israel and God called him to go to Nineveh. Nineveh was the capital of Assyria, one of the cruelest, most brutal nations to ever exist. They were conquering everyone in the near east in Jonah's day and were about to destroy Jonah's nation: Israel. When a boy, he saw his hometown destroyed by the Assyrians. Friends, relatives, perhaps even parents were killed. For these reasons, when God asked him to go warn them of coming judgment, he went the opposite way instead. In his bitterness and unforgiveness he disobeyed God. He wanted revenge, not one chance of mercy. He became so hardened in his conscience he could sleep right through a storm at sea. He knew God was disciplining (not punishing) him. When the sailors reluctantly threw him into the water the storm stopped. They gave the glory to God. Jonah had never witnessed to them, but God got His glory from it anyway.

JONAH PRAYING (chapter 2) When Jonah hit the water he started praying. The Hebrew of Jonah 2:1-6 make it clear Jonah knew he was dying. When the large fish swallowed him he was still alive, perhaps even with his head above water. He knew it was all over then, though. Before going unconscious, as the whale (?) was swallowing him, he prayed and confessed his sin. Then he died. Three days later the fish spit him upon dry land and God brought him back to life. Jesus used this as a picture of His own death and resurrection (Matthew 12:39-40). When he came back to life he praised God and committed himself to follow God -- even going to Nineveh. God gave him another chance.

JONAH PREACHING (chapter 3) After walking 500 miles (about a month) with plenty of time to think, he arrived at Nineveh. It was a large city, taking 3 days to just walk through it! The city was very proud, wicked, hard and stubborn. Jonah's message was not one of repentance. He offered no mercy. He simply proclaimed "40 days and Nineveh will be destroyed." The next day it was "39 days...." Still, people repented immediately. Perhaps seeing him contributed to that. He was

probably hairless and had his skin splotched from the stomach acids of the fish. He was a living picture of how God judged sin yet restored those who repented. His message spread like wildfire. Even the king repented, ordering all people and animals to fast and show their repentance. It was the greatest revival ever!

JONAH LEARNING (chapter 4) Jonah, however, didn't give up hope that God would still destroy the city and people in it. He was angry that they repented, fearing God might show mercy. He sat on a hill awaiting the end of the 40 days. It was hot, but a vine grew to give him heat. Then a worm ate the vine and the shade was gone. Jonah was so upset at the loss of his shade he wanted to die! This was just God's way of showing him how selfish he was. He didn't care about all of Nineveh but did care about his own comfort! What an end to the story. Everything obeyed God but Jonah. The storm, dice used by the sailors, the sailors, fish, Ninevehites, gourd, worm and east wind. Everything but Jonah, the one who claimed to "fear" God (1:9), obeyed Him.

I think the story ended well for Jonah, though. I think he repented and grew through his selfishness. The fact that he wrote and distributed this account of his experiences after leaving Nineveh leads me to this conclusion. Unfortunately the story didn't end so well for Nineveh. They went on to conquer Israel, although they weren't the cruel nation they used to be. God's timing is seen in this for He wanted Israel disciplined, not unreasonably punished. A little over a hundred years after Jonah went to Nineveh, God sent Nahum with the same message. This time there was no repentance and God used the Babylonians to destroy Nineveh.

OUTLINE OF JONAH

I. JONAH FLEEING (Away from God) 1

- A. Reason 1:1-2
- B. Route 1:3
- C. Result 1:4-17
 - 1. Consequences to Sailors 1:4-11
 - 2. Consequences to Jonah 1:12-17

II. JONAH PRAYING (Back to God) 2

- A. Confession 2:1-6
- B. Praise 2:6-8
- C. Repentance 2:9
- D. Answer 2:10

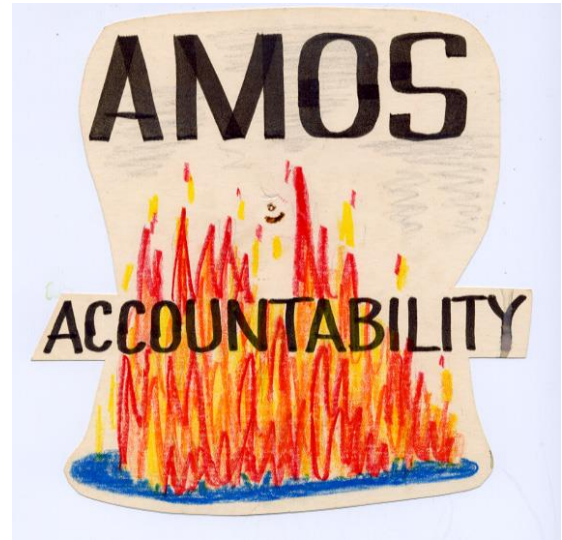
III. JONAH PREACHING (With God) 3

- A. Command to Preach 3:1-3
- B. Content of Preaching 3:4
- C. Response to Preaching 3:5-10

IV. JONAH LEARNING (Ahead of God) 4

- A. His Complaint 4:1-3
- B. God's Actions 4:4-11

AMOS: ACCOUNTABILITY



TITLE: Amos

AUTHOR: "Amos" = "Burden Bearer"

DATE of WRITING: 810 - 785 BC

PLACE of WRITING: Israel (North)

TIME COVERED: Amos' day to eternity future

RECIPIENTS: Israel (North)

KEY VERSE: 4:11-12 *"I overthrew some of you as I overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. You were like a burning stick snatched from the fire, yet you have not returned to me," declares the LORD. "Therefore this is what I will do to you, Israel, and because I will do this to you, prepare to meet your God, O Israel."*

KEY WORD: "Transgression" = 12 times; "I will not turn away your punishment" = 8 times

PURPOSE: to warn Israel (North) to repent from their many sins or face severe judgment.

THEME: The inevitable judgment of God on sin.

How often do we think "that will never happen to me"? When I was a young boy I always assumed house fires always happened to others and would never happen to me. Then my room caught fire, and I've never said that again. At least I haven't said it about fire. I still assume that about a lot of other things, I'm afraid.

The nation Israel (northern 10 tribes) felt the same way about God's judgment on their nation. They were 'God's people,' went through all the motions of worship, were economically prosperous, filled their lives with pleasure, and had a strong army. What could happen?

AMOS the prophet came from near Jerusalem, and was sent by God to warn the northern kingdom of coming judgment. A country boy who picked figs and did some shepherding, he was hardly the man we would expect to be sent on such a mission. He was faithful, though, and did what God asked. **ASSYRIA** was on the horizon, warlike and very aggressive. They were very harsh and cruel, and their goal was to rule the world. **ISRAEL** (the northern kingdom) was in great economical prosperity but was spiritually bankrupt. They were idolatrous, worshipping golden calves instead of Jehovah. **GOD** was very angry with the people: "The Lord roars from Zion" (1:1). God is like an angry lion about to bring destruction.

I. PROPHECIES by the PROPHET (1-2) Imagine you are in a courtroom. The trial begins with the formal arraignment. God's accusations against the nations was because of their repeated acts of sin. God found each guilty and passed sentences of judgment on them: Damascus, Gaza, Tyre, Edom, Ammon and Moab. All this sounded great to Israel, for these nations were their enemies. However when he started saying what God would do to them because of their sins, they weren't nearly as happy!

II. SERMONS of the PROPHET (3-6) Amos' second sermon (chapter 3) continues the courtroom imagery. This time the case against Israel is presented. They broke their covenant with God. They made promises to be faithful to God, to love and obey Him and Him alone. Witnesses are called to show Israel's guilt, nations that were better witnesses for God than His own people (Ashdod and Egypt). Israel was found guilty and sentence passed: their strong military would be defeated and most of the people would be killed.

The third sermon (chapter 4) goes into more detail about the sins they are charged with. The women overindulged themselves and thought life was only for one pleasure after another. “Fat cows” God calls them. Everyone still outwardly went through the motions of worshipping God, but they were just going through the motions. They had no place in their lives for God.

God tried to warn the people many times, but they were too stubborn to listen. He sent food shortages, droughts, crop failures and military defeats to get their attention and have them return to Him, but they never did. They still insisted in trusting in themselves only.

Sermon number four (5-6) is like a funeral lament. Amos is so sure of Israel’s destruction it was like it already happened, like they were already dead. Forgiveness and restoration was still available for individuals who repented, but for the nation as a whole it was too late. Judgment was sure to come.

III. VISIONS of the PROPHET (7-9) The sermons are now over. Next come illustrations of what the judgment will be like. God says He will send a plague of grasshoppers to destroy everything, but Amos asks for mercy and God relents. The same happens with a great devouring fire. Still, God says He will destroy the nation. The Jews don’t want to hear Amos’ preaching any more, so they tell him to stop and go home. They are like over-ripe fruit (8), good for nothing but destruction. Outside they look fine but inside they are rotten. God the righteous judge has declared it so and so it will be.

Still, like all the prophets, God doesn’t end on a note of despair. There is always hope. God has Amos remind the Jews about their glorious future when all will worship Him in peace and righteousness. The Messiah will reign on David’s throne and everything will be perfect. But until then . . .

OUTLINE OF AMOS

Introduction (Judgment) 1:1-2

I. PROPHECIES 1-2

Prophecies of Damascus, Philistia, Tyre, Edom, Ammon, Moab, Judah, Israel

II. SERMONS 3-6

A. Privileges Despised (Present) 3

B. Sin Described (Past)

C. Punishment To Come (Future) 5-6

III. VISIONS 7-9

A. Locust 7:1-3

B. Fire 7:4-6

C. Plum-Line 7:7-17

D. Over-Ripe Fruit 8

E. False Altar 9:1-10

Conclusion (Hope) 9:11-15

HOSEA:

LOYAL LOVE

TITLE: After prophet who wrote it

AUTHOR: Hosea = "Jehovah is Salvation"

DATE of WRITING: 785-725 BC

PLACE of WRITING: North (Israel)

TIME COVERED: 785-725 BC

RECIPIENTS: North (Israel)

KEY VERSE: 3:1 *The LORD said to me, "Go, show your love to your wife again, though she is loved by another and is an adulteress. Love her as the LORD loves the Israelites, though they turn to other gods and love the sacred raisin cakes."*

KEY WORDS: "Love," "whoredom/spiritual adultery" (14 times)

PURPOSE: to announce that God will chasten His unfaithful "wife" but will restore her to a place of blessing.

THEME: Loyal love of God for His own despite sin and unfaithfulness.



ADULTEROUS WIFE & FAITHFUL HUSBAND (Hosea 1-3) The book of Hosea starts with a very sad love story. Hosea, God's prophet, actually lives out God's message. He is a walking audio-visual to communicate God's truth to the people.

God tells him to marry a woman named Gomer. He is loyal and faithful to her and God, but she is disloyal to him. She is sexually unfaithful. In fact, many scholars believe the children born to her are not his. As her immoral lifestyle continues she finds her self taken in slavery and on the auction block, being sold as a slave. Hosea shows up and pays the price to buy her back, restoring her as his wife. It is a sad, moving story. The Jews couldn't have missed the meaning of it, though.

ADULTEROUS NATION & FAITHFUL GOD (Hosea 4-14)

In Hosea 4-7 we see that **God is Holy - He Hates Sin**. The parallel between Gomer and Israel (the northern 10 tribes) is here elaborately done. Israel is the spiritual wife of God as Gomer is the physical wife of Hosea. As she became physical unfaithful, so Israel has been spiritually unfaithful to God, willfully rejecting their sacred relationship and putting idols first. The Jews worshipped Baal by sacred prostitution and child sacrifice. God remained faithful to them, but they were unfaithful to Him, abandoning His love. As Gomer, they were unfaithful, unthankful and unworthy. They gave themselves to others and as a result their health and reputation were ruined. They only cared about material things, but those 'things' didn't satisfy and they ended up deserted and abandoned by their 'lovers.' Israel, like Gomer, was unable to help herself. Deliverance could only come by Someone greater coming to their aid.

In Hosea 8-10 we see that **God is Just - He Judges Sin**. Again visual aids are used to show God's message: a dying man shows there is no future, a flaming fire shows all will be devoured, a half-baked cake shows the tastelessness of the Jews 'religion,' a deceitful bow shows they can't be trusted, a pleasureless vessel shows God has no joy in His people and a forgetful servant shows the Jews are of no service to God. All these show Israel is guilty before God. Still, God is patient and in His mercy puts off judgment to give time to repent. However God is also just, and the time to settle accounts will soon arrive. Barrenness and bondage are coming. While it may be too late for the nation as a whole, individuals can still turn to God in repentance and receive forgiveness and mercy.

Finally, in Hosea 11-14 we see that **God is Love - He Has Mercy on Sinners**. Hosea, like all the prophets, ends his message on a note of hope. Consolation will follow chastening. A time of peace and deliverance is coming in the future.

The book concludes with Hosea pleading one last time for the people to repent and turn to God. God will forgive and restore, as Hosea did Gomer. "Hosea" means "God is Salvation," the same as "Joshua." It's written differently in English to be able to tell them apart, but they are the same in Hebrew. Hosea is a picture of loyal love. He redeemed Gomer by paying a price to buy back what was already his. God did the same with us. Each loved their 'wives' in spite of their sin and were faithful despite being shown unfaithfulness. They didn't set their loved ones aside but suffered personal agony because they cared more about the other than their own ease and comfort. They were willing to pay the price to buy back what was really theirs, to forgive and restore. Each looked forward to enjoying an intimate relationship with his loved one after restoration: Hosea with Gomer and God with His people in the millennium. That is the future hope, the consolation which will eventually come.

One day a little boy wandered into the woods on his way home and got lost. Finally he found his way home but hid in the barn all night long. He was afraid because he was late. His parents were up all night searching the woods for him because they loved and missed him. Had he understood their concern he could have spent the night in his bed with his family. The same is true of us and God. He is anxious and willing to have us back, it is our choice to stay away.

OUTLINE OF HOSEA

I. ADULTEROUS WIFE and FAITHFUL HUSBAND (Hosea and Gomer) 1-3

(Narrative, Symbolic Illustration – The Prodigal Wife)

- A. Sin of Gomer 1
- B. Punishment of Gomer 2
- C. Pardon of Gomer 3

II. ADULTEROUS NATION and FAITHFUL GOD (God and Israel) 4-14

(Sermons, Spiritual Truth – The Prodigal People)

- A. Sin of Israel 4-7
- B. Punishment of Israel 8-10
- C. Pardon of Israel 11-14

ISAIAH:

GOD IS SALVATION

TITLE: After prophet who wrote it

AUTHOR: Isaiah "Salvation is of Jehovah"

DATE of WRITING: 722-681 BC

PLACE of WRITING: Judah

TIME COVERED: From Isaiah's time to eternity future (messages cover reign of 5 kings)

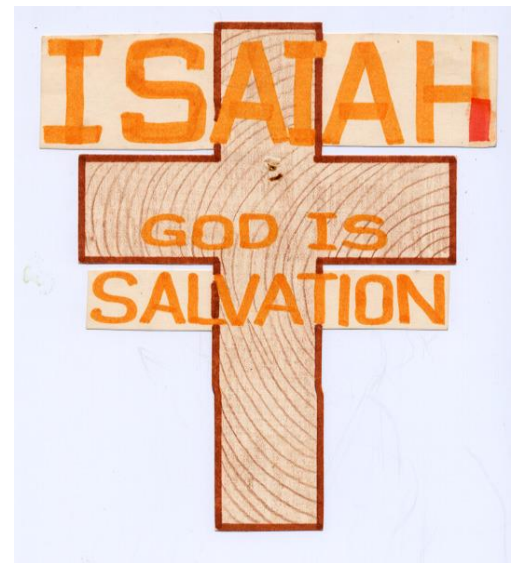
RECIPIENTS: Southern kingdom, Judah

KEY VERSE: 6:1-3 *In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord seated on a throne, high and exalted, and the train of his robe filled the temple. Above him were seraphs, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. And they were calling to one another: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory."*

KEY WORDS: "Holy One of Israel" 25 times, "judge/judgment" 52 times, "comfort" 18 times

PURPOSE: Outward religious activity without an inner attitude of love & submission brings judgment

THEME: God is holy and man is not, therefore unless sin is confessed and removed judgment comes



The Old Testament is divided into three main sections: History (Genesis - Esther), Poetry (Job - Ecclesiastes) and the Prophets (Isaiah - Malachi). The largest prophetic books come first (Major Prophets - Isaiah - Daniel) followed by the smaller books. Isaiah is the first prophetic book we come to, not because he was the first chronologically but because his book is the largest of all the prophets. Even more than being foremost in quantity, it is also foremost in quality. Having 66 chapters, like the Bible has 66 books, it has been called the Bible in miniature. Isaiah uses the term 'salvation' 26 times while all the other prophets only use it 7 times combined. It shows much about Jesus and salvation. The first 39 chapters show man's condemnation, his need of salvation, just as the first 39 books in the Bible, the Old Testament, show the same thing. The final 27 chapters of Isaiah, and books of the Bible (the New Testament) show God's consolation, His provision for man's need. Truly this is a special book!

NEED OF SALVATION (1-39) The book opens foretelling that God's judgment is to come onto Judah, the southern kingdom (1 - 12). Their rebellion and sins are detailed. In contrast to man's sinfulness we see God's holiness. God revealed His glory to Isaiah (6) and this became the motive for as well as the content of Isaiah's whole message.

Isaiah doesn't just foretell judgment and destruction, though. Every time God sends a message of judgment He also includes words of hope and restoration in the future. Isaiah is full of prophecies about the Messiah to come. He is to be born of a virgin (7:14) and come from the line of David (11:1), called 'Immanuel' (7:14), be a stumbling block to Israel (8:14) and a light to the nations (9:2). He is to be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Prince of Peace (9:6).

Next, judgment is seen as coming on the Gentiles, too (13-27). Babylon, Moab, Damascus, Ethiopia, Egypt and Arabia will also fall to God because of their unconfessed sin. Any who turn against God, then or in the future, will suffer the same fate.

Judgment will come on the whole world (28-35) as well. One future day the Messiah will return and judge all who oppose Him while rewarding those who have remained faithful to Him. Assyria, n will especially be punished for its cruel treatment of God's northern kingdom (36-39).

The second section of Isaiah turns from the dismal present to a time of hope in the future. Even the names of Isaiah's two sons reflect this two-fold message that God spoke through Him.

“Hasten the Spoil, Rush the Prey,” the first son, spoke of the coming judgment for sin. “A Remnant Shall Return,” the second son, talked about the coming hope of the time when the Messiah would rule in perfect peace and righteousness. What names! Every time the boys were called into the house for supper the neighbors heard a sermon preached!

PROVISION OF A SAVIOR (40-66) God is still faithful, even when His people are unfaithful. He will keep His promises to Abraham and his descendants. A time of comfort will come when the Messiah will rule and reign forever (40-48). All God’s enemies will be judged and removed.

Sin and rebellion will then be removed and all will be perfect righteousness forever (49-57). This Messiah is called the “Suffering Servant,” for those two words describe Him and His mission. Chapter 53 is especially clear about this, sounding like something one would read in one of the Gospels. No wonder Isaiah is quoted and referred to in the New Testament more than any other Old Testament book. Isaiah 53 alone has almost 60 quotes or allusions in the New Testament! It is a book and chapter that must be understood before the New Testament can be really understood.

Isaiah closes with thoughts about the time when redemption will be finally and totally realized (58-66). God’s people will be restored and God’s glory recognized and worshipped everywhere. It will take the tribulation for the Jews to turn back to God, but it will happen. Thus, though the present seems bleak for the Jews, the future looks great because God is in charge of it all. There is hope because God is in control and God keeps His promises!

Isaiah’s painful warning of the consequences of taking sin lightly applies to us today, too. God is still holy, and we are not. Sin not covered by the blood of Jesus cries out for judgment, and a righteous and holy God will ultimately judge sin. The Suffering Servant is still the best answer, in fact the only answer. Have you confessed your sin and asked for His mercy in covering and removing it? That’s the only way to have a future in this sin-sick world.

OUTLINE OF ISAIAH

I. NEED OF SALVATION (Groaning Under God’s Judgment) 1-39

- A. Judgment on Judah 1-12
 - 1. Judah’s Rebellion 1-4
 - 2. Isaiah’s Commission 5-8
 - 3. Judah’s Messiah 9-12
- B. Judgment on Gentiles 13-27
 - 1. Judgment on Babylon and Moab 13-16
 - 2. Judgment on Damascus, Ethiopia, Egypt 17-20
 - 3. Judgment on Arabia and Tyre 21-23
 - 4. Judgment on Future Nations 24-27
- C. Judgment on World 28-35
 - 1. Judgment is Coming 28-30
 - 2. King is Coming 31-35
- D. Judgment on Assyria 36-39

II. PROVISION OF A SAVIOR (Glorifying in God’s Salvation) 40-66

- A. Redemption Promised 40-48
 - 1. Comfort for God’s People 40-43
 - 2. Judgment for God’s Enemies 44-48
- B. Redemption Provided 49-57
 - 1. Prince of Peace 49-51
 - 2. Suffering Servant 52-57
- C. Redemption Realized 58-66
 - 1. God’s People Restored 58-62
 - 2. God’s Glory Recognized 63-66

MICAH:

HOPE

TITLE: After prophet who wrote it

AUTHOR: Micah

DATE of WRITING: 749 - 697 BC

PLACE of WRITING: Judah

TIME COVERED: 749 BC - eternity

RECIPIENTS: Judah & Israel

KEY VERSES: *4:1-4 In the last days the mountain of the LORD's temple will be established as chief among the mountains; it will be raised above the hills, and peoples will stream to it. Many nations will come and say, "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob. He will teach us his ways, so that we may walk in his paths.". They will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore.*

KEY WORDS: 'Hear" 9 times; 'desolation' 4 times; 'gather' 9 times

PURPOSE: Judgment is coming, but eventually Israel will be restored.

THEME: Despite coming judgment, there is hope in the future.



Scientists once did an experiment where they took a number of pigs and put them in deep water. The pigs struggled for 24 hours and then drowned. Next they took another group and put them in deep water, just like the first group. However after 12 hours they allowed them to get out for 30 minutes. Then they put them back in. This group lasted 40 hours before drowning. Why did the second group last almost twice as long as the first? It was because they had the hope of being rescued again. Hope made all the difference.

HOPELESSNESS We live in a world today that is full of hopelessness. Music, art, movies and other areas of our culture clearly show this. The large numbers of people who suffer from addictions or psychological problems also point to this as a time of hopelessness. AIDS, nuclear warfare, financial pressures, breakdown of interpersonal relationships and pressures in the work place bring fear and emptiness. With no stable anchor to hold onto and nothing sure in the future, all people have is today. And when that goes sour there seems to be nothing left. Satan, the Prince of this World, promotes hopelessness for it causes people to think that death is their best alternative. As the kingdom of darkness grows, so does the suicide rate. All of this is because man has no hope.

GODS 'HOPE' The definition of the word 'hope' today refers to a wish, a possibility, something we'd like to happen. Often when all else fails and disaster seems certain people say, "All we can do is hope for the best." This isn't what the Bible is talking about when it uses the word 'hope.' When the Bible uses the word 'hope' it is referring to 'confident assurance.' It means something is 100% certain, its as sure as if it already happened. It is a guarantee of God's promises being fulfilled. Our confident assurance is that all things work together for good, God is in charge of everything that happens and it is all for our maturity and His glory, that Jesus may return for us at any moment, that when we die we will spend eternity with Jesus, and that we can never lose our salvation. Our hope is not in something we wish for but something we are assured of, so we have nothing to fear.

MICAH'S HOPE While each of the prophets offers hope after giving God's message of impending judgment, Micah especially focuses on that. Each prophet concluded his message by talking about the future time of deliverance which God would provide for His faithful people, Micah goes into extra detail about this. Micah himself lived and ministered during the time of Isaiah. While Isaiah was a

well-known prophet who ministered to rich, city people, Micah was an unknown who preached to poor country people. Both ministered during the time the Northern Kingdom was falling to Assyria.

PROPHECY OF JUDGMENT (1-3) Although it will be several more generations until the Southern Kingdom actually falls, the final countdown has begun. It is too late to turn, for they are too committed to their sinful path. Judgment is approaching. Their wound is incurable. Sin is rampant. The family unit has broken down. Materialism, stealing and scheming are common. People take advantage of the poor. The leaders are selfish and self-centered. They hate good and love evil. False prophets abound and false truths are accepted as truth. Even the priests have turned from God, just teaching what will bring in the greatest offering. While there is no hope for the nation, there is still hope for the individual. Mercy is still available for each person who turns to God for salvation and forgiveness. They won't escape the results of sin in this life, but they will escape eternal consequences of hell.

PROMISE OF RESTORATION (4-5) Using almost the same words that Isaiah used, Micah writes about the hope the faithful Jews still have. He talks in detail about the millennium when the temple will be rebuilt and people will worship God once again. The Messiah will rule and reign, bringing peace to all. All will return to garden of Eden conditions. What a glorious hope that is for Israel! Micah says that the King who will rule over this kingdom will be born in Bethlehem (5:2).

PLEA FOR REPENTANCE (6-7) Because of this Micah pleads with the people to repent from their halfhearted worship, empty ritual, persistent rebellion, deception, hypocrisy, corruption, greed and idolatry. Judgment will come because of that, but there is a glorious future for Israel when their borders will be expanded and all nations will come to Jerusalem to worship and serve the Messiah King. What a glorious hope that is for them all!

OUR BLESSED HOPE We have a hope even greater than the Jews had. We have a far distant hope of spending eternity with God, too. We have a near future hope of the rapture or, if we die first, being immediately with God in heaven. We have a present hope as well. All things DO work together, there IS a plan and purpose for all that happens, God IS sovereign and does all because He loves us. Where would we be without that hope? When the Roman Empire started falling apart, many turned to Jesus because of the hope they saw displayed in the lives of God's people. Our times are similar to those of the early church as well as Israel before judgment came. We, too, can shine our light of hope in a dark and hopeless world. Remember, the hope of the world is Jesus!

OUTLINE OF MICAH

I. PROPHECY OF JUDGMENT (Judgment on God's People) 1-3

- A. Judgment is Certain 1
- B. Greedy People 2
- C. Unjust Leaders 3:1-4
- D. False Prophets 3:5-8
- E. Perverse Priests 3:9-12

II. PROMISE OF RESTORATION (Blessing for God's People) 4-5

- A. Life During the Kingdom 4:1-6
- B. Events Before the Kingdom 4:9-13
- C. His Coming 5:1-3
- D. His Kingdom 5:4-7
- E. His Conquest 5:8-15

III. PLEA FOR REPENTANCE (Lawsuits against God's People) 6-7

- A. Indictment #1 6:1-5
- B. Confession #1 6:6-8
- C. Indictment #2 6:9-16
- D. Confession #2 7:1=10

NAHUM: JUSTICE

TITLE: After Prophet who wrote it

AUTHOR: Nahum ("Comforter")

DATE of WRITING: 661 - 612 BC

PLACE of WRITING: Israel

TIME COVERED: About 50 years

RECIPIENTS: Nineveh

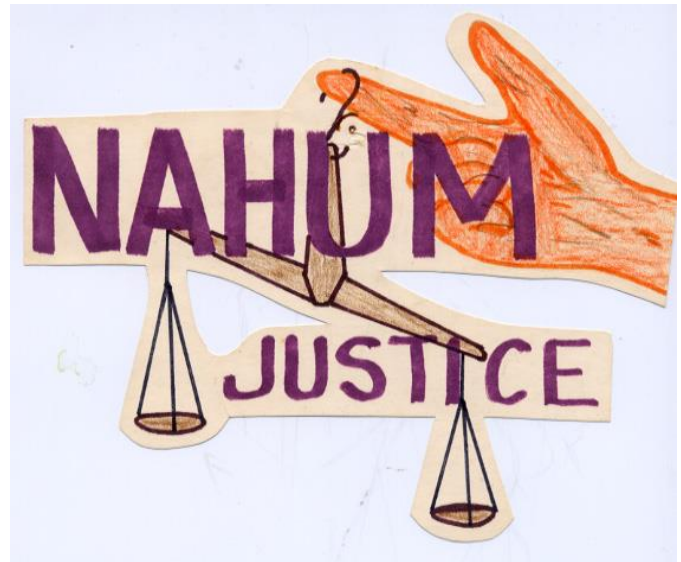
KEY VERSE: 3:5-7 *"I am against you," declares the LORD Almighty. "I will lift your skirts over your face. I will show the nations your nakedness and the kingdoms your shame. I will pelt you*

with filth, I will treat you with contempt and make you a spectacle. All who see you will flee from you and say, 'Nineveh is in ruins-- who will mourn for her?' Where can I find anyone to comfort you?"

KEY WORD: "Vengeance/Revenge" 3 times

PURPOSE: About 150 years after Jonah's revival, Nineveh is deep in sin so God announces their destruction because of sin.

THEME: The justice of God in destroying Nineveh



Suppose someone invited you out to lunch and took you to a nice restaurant. They ordered expensive food for both of you, enjoyed the meal, then got up and walked out without waiting for the check. When you asked them why they didn't pay they were surprised, saying they didn't know they had to pay and weren't prepared to pay. They just wanted a nice meal is all! Sound unbelievable? Everyone knows you must pay for what you do. Or do they? Often people sin assuming they'll never have to pay for it. God holds each one accountable for their sin. Unless it is put under the blood of Jesus, it remains on the account of the one who committed the sin.

Nineveh is a prime example of this. Founded by Nimrod, who also founded Babel, it was a large, virtually impregnable city. The walls were 100 feet high and wide enough for 3 chariots to ride side by side. In addition there were 1,500 towers which were 200 feet high. A moat 60 feet deep and 140 feet wide surrounded the whole city. The walls were 60 miles long, making the city about 350 square miles. The Tigris River flowed along one side and the Khoser River came through the town. This provided valuable water as well as further protection. Suburbs and fields surrounded the city. At least 1 million people lived there. These were cruel, heartless people. They had a mania for blood and savagery, comparable to the worst in Nazi Germany. They didn't just defeat other nations, they enjoyed bringing the worst suffering and misery possible. Jonah's revival of 150 years earlier had completely faded and their evil was worse than ever.

JUSTICE DECLARED (1) I don't know what kind of speaker Nahum was, but he was a tremendously gifted writer. The book is a beautiful literary masterpiece. He uses special Hebrew words to describe God. He points out God is very angry at Nineveh for its sin. God has been patient but even God's patience has limits -- and His limits are almost here. God is all powerful, and withholding judgment so far wasn't done because He was weak but to give more time for repentance. Actually God isn't being cruel in destroying Nineveh, He has been very patient with them. Judging them brings justice to the world and glorifies Him. It just gives them what they chose anyway.

Ironically, God used the rivers and walls they used for protection to destroy them. That was His show of justice on them.

JUSTICE DESCRIBED (2) Nahum not only tells WHAT will happen (chapter 1) but also HOW it will happen (chapter 2). Babylon will use the rivers to flood the city and easily destroy it. Inside the nobles and people will be so overconfident that they will party and be drunk, not believing Nineveh could fall. They will be wrong! History records the fall of Nineveh just exactly as God predicted!

JUSTICE DESERVED (3) In chapter 3 the WHY of the destruction is detailed. The people are evil, cruel and bloody. They are guilty of idolatrous practices, witchcraft and destruction. They will reap what they sowed. They showed no one mercy, and none will be shown to them. The city will be so thoroughly destroyed no one will even remember its location. That is what happened. For almost 3,000 years its very location was unknown, until 1842. The city literally sinned itself to death. It didn't even try to change or think of repenting. It died. Somehow they thought God would judge lesser nations for lesser sin, but they would escape. Not so. Unfortunately there are many parallels with America. I remember hearing Billy Graham say that if God doesn't judge America He will have to apologize to Sodom and Gomorrah! Well, God isn't going to apologize. There is a price to pay for sin.

No one would think of going into a restaurant and not having to pay for the food they eat, but many today think they won't have to pay for their sin. This applies to nations and individuals both. Aren't you glad that Jesus paid for your sins on the cross and, because you accepted His free gift of salvation, you don't have to worry about that any more? Take some time now and thank Him for what He has done for you and what He will do for you.

OUTLINE OF NAHUM

I. JUSTICE DELCARED (Wrath against Nineveh) 1

- A. The God of Vengeance 1:1-7
- B. The Vengeance of God 1:8-15

II. JUSTICE DESCRIBED (Woe in Nineveh) 2

- A. The Attack 2:1-5
- B. The Defeat 2:6-13

III. JUSTICE DESERVED (Warning to Nineveh) 3

- A. Wickedness Unlimited 3:1-7
- B. Warning Unheeded 3:8-10

ZEPHANIAH:

DAY of the LORD

TITLE: After the prophet who wrote it

AUTHOR: "Zephaniah" means "He Whom God Has Hidden"

DATE of WRITING: About 630 BC

PLACE of WRITING: Judah (Jerusalem?)

TIME COVERED: 630 BC to eternity future

RECIPIENTS: Judah and Jerusalem

KEY VERSE: 1:7, 12 *Be silent before the Sovereign LORD, for the day of the LORD is near.*

The LORD has prepared a sacrifice; he has consecrated those he has invited. ... At that time I will search Jerusalem with lamps and punish those who are complacent, who are like wine left on its dregs, who think, 'The LORD will do nothing, either good or bad.'

KEY WORD: "Day of the Lord" (20 times), "desolation" (7 times), "remnant" (4 times)

PURPOSE: to warn of coming judgment and to comfort the faithful remnant

THEME: Day of the Lord as prefigured by the Babylonian invasion



Everyone would like to know the future. People are hoping to find some answers to what lies ahead. Unfortunately they assume the future will be better than the present. That's what they base their hope on. But what about when the future gets worse? Then what? That was God's message through Zephaniah to the people of his day, and it is God's message to people today, too. The only hope God could offer to them then was in the distant future -- the Day of the Lord.

JUDGMENT IN THE DAY OF THE LORD (1:1 - 3:8) Zephaniah ministered at the same time as Jeremiah, when Jerusalem fell to Babylon. While Jeremiah was tender in wooing the people to God, Zephaniah hammered hard at the nation's conscience. His message is contained in just 53 verses but it contains some of the strongest statements of judgment in the whole Old Testament. God is the God of the universe. He is holy and righteous and expects people to live in accordance with his will. Sin and rebellion **MUST** be punished. The Jews have gotten so far from God that it's too late to stop the coming judgment. Sins of idolatry, indifference, conformity and irresponsibility have gone too far for too long. Judgment is coming for sure. The only hope is the coming Day of the Lord (see JOEL for a chart and more information).

This future judgment will include not only Israel but all the Gentile nations, too. It will culminate with the battle of Armageddon.

SALVATION IN THE DAY OF THE LORD (3:9-20) Then will come Israel's rejoicing as the Millennium comes. The Jews will repent and turn back to God and the Messiah will rule on David's throne forever. Unfortunately it will take the tribulation for them to repent.

Their problem then, as is often also the case today, is complacency. Complacency has been called the 'curse of Christendom.' It opens God's people to compromise. It's more deadly than outright rebellion because it is harder to recognize and change. Lukewarmness is something God hates (Revelation 3:15-16). Complacency is like a malignancy: lethal when ignored, but conquerable when confronted. Ask God to point out any complacency that has slipped into your life. Repent and turn to God for His forgiveness and restoration.

OUTLINE OF ZEPHANIAH

I. JUDGMENT IN THE DAY OF THE LORD (Revenge) 1-3:8

- A. Judgment on Earth 1:1-3
- B. Judgment on Judah 1:4-2:3
- C. Judgment on Gentiles 2:4-15
- D. Judgment on Jerusalem 3:1-7
- E. Judgment on All Nations 3:8

II. SALVATION IN THE DAY OF THE LORD (Restoration) 3:9-20

- A. Israel's Regathering 3:9-10
- B. Israel's Repentance 3:11-13
- C. Israel's Rejoicing 3:14-15
- D. Israel's Redeemer 3:16-20

HABAKKUK: PATIENCE



TITLE: After prophet who wrote it

AUTHOR: Habakkuk (“embrace”)

DATE of WRITING: 610 - 599 BC

PLACE of WRITING: Judah

TIME COVERED: Judah’s Conquest by Babylon

RECIPIENTS: Judah, just before conquest

KEY VERSE: 2:4 *“See, he is puffed up; his desires are not upright-- but the righteous will live by his faith--*

KEY WORDS: “Why” “Woe” (5 times)

PURPOSE: Habakkuk is concerned over God’s apparent lack of concern about Judah’s sin. God says He will discipline them through Babylon, then judge Babylon.

THEME: God’s patience in dealing with man

What do you do when you find yourself in a world ruled by evil, when people around you flout the will of God, yet God does nothing about it? That is the problem Habakkuk faced. Month after month, year after year he saw his nation falling apart because of flagrant sin. “Do something, God!” he cries out. Then God starts doing something - He disciplines His people with the Babylonians! “But they are worse than we are!” Habakkuk cries. “I know,” God says, I’ll judge them before long, too.”

Habakkuk is 3 short, pointed chapters. It consists of dialogue between Habakkuk and God about what’s happening and about how to accept God’s dealings when we don’t understand them. It applies to us today individually when things happen that we don’t understand. It applies to us as a nation for we, too, have turned far from God.

PROBLEMS (1) Why does God allow His people to live in sin? Why do the wicked prosper? Why does God allow His people to live in sin, oppressing and taking advantage of the minority who try to remain faithful to Him?

People today ask the same thing: why doesn’t God stop war? Why do good people suffer? Why do unfair things happen? How can God let abortion continue? The answer that He gives to Habakkuk is that He is patient. We must be patient to await His making wrong right. After all, if He weren’t patient with us where would we be? If He would have judged this world before we were born where would we be? Patience is an important virtue in those who would be like Jesus. It is very lacking today. Everything must happen fast and efficiently. Our very lives are full of trying to cram more and more into them. God tells us to patiently wait for Him (Psalm 27:14; 40:1). God is never late, but He’s never early either. There is no way of trying to rush God, He works at His pace, and He is a patient God.

Before long, though, God tells Habakkuk, He will discipline the people’s sin with the Babylonians. He isn’t indifferent to sin, He has a plan which is unfolding. That brings up another question to Habakkuk, though. The Babylonians were worse than the Jews! Has God changed His standards? No, the Jews were more accountable. Will God forsake His people entirely? If so, what about His promises to Abraham? How will having His special people destroyed bring glory to God?

SOLUTION (2) God answers these questions of Habakkuk's by reassuring Him that He is righteous -- He will judge Babylon, too. Those who are righteous will be spared the eternal consequences of sin, but not the temporal. "The just shall live by faith" (2:4) is quoted three times in the New Testament (Romans 1:17; Galatians 3:11; Hebrews 10:38). This verse was what God used to motivate Martin Luther to start the Reformation. God says the ungodly, whether Jew or Babylonian, will perish and the godly, whoever they are, will have eternal life. God says He is not indifferent to sin, He will judge it (Galatians 6:7). "Be patient, Habakkuk," God is saying, "I know what I'm doing here!" But patience is hard to learn. It doesn't come naturally or easily. It takes suffering and difficulties to stretch us and teach us patience (Romans 5:3; Job 1:21; James 5:11). We only see how great God is when we patiently wait for Him to act.

PRAISE (3) Habakkuk realized God's sovereign power and that all creation was the work of His hands and under control. God is in control of the forces of nature as well as the nations of the world. Even though it seemed things were out of control, God was (and is) still in control. He closes with a tremendous affirmation of God's sovereign control and recommitment of Himself to praise and trust God no matter what. *Though the fig tree does not bud and there are no grapes on the vines, though the olive crop fails and the fields produce no food, though there are no sheep in the pen and no cattle in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will be joyful in God my Savior. The Sovereign LORD is my strength; he makes my feet like the feet of a deer, he enables me to go on the heights.*

OUTLINE OF HABAKKUK

I. PROBLEMS (Habakkuk Questions) 1

- A. Question 1: "Why Does God Allow His People to Live in Sin?" 1:1-4
- B. Answer 1: "God Will Use the Babylonians to Discipline the Jews" 1:5-11
- C. Question 2: "How Can God Allow Unbelievers to Discipline His People?" 1:2-2:1

II. SOLUTION (God Answers) 2

Answer 2: "God is righteous and will judge Babylonians, too." 2:2-20

III. PRAISE (Habakkuk Responds) 3

- A. Praise for God's Person 3:1-3
- B. Praise for the God's Power 3:4-7
- C. Praise for the God's Purpose 3:8-16
- D. Praise because of Faith in God 3:17-19

BIBLE OVERVIEW

17. ASSYRIAN CAPTIVITY

MAIN EVENTS: North (Israel) Captive into Assyria

MAIN PEOPLE:

BOOKS OF THE BIBLE:

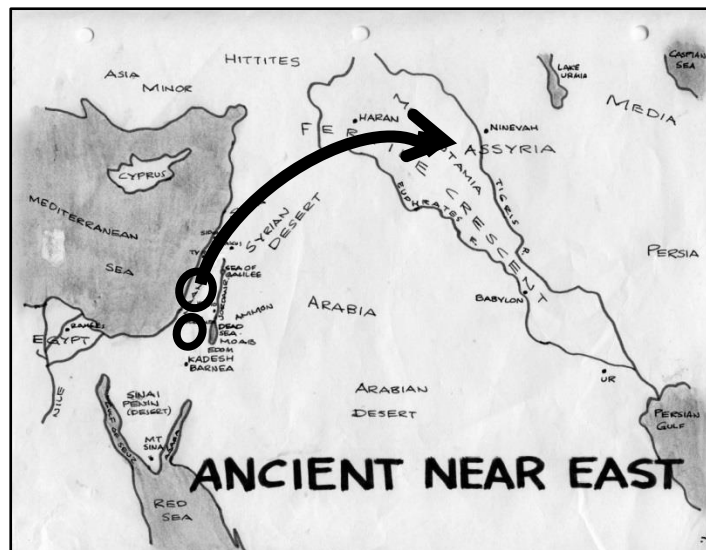
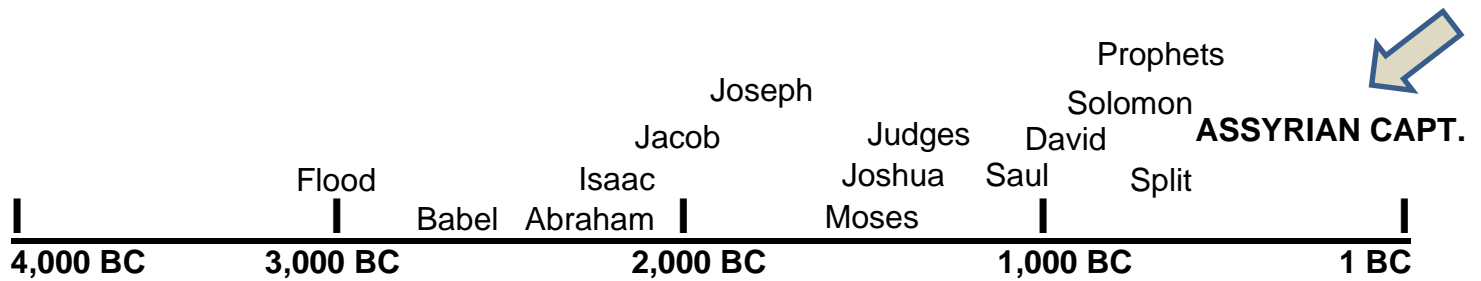
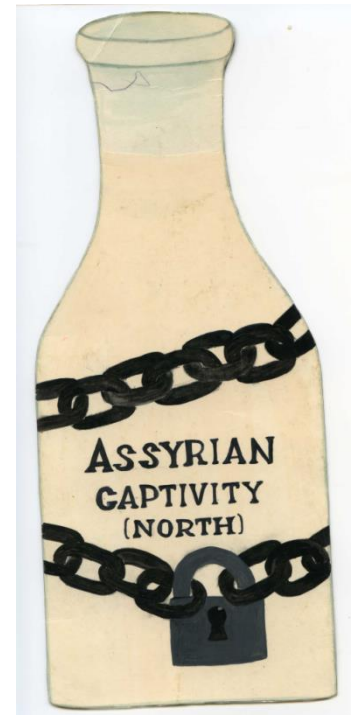
BIBLE VERSE: *2 Kings 17:18 So the Lord was very angry with Israel and removed them from his presence. Only the tribe of Judah was left.*

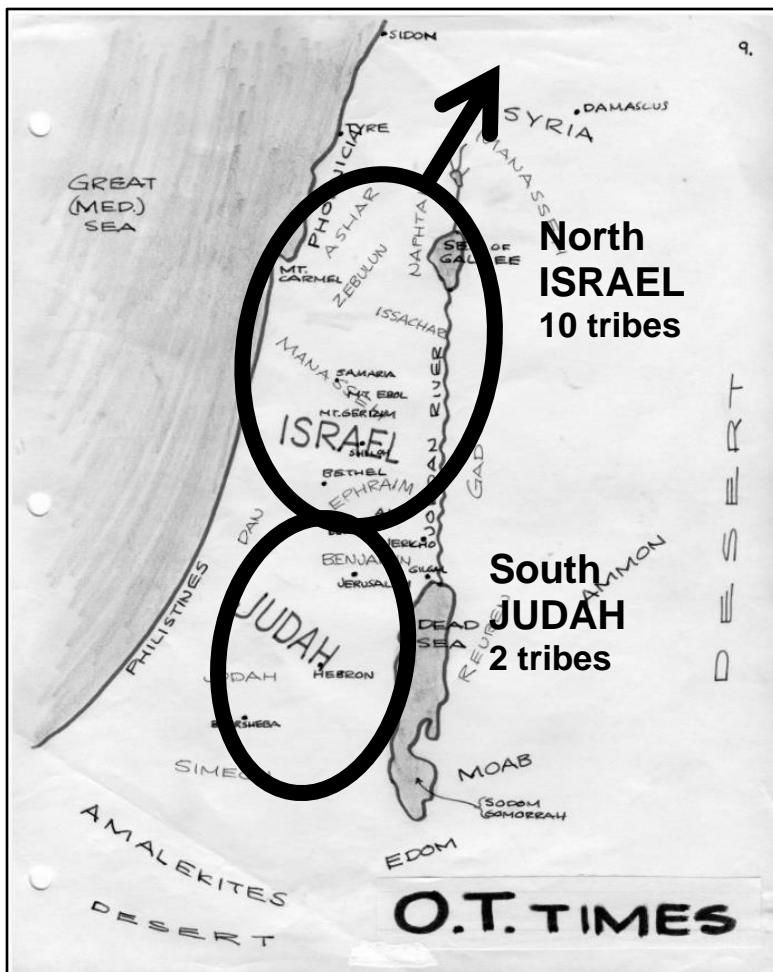
TIME: 722 BC

WORLD EVENTS AT THIS TIME:

Zoroaster in Persia

GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION: Palestine to Assyria





During this time in Bible history the Northern Kingdom, Israel, was taken captive by Assyria. Assyria was the leading world power in the area and was very cruel. They brought nation after nation under their control. They attacked Israel three or four times and forced them to pay a heavy tribute to Assyria. Shalmaneser then attacked and, after a three year siege of the capital city, Samaria, defeated it in 720 BC. The Northern Kingdom, Israel, had existed as a nation for almost 200 years. Every one of their nineteen kings was evil, not one was godly.

It was the practice of the Assyrians to completely destroy each country it captured by taking off a large number of the people there and moving in people who had been captured from other nations. This left the north, Samaria, with a mixture of Jews and Gentiles who intermarried over time and became a race of half Jews half Gentiles. This is why Nehemiah rejected their help rebuilding the city and why Samaritans were so rejected in Jesus' day (Nehemiah 2:19-20; 4; John 4:1-9; Luke 10:33; 17:16; John 8:44).

God did not allow them to conquer Judah because He did not want His godly remnant there to be moved to other countries and have their descendants intermarry. So He did not allow Assyria to defeat Judah and take them captive as well.

When these ten tribes went into captivity they weren't 'lost,' for the godly, believing remnant in each of them had already moved to the south, Judah. Thus the Southern Kingdom, Judah, became in effect the true Jewish nation containing the believers from all twelve tribes. So the nation stayed together as a whole and no tribes were 'lost' (James 1:1; Acts 26:6-7). But those who were taken to Assyria never returned, and the Northern Kingdom, Israel, never existed as such again.

What a sad ending for people who were so richly blessed by God. We see that pattern over and over throughout the Bible: God reaches out in love and grace, but the response is rejection and disobedience. Still He is willing to forgive, to restore and to continue His blessings. Most reject Him, though. That is still the case today.

BIBLE OVERVIEW

18.

BABYLONIAN CAPTIVITY



MAIN EVENTS: The Jews in Captivity in Babylon

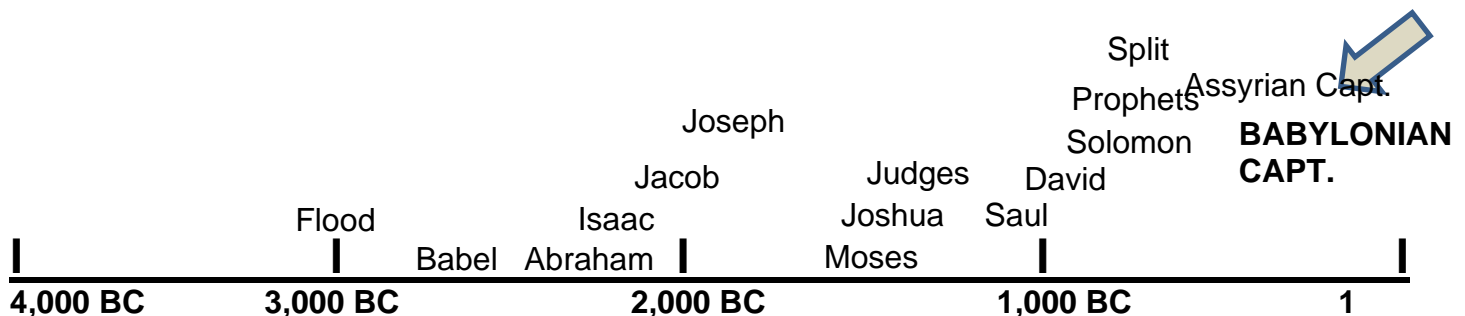
MAIN PEOPLE: Jeremiah

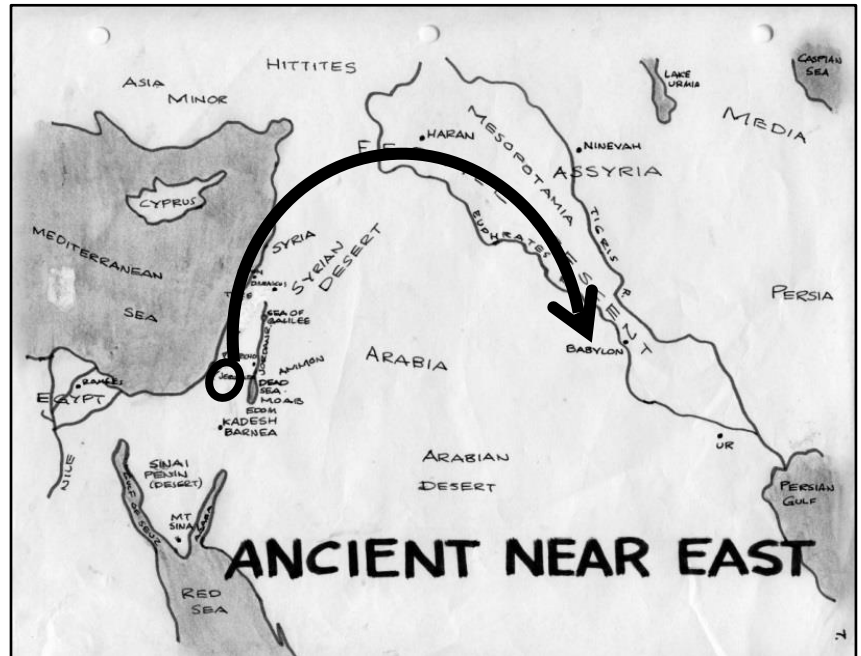
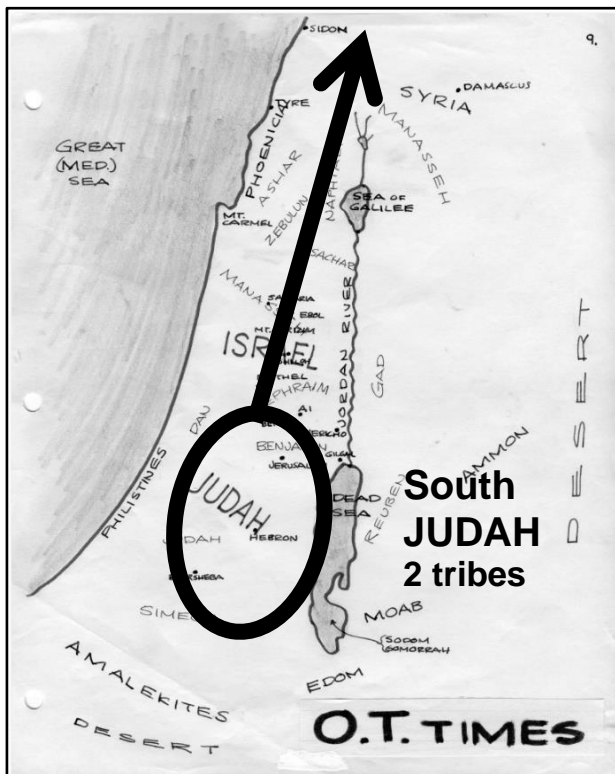
BOOKS OF THE BIBLE: Jeremiah, Lamentations

BIBLE VERSE: *Jeremiah 21:14 I will punish you as your deeds deserve, declares the LORD. 2 Chronicles 36:15-19 The Lord, the God of their fathers, sent word to them through his messengers again and again, because he had pity on his people and on his dwelling place. 16 But they mocked God's messengers, despised his words and scoffed at his prophets until the wrath of the Lord was aroused against his people and there was no remedy. 17 He brought up against them the king of the Babylonians, who killed their young men with the sword in the sanctuary, and spared neither young man nor young woman, old man or aged. God handed all of them over to Nebuchadnezzar. 18 He carried to Babylon all the articles from the temple of God, both large and small, and the treasures of the Lord's temple and the treasures of the king and his officials. 19 They set fire to God's temple and broke down the wall of Jerusalem; they burned all the palaces and destroyed everything of value there.*

TIME: 586 BC

GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION: Palestine, Babylon





This section of the Bible overview focuses on the nation of Judah also going into captivity.

The Southern Kingdom, Judah, existed as a nation for about 150 years after the North went into captivity to Assyria. They existed as a nation for about 350 years. They had twenty kings but only eight of them were godly, and most of those were not godly for their whole reign.

Despite repeated warnings by the prophets, the Southern Nation turned from God and continued following pagan gods and idols. There were a few times of revival, but those were short-lived. Finally, judgment came from the nation Babylon, which had replaced Assyria as the power in that part of the world. Their empire was growing as they captured one nation after another.

In 605 BC Babylon attacked and took many captives from Judah, including Daniel (Daniel 1:1-6). Then in 597 BC Jehoiakim was taken into captivity (2 Chronicles 36:5-6). Three months and ten days later Jehoiachin, along with other members of the royal family, were also taken into captivity (2 Chronicles 36:9-10; 2 Kings 24:15-17). Finally, in 586 BC, after a siege of a year and a half, Jerusalem was conquered and destroyed. Most of the people were taken into captivity, along with articles from the temple. Only the poorest people remained (2 Kings 25).

After seventy years God allowed His people to return to their land (Jeremiah 25:12; 29:10). This happened in 516 BC when Cyrus allowed some Jews to return to the land of Palestine. The Babylonian Captivity had a lasting impact on the Jews, however. For one thing, they have never again wandered into idolatry, even to this very day. Also, they turned from an agrarian culture of farmers and shepherds, to business men. They remain among the best and most successful business men in the world to this very day. Despite their failure to accept Jesus as their Lord and Savior, He still protects and blesses His chosen people.

JEREMIAH: FINAL CHANCE:

TITLE: After Prophet Who Wrote It

AUTHOR: Jeremiah, prophet for 66 years

DATE of WRITING: About 650 BC

PLACE of WRITING: Judah and then Egypt

TIME COVERED: 626 - 560 BC

RECIPIENTS: Jews in Judah & Jerusalem

KEY VERSE: 21:7, 14 *After that, declares the LORD, I will hand over Zedekiah king of Judah, his officials and the people in this city who survive the plague, sword and famine, to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and to their enemies who seek their lives. He will put them to the sword; he will show them no mercy or pity or compassion.' ... I will punish you as your deeds deserve, declares the LORD. I will kindle a fire in your forests that will consume everything around you.'*

KEY WORDS: "Iniquity/sin/transgression" 53 times, "captive" 51, "scatter" 14, "evil" 81

PURPOSE: To show that the sin of Judah brings Babylonian captivity.

THEME: Last appeal for Judah to avoid judgment by repenting and turning from sin.



Gravity is one of the unbreakable laws God has built into his universe. What goes up must come down. Slip on ice and you'll go down. The law can't be broken without consequences. God has other laws with consequences, too. They all aren't in nature. Many are spiritual laws. One of the most firm of these is that sin brings judgment. Break this principle by sinning and there will be consequences. Unfortunately we learn about these laws the hard way: falling on ice or suffering the consequences of our sin. The Jews living in Judah after the split learned this the hard way, too. God sent Jeremiah to warn them but they refused to listen until it was too late.

JEREMIAH was called to be a prophet when he was quite young. God forbid him to marry because of the terrible times. He ministered for 66 years, during the reigns of the last five kings of Judah. His message broke his heart, and he often cried as he spoke. That's why he is called the "weeping prophet." His words hurt him so much that he wanted to stop preaching, but God wouldn't let him. Despite his long faithfulness, he never had one convert. He was rejected, hated, beaten, put in stocks and prison, and charged with treason. After Jerusalem was captured by the Babylonians he was forced to go to Egypt by a group of Jews who fled there for freedom. Jeremiah died at an old age in Egypt, perhaps being stoned to death.

LAST CHANCE FOR THE JEWS (chapters 1-45) God, through Jeremiah, warns the Jews of coming destruction. They have been too evil too long. It is too late for national repentance, but individuals can still repent and find salvation. None do. They have lost sight of the seriousness of sin. No one but Jeremiah and perhaps a small faithful remnant will call sin sin and call for repentance. God's people were hypocritical, prideful, arrogant and indifferent to God. Outwardly they were living in a time of great success and prosperity, but inwardly they were corrupt and empty. Jeremiah tried to show the people the sinfulness of their ways by his words and actions. He didn't marry, go to parties or feasts, and used object lessons to illustrate God's truth. He smashed a clay pot to show God's

sovereignty over the nation He had formed. At another time he wore a wooden yoke to show the people they would soon be in bondage.

Still, there is a ray of hope among the judgment. They will be allowed to return to Jerusalem after 70 years in captivity, and there is a future time of deliverance coming when God Himself will rule forever on David's throne. In anticipation of this and to show hope, Jeremiah purchases land just before the city falls when everything seems hopeless.

As the people became aware of their danger and that destruction by Babylon seemed certain and soon, they still would not repent. They were too hard and prideful by this time. Even after Babylon came and destroyed the city and killed or enslaved most of the people, they still wouldn't turn to God. God's law that sin must be judged cannot be broken.

LAST CHANCE FOR GENTILES (chapters 46-51) This principle of reaping what you sow doesn't just apply to Jews, but to ALL the nations, and all who don't repent will also be judged. God judges sin, first among His people (1 Peter 4:17) but ultimately among everyone.

GOD STILL JUDGES SIN TODAY Lest anyone think God has changed this principle, look at the cross. That is ultimate proof of what God thinks of sin. If He would be willing to judge it on His only beloved Son, how can we think He won't judge it on us? In fact, our only escape from His wrath is found at the cross. By accepting what Jesus did for us in accepting God's judgment on our sin, we have forgiveness and eternal life. Jesus took our consequences, we must freely accept His gift of salvation. If not, our sins will be judged. A holy God cannot overlook sin, He wouldn't be God if He did and we couldn't love and respect a God like that. One day, sooner or later, He will judge the sins of this country and world because man today, like in Jeremiah's time, refuses to believe the principle that God judges sin. Still, we can have eternal salvation in Him no matter what this life brings by accepting His payment for our sins. What a God of grace and mercy He is! Make sure all your sins are covered by the blood of Jesus!

OUTLINE OF JEREMIAH

Preface: Jeremiah's Call 1

I. LAST CHANCE FOR THE JEWS 2-45

- A. Condemnation of Judah 2-25
 - 1. Judah Under Judgment 2-6
 - 2. Judah in Idolatry 7-10
 - 3. Judah in Rebellion 11-15
 - 4. Judah in Sin 16-20
 - 5. Judah in Captivity 21-25
- B. Criticism of Jeremiah 26-29
- C. Future Restoration of Judah 30-33
- D. Jeremiah in Jerusalem 34-45
 - 1. Jerusalem Before the Fall 34-36
 - 2. Jerusalem During the Fall 37-39
 - 3. Jerusalem After the Fall 40-45

II. LAST CHANCE FOR THE GENTILES 46-51

Egypt, Philistia, Moab, Ammon, Edom, Damascus, Arabia, Elam, Babylon

Appendix: Jerusalem's Fall 52

LAMENTATIONS: SIN BRINGS SORROW

TITLE: From Septuagint, Jeremiah's 'Cry'

AUTHOR: Jeremiah

DATE of WRITING: About 586 BC

PLACE of WRITING: Jerusalem

TIME COVERED: Fall of Jerusalem - 586 BC

RECIPIENTS: Judah & Jerusalem as well as all who observed fall of Jerusalem

KEY VERSE: *1:1 How deserted lies the city, once so full of people! How like a widow is she, who once was great among the nations! She who was queen among the provinces has now become a slave.*

KEY WORDS: Zion (Jerusalem, 15 times), Jerusalem (7 times), desolate (7 times)

PURPOSE: To show Jeremiah's sorrow over Jerusalem's destruction for sin

THEME: A lament over the destruction of Jerusalem



Put yourself in this unsavory situation for a moment: someone has been trying to hurt you for some time. They stop at nothing to embarrass and criticize you. They tell your friends lies about you and have even tried to harm you physically. As time goes on this just gets worse. Then you hear they have had an accident and got hurt -- not seriously but painfully. What would your inner response be? How would you feel inside? Would you cry out loud in misery for them? Jeremiah was in a similar situation, with people who tortured and tried to kill him. When they suffered he cried long and hard because these were his people and his nation. Thus he is known as the "weeping prophet."

LAMENTATION "To lament" means "to cry out in grief, to mourn aloud." The book of Lamentations is 5 funeral dirges, "a eulogy in a graveyard." It's the saddest book in the Bible. It was written about the fall of the nation Israel in 586 BC. The Jews never really ruled their own land again until 1946 AD.

Suppose China invaded your country and worked its way across the land, destroying all buildings and crops and either killing or enslaving all the people. Famine would have gotten so bad that people would eat anything to live, even their own babies. Towns are destroyed, people are killed. Dead bodies bloat and pop under the hot sun. What few survivors remain are marched off to slavery. That is what happened to Judah and Jerusalem. Jeremiah knew it was coming and, for 40 years, warned the people to repent but not one did. As he saw the destruction all around him he wrote his feelings down in 5 melancholy poems, each of 22 verses (except the middle one which is three times as long -- 66 verses). The first four are acrostic to make memory easier. Each poem ends in prayer to God.

Jerusalem is destitute (chapter 1). Jerusalem is pictured as a solitary widow, sitting and mourning in lonely sorrow. She is pictured as crying and wailing, asking for sympathy and mercy but getting none. In her pride and self-centeredness she has been humbled. Her grief is described in chapter 1. In chapter 2 **God is angry** because of the people's sin. That is why they are suffering. Sin brings sorrow. Unbelievably bad things are happening to them because of their refusal to repent of their sin and obey God. Still, God is a God of mercy who forgives and restores so chapter 3 (the long poem) talks about how **Jeremiah is hopeful**. His words throb with pain as he identifies himself with his suffering people. The Jews are learning the hard way that sin brings sorrow. It seems that everyone

needs to learn that lesson for themselves, the hard way. There are no exceptions to that principle, even the innocent suffer for the sins of the others. Jeremiah puts his hope in God, though.

Again the misery is described as chapter 4 again tells how **Jerusalem is defeated**. Contrasts are shown between how she was and how she now is. Her riches and glory have been replaced by famine and misery. It's too late. All this is because of the sins of the people and leaders. They didn't believe it would really happen to them, even though they saw it happen to their sister country in the north, Israel, 150 years ago. The leaders who weren't killed were rejected like lepers by the surviving people.

The final chapter, 5, shows that **Joy is absent** among the people. They appeal to Jeremiah for help and tell him of their distress and misery. In this final brief but forceful poem they pray to God to restore them. They recognize God's sovereignty. The book closes on a word of distress: "unless you have utterly rejected us and are angry with us beyond measure".

The message of the book is obvious: sin brings sorrow. It started in Eden and has been happening ever since. If we sin He won't force us to repent, but we will suffer the consequences of our sin. Remember, sin does bring sorrow!

OUTLINE OF LAMENTATIONS

I. DESPAIR 1-2

- A. Jerusalem is Empty 1
 - 1. No People 1:1-11
 - 2. No Sympathy 1:12-22
- B. God is Angry 2
 - 1. An Angry God 2:1-10
 - 2. A Weeping Prophet 2:11-19
 - 3. A Fallen City 2:20-22

II. HOPE 3

- A. Jeremiah's Trials 3:1-18
- B. Jeremiah's Hope 3:19-39
- C. Jeremiah's Prayer 3:40-66

III. DETERMINATION 4-5

- A. Jerusalem is Defeated 4
 - 1. A Stricken City 4:1-11
 - 2. An Exposed City 4:12-22
- B. Joy is Absent 5
 - 1. "Remember Us" 5:1-18
 - 2. "Restore Us" 5:19-22

BIBLE OVERVIEW

19. DANIEL

MAIN EVENTS: Daniel in captivity in Babylon

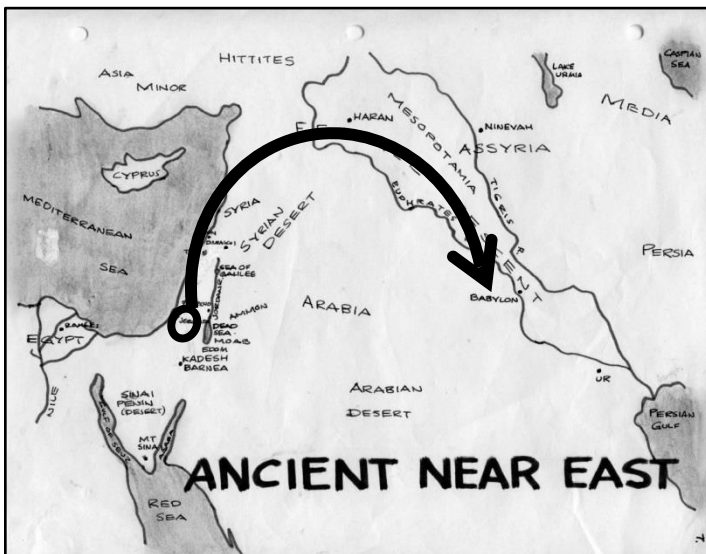
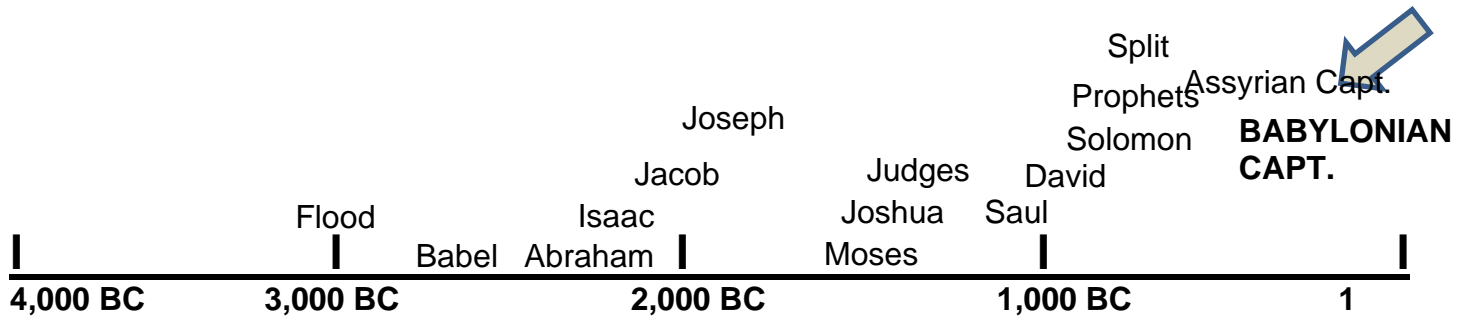
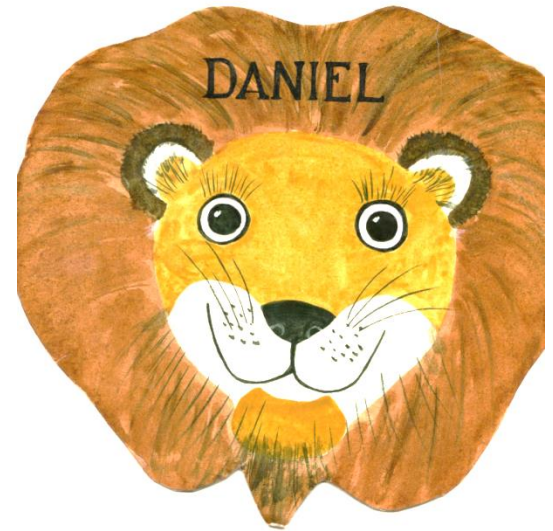
MAIN PEOPLE: Daniel, Hananiah, Azariah, Mishael

BOOKS OF THE BIBLE: Daniel. Ezekiel

BIBLE VERSE: Daniel 6:10-11 Now when Daniel learned that the decree had been published, he went home to his upstairs room where the windows opened toward Jerusalem. Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God, just as he had done before.

TIME: 605 - 536 BC

GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION: Palestine, Babylon



The man Daniel is special enough to be remembered in our Bible overview. He lived in Babylon during the time the Jews were taken there in captivity. He was a great man of prayer, of faithfulness, and received many wonderful revelations from God. He was taken to Babylon in 605 BC (Daniel 1:1-6). He lived a life bringing glory to God. Ezekiel was also in Babylon at this time, having been taken there in 597 BC.

This was another sad stage in our overview, but one which God used to bring His people, at least some of them, back to Him. It is similar to the time they went into captivity in Egypt. Neither would have to happen had they stayed faithful and obedient to God.

DANIEL: SOVEREIGNTY

TITLE: "Daniel" = "God is my Judge"

AUTHOR: Daniel

DATE of WRITING: 605 - 525 BC

PLACE of WRITING: Babylon

TIME COVERED: 80 yrs (605-525 BC)

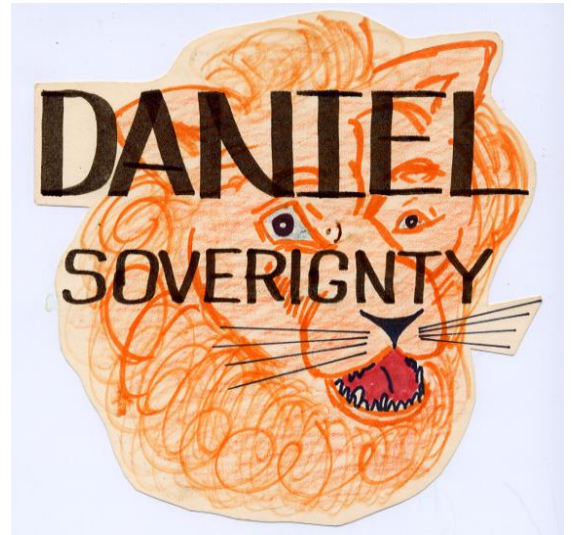
RECIPIENTS: Jews in Babylon

KEY VERSE: 7:13-18 *"In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men of every language worshipped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed. "I, Daniel, was troubled in spirit, and the visions that passed through my mind disturbed me. I approached one of those standing there and asked him the true meaning of all this. "So he told me and gave me the interpretation of these things: 'The four great beasts are four kingdoms that will rise from the earth. But the saints of the Most High will receive the kingdom and will possess it forever-- yes, for ever and ever.'"*

KEY WORDS: "king" 183 times; "kingdom" 55 times; "Daniel" 74 times

PURPOSE: To show God's greatness and plan for the future

THEME: God's sovereignty over nations and peoples



OUTLINE OF DANIEL

I. GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY OVER GENTILES 1-7

- A. Faithful Boys (Daniel is 15 years old) 1
- B. Vision of the Statue (Daniel is 18 years old) 2
- C. Into the Furnace (Daniel is 20 years old) 3
- D. Nebuchadnezzar Humbled (Daniel is 76 years old) 4
- E. Handwriting on the Wall (Daniel is 86 years old) 5
- F. Into the Lions Den (Daniel is 93 years old) 6
- G. Vision of the 4 Beasts (Daniel is 53 years old) 7

II. GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY OVER JEWS 8-12

- A. Vision of the 2 Beasts (Daniel is 54 years old) 8
- B. Vision of the Weeks (Daniel is 94 years old) 9
- C. Vision of Israel's Foes and future (Daniel is 95 years old) 10-12
 - 1. Satan's Opposition 10
 - 2. Antichrist's Opposition 11
 - 3. Israel's Deliverance 12

MEET DANIEL

Suppose tonight your country was attacked and defeated, and the victorious enemies took you from your family to their capital to serve them. What would you think? How would you feel? What would you do? That's exactly what happened to Daniel. He was taken from Jerusalem to Babylon when He was 14 when Judah was defeated (Daniel 1:1-2).

INTO CAPTIVITY (14 years old) The name, Daniel, means "God is his judge." His godly parents brought him up in the faith of the Lord. The northern kingdom, Israel, had long ago fallen to Assyria. Many in the south (Judah) thought that would never happen to them. His parents thought differently and prepared him for it. Still, how does one prepare for losing their family, friends, home land -- everything they have? He knew God was sovereign and still in control of all, that's what he rested his hope on.

KING'S TRAINING PROGRAM (15 years old) Daniel was chosen to be put into a special training program to serve the King of Babylon. It was a great opportunity to live a good life instead of dying young from overwork as a slave. Anyone would have jumped at the chance, and he thanked God for it, but there was a catch. He would have to disobey God's law and eat non-kosher food. Even though He knew He could be sent out to toil as a slave, He refused to eat. The end does not justify the means. He would be faithful, God would take care of the consequences if He desired. Praise be to God, He chose to prosper him and honor his stand. Glory to His name!

NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S DREAM (18 years old) Soon another problem presented itself. Nebuchadnezzar, the king, had an awful dream. He wouldn't tell his advisors what it was for he knew they'd make up with some interpretation to please him. He could only know they had supernaturally received an interpretation if they also received the dream itself. Of course, none of them could know the dream, so he decided to kill them all! By His grace, God revealed the dream and its meaning to Daniel and he passed it on to the king, making sure God got all the glory for it! The dream was of a large statue whose gold head stood for Babylon, silver chest for Medo-Persia, bronze thighs for Greece and iron legs for Rome. It was an outline of world history.

IDOL WORSHIP (20 years old) Nebuchadnezzar was so impressed by the dream he decided to make it all apply to himself. In his pride he built a golden statue and had everyone worship it. Daniel was away on assignment, so his friends Hannaniah, Azariah and Mishael had to decide what to do. To refuse to worship meant death. They refused to worship and were to be thrown into a fiery furnace. They knew God was able to deliver them, but they didn't know if that was His will for them or not. It was, and they were protected from the flames. All that happened was that the ropes that bound them were burnt away. Praise God for His sovereign control!

VISION # 1 (53 years old) Many years later God gave Daniel more details about the coming world empires from his day to the end. Instead of a statue God used animals to describe characteristics of the coming kingdoms: lion for Babylon, bear for Media-Persia, leopard for Greece and beast for Rome (Daniel 7). God's sovereign control over history future was clearly revealed (1 Chronicles 29:11). "Our God is in heaven, He does whatever pleases Him" (Psalm 115:3). We can't understand all about Him and what He does (Isaiah 55:8), it is all by His sovereign choice (Revelation 4:11). He controls the angels, nature, history past, present and future and all mankind.

VISION # 2 (54 years old) Shortly after, God gave him many more details about the middle two empires, the ones soon coming (Daniel 8). Those were the ones he was most interested in. A ram (Medo-Persia) and goat (Greece) were used in this vision. The focus was more on their enemies, preparing them for what would come. Alexander the Great and Antiochus Epiphanes were prophesied and many details given. God is in control of nations, even each individual in each nation. Daniel was greatly humbled by this, as anyone who thought about God must be humbled.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR HUMBLLED (76 years old) Not everyone was humbled by God's sovereign control, though. Nebuchadnezzar was very prideful and arrogant, taking credit for great Babylon as if he had done it without God's help! God warned him (Daniel 4:29-34) but he refused to humble himself, so God allowed him to live and act like an animal for seven years until he turned to God for help and deliverance. God healed and restored him, and then he gave all the credit and glory to God!

HANDWRITING ON THE WALL (86 years old) Before too long, though, Belshazzar replaced his father Nebuchadnezzar as king. He, too, was very proud and mocked God. He blasphemed God by using utensils from God's temple in Jerusalem for a pagan orgy. God wrote on the wall that judgment was coming (Daniel 5). No one could read it, so Daniel was sent for to interpret it for them. The prophecy was fulfilled that very night when Darius and his Medo-Persian army entered the complacent city and took over Babylon's kingdom.

LION'S DEN (93 years old) Darius was just as proud and self-sufficient as the rulers before him had been, so it was easy to trick him into signing a law stating that only he could be worshipped. When Daniel refused to worship him and was therefore condemned to death, Darius realized his pride had tricked him but it was too late. He couldn't save himself, but God could. Even among many starving lions he was safe for he was under God's sovereign control as if he'd have been safely sleeping in his own bed. Darius recognized God's total control over everything through this and worshipped Him. He wanted everyone in his kingdom to worship his God, too.

VISION # 3 (94 years old) Daniel had been praying to God about the future things He had revealed to him, asking for more details and information. He knew the Jews could leave Babylon after 70 years of captivity (Jeremiah 25:11-12; 29:10). What then? God told him their future would consist of 70 7-year periods. The first 483 years will be from when they can return to Jerusalem until when the Messiah is rejected (Daniel 9). Then after a gap of undetermined time will be one final 7-year period before the Messiah returns to set Himself up on David's throne forever. What a God! "Trust in the Lord forever, for the Lord, the Lord is the Rock eternal" (Isaiah 26:4).

VISION # 4 (95 years old) After 3 weeks of praying and fasting about these things the Lord had been showing him, God gave him one more vision. The angel messenger sent with the answer to Daniel's prayer was held up by Satan's forces (Daniel 10). Angel reinforcements came to give victory in this spiritual battle in the heavenlies. God gave Daniel more information about the future, especially about the coming Antichrist and the battle of Armageddon.

God is totally in control of everything. "No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:37-38).

His message to you is that no matter what happens, trust God. Eli said, "He is the Lord; let Him do what is good in His eyes" (1 Samuel 3:18). Job stated, "The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away; may the name of the Lord be praised" (Job 1:21). Jesus Himself said, "Not My will but Thy will be done." He taught them to pray in the Lord's Prayer, "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done." Make that your prayer, too. Rest in God's sovereign control over everything and everyone. No matter what, trust in Him. "Though the fig tree does not bud and there are no grapes on the vines, though the olive crop fails and the fields produce no food, though there are no sheep in the pen and no cattle in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will be joyful in God my Savior. The Sovereign LORD is my strength; He makes my feet like the feet of a deer. He enables me to go on the heights" (Habakkuk 3:17-19).

EZEKIEL: GOD'S GLORY

TITLE: After prophet who wrote it

AUTHOR: Ezekiel ("God will Strengthen")

DATE of WRITING: 592 to 570 BC

PLACE of WRITING: Judea & Babylon

TIME COVERED: 592 to 570 BC - 22 years

RECIPIENTS: Jews, esp those in Babylon

KEY VERSE: 36:17-19, 24-28 *"Son of man, when the people of Israel were living in their own land, they defiled it by their conduct and their actions. Their conduct was like a woman's monthly uncleanness in my sight. So I poured out my wrath on them because they had shed blood in the land and because they had defiled it with their idols. I dispersed them among the nations, and they were scattered through the countries; I judged them according to their conduct and their actions. ... "For I will take you out of the nations; I will gather you from all the countries and bring you back into your own land. I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws. You will live in the land I gave your forefathers; you will be my people, and I will be your God.*

KEY WORDS: "You shall know I am the Lord" (70 times); "Son of Man" (79 times)

PURPOSE: to show God judges sin but will one day restore Israel and fill them with His glory

THEME: the Glory of God is gone, but will one day return

God has revealed His glory in the vast complexities of the universe and the minute complexities of cells, atoms and DNA. All this is to help us see what a great God He is (Psalm 19:1; Revelation 4:11) so we will better trust and praise Him (Psalm 8:1). Everything He does reveals His glory. Even having His people being defeated and taken into captivity shows His glory. If His people don't show His greatness by their serving Him, they will show it by their being disciplined by Him. The purpose of their capture by Babylon was to show them the seriousness of their sin and have them turn their hearts back to Him, the same purpose as the tribulation. Through Ezekiel, God reveals truths beyond the current misery to the new closeness between God and His people that will one day result. It often takes pain and suffering for us to turn to God and see His misery. It's better for us to see it before that, for it is clearly seen throughout nature and life, but often we have to come to that point to see it. That's the message of Ezekiel.

GOD'S GLORY SEEN BY JUDAH'S FALL (before the siege of Jerusalem, 595-587 BC - chapters 1-24) God reveals glimpses of His glory in the book of Ezekiel similar to what is in Revelation and what Ezekiel's contemporary Daniel saw. There are elaborate visions full of exotic creatures and scenes of angels assigned to guard God's holiness. All this is to reflect God's sovereign majesty and holiness. Through words and actions, Ezekiel was to warn the people that a holy God would judge their sin. If they didn't recognize and reflect His glory in their obedience to Him, they would in their discipline by Him.



GOD'S GLORY SEEN BY JUDAH'S FOES (during the siege of Jerusalem, 586 BC - chapters 25-32)
God not only judges His people, He judges all who do not glorify Him. Judgment starts with God's people first (1 Peter 4:17). However it doesn't end there. The Ammonites, Moabites and Edomites are judged for taking pleasure in seeing Judah fall, and for their refusal to serve God. Tyre, Sidon and Egypt are also to be judged.

GOD'S GLORY SEEN BY JUDAH'S FUTURE (after the siege of Jerusalem, 585-570 BC - chapters 33-48)
Now that Jerusalem has fallen, it is time to look to the future and to better times ahead. God always offers hope during times of darkness. Sin has consequences, but God's glory is always there to see us through it. Through Ezekiel God points to the time when the Jews will be restored to the land (33:1-14), a prophecy being fulfilled during our lifetime. Then will come a time of spiritual revival and renewal, of rebuilding the Temple and worshipping God in spirit and in truth. These are future for us, taking place during the coming tribulation time. Then in the millennium which will follow the tribulation all will worship God and give Him the glory due Him, the glory which His people should have given Him throughout history. There is a day coming when the whole earth will recognize God's glory and He Himself will again dwell with His people on earth.

GOD'S GLORY SEEN BY YOU AND ME We, today, are to bring glory to God by all we do (1 Corinthians 6:20; Romans 9:23). That is the reason God created us (Psalm 96:7-8; 2 Chronicles 16:28-29). Man today glorifies man instead of God (Romans 1:25).

How are we to glorify God? By appreciating all He has done for us and recognizing our own insufficiency and unworthiness (1 Corinthians 1:29-31), by living a holy life in obedience to Him (John 15:8; 1 Corinthians 10:31) and by worshipping and praising Him (Psalm 50:23; 89:12; 91:1) we bring glory to Him. He is worthy of all glory (Romans 11:36; 16:27; Galatians 1:5; 1 Timothy 1:17; Ephesians 3:21). Forever. Amen!

OUTLINE OF EZEKIEL

I. GOD'S GLORY SEEN BY JUDAH'S FALL 1-24

Before the Siege of Jerusalem 592-587 BC

- A. Judgment To Come 1-3
- B. Judgment Predicted by Symbols 4-5
- C. Judgment Predicted by Sermons 6-7
- D. Judgment Predicted by Visions 12-19
- E. Judgment Deserved 20-24

II. GOD'S GLORY SEEN BY JUDAH'S ENEMIES 25-32

During the Siege of Jerusalem 586 BC

Ammon, Moab, Edom, Philistia, Tyre, Sidon, Egypt

III. GOD'S GLORY SEEN BY JUDAH'S FUTURE 33-48

After the Siege of Jerusalem 585-570 BC

- A. New Shepherd for Israel 33-36
- B. New Life for Israel 37-39
- C. New Temple for Israel 40-43
- D. New Worship for Israel 44-48

BIBLE OVERVIEW

20. EZRA

(RETURN)

MAIN EVENTS: Jews return to Israel

MAIN PEOPLE: Zerubbabel, Ezra, Nehemiah,

BOOKS OF THE BIBLE: Ezra, Esther, Haggai, Zechariah, Nehemiah, Malachi

BIBLE VERSE: *Ezra 7:6 Ezra had devoted himself to the study and observance of the Law of the LORD, and to teaching its decrees and laws in Israel.*

Esther 4:15-16 Then Esther sent this reply to Mordecai: "Go, gather together all the Jews who are in Susa, and fast for me. Do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my maids will fast as you do. When this is done, I will go to the king, even though it is against the law. And if I perish, I perish."

TIME: 550 BC

WORLD EVENTS AT THIS TIME:

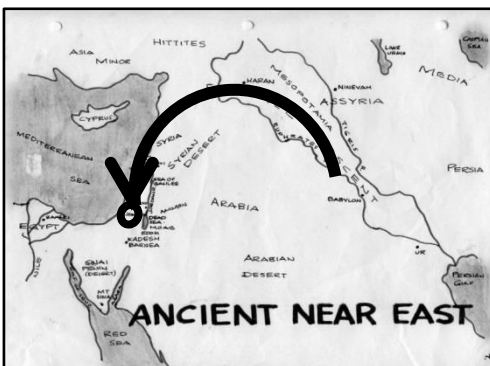
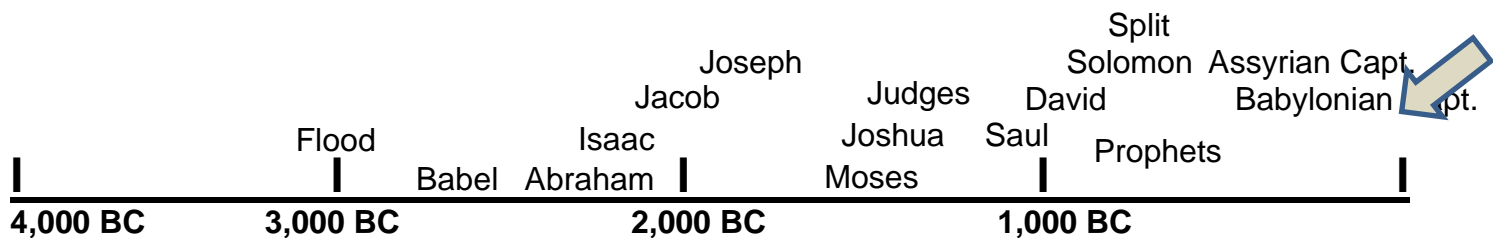
Buddhism was founded in India by Siddhartha Gautama

Jainism was founded in India by Mahavira Jains

Persia captures Pakistan

Confucius in China

GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION: Babylon, Palestine



When the seventy years of captivity in Babylon were over, God allowed some of the Jews to return home from Babylon, as prophesied by Jeremiah (Jeremiah 25:12; 29:10). Some returned under Zerubbabel, some later with Ezra and others still later with Nehemiah. However the vast majority of Jews choose to stay and enjoy the prosperity they were experiencing in Babylon instead of returning to the place of God's will for them, the Promised Land. Those who returned had been cured from idolatry and were faithful to God. Their faith and trust in God was deepened and they were willing to endure the harder living conditions in the land in order to be faithful to God. There was much work to do in rebuilding the Temple, then the walls of the city. They endured many problems from within their own ranks as well

as threats and persecution from the Gentiles living around them, but they endured. Even so, there were many who didn't stay faithful to God but wandered into sin. God sent godly men to warn them and turn them back to Him, as He had been doing since the very beginning.

MEET NEHEMIAH

His name is Nehemiah. He was a leader of the Jews. Some people think being a leader is hard. It's really quite easy. All you need is inexhaustible patience, unfailing insight, unshakable stability, unbreakable will, decisive judgment, indefatigable physique, irrepressible spirit and unfeigned affection for all people. Nehemiah didn't have that. But God helped him with it.

If you are a leader, perhaps there's something you can learn from him. If you have a job, a family or a friend, then you are a leader. A leader is someone who knows where he is going and how to get others to follow him. Being a leader is something you **ARE**, not something you **DO**. It's a function, not a title conferred by others. That's the way it was for him.

Nehemiah lived in Babylon after Jerusalem fell to Babylon. This story starts in Babylon, 100 years before Nehemiah was born. **ZERUBBABEL**, grandson of the 2nd last king of Judah (Jehoiachin), led the first group of Jews back to Jerusalem. Not many wanted to return, though - about one of every hundred. Most didn't want to leave the prosperity and good living in Babylon to return to a depressed and ruined country. Of course some, like Daniel (who was in his 60's) were too old to go back.

When Zerubbabel led his group of 15,000 back, God provided Haggai and Zechariah to preach while he led work on rebuilding the temple. They didn't get too far, though, before they stopped for 20 years. Then they finished their work.

It was during this time that Hadassah, better known to you as **ESTHER**, was used by God to preserve the Jews from annihilation not only in Persia but also in Palestine.

Eighty-five years after Zerubbabel, **EZRA** led another group of people back to Jerusalem. He was a great-grandson of the man who was the high priest when Jerusalem fell. He was the equivalent of the Secretary of State for Jewish affairs. Ezra was a godly scholar who knew the Old Testament by heart. He wrote the books of Ezra, Chronicles and Psalm 119 as well as finishing books such as Deuteronomy and Joshua. Ezra edited the whole Old Testament, changing it over to the square Hebrew script which is still used today. He also started the synagogue system which your church and school systems are built upon. The synagogue system kept the Jews together when they were away from their temple. Ezra also developed the Sanhedrin, 70 top men to govern Jews in and out of the land.

Only 1,500 men followed him back. He taught the Bible and persevered in trying to encourage them to follow God. He didn't get much good response, though.

Fifteen years later the spotlight switched to **NEHEMIAH**. His story starts in 445 BC. He was born in Babylon. His grandparents had been taken into captivity at the fall of Jerusalem. He was a top advisor to the king, Artaxerxes. God used him in some very unexpected ways. There are some clear leadership lessons we can learn from Nehemiah's life.

A leader is a person who prays. When he heard about the terrible conditions in Jerusalem Nehemiah prayed for God to send someone to help the people -- and wouldn't you know it, God sent him! (Nehemiah 1:1-4) God used him because he spent so much time in prayer with Him.

A leader is a person who prepares. When he finally got to Jerusalem he found everyone there was discouraged and very pessimistic (Nehemiah 2:11-12). It seemed hopeless. He patiently gathered as much firsthand information as he could, prayed about it, talked with some trusted advisors and made some long-range plans. To carry them out he had to detail short-range goals and

all that would be necessary to accomplish the needed work (Nehemiah 2:4-8). When the time was right he shared his plans with others, motivating and encouraging them to follow (Nehemiah 2:17-18). He had delegated work so everyone had a specific assignment to carry out. When the enemy was about to attack to stop them they kept working and didn't give in to fear (Nehemiah 4:3-9). Nehemiah prayed, trusting God to protect them, but he also posed a guard. It takes prayer and work to be a good leader: pray as if all depends on God and work as if all depends on him.

A leader is a person who perseveres. Food shortages forced poor people to have to sell their children to the rich so they could have money to feed their other children. Money was lent at a high rate, with 50% inflation. A leader must contend with internal problems, which are often more difficult to handle than attacks from without. Nehemiah had to take action about these difficulties, so he did. He did what was necessary, even though it wasn't popular. He stood for the right (Nehemiah 5:9-11)

Even when the enemy attacks intensified he didn't let them intimidate him or distract the work. Not even threats of assassination stopped him (Nehemiah 6:1-4). A leader can't be influenced by fear!

A leader is a person who purges. He needed to remove sin and evil from among them. Ezra was still preaching, and God used his words to start a revival. Lives were changed and people started obeying the Bible.

Later Nehemiah went back to Babylon for a very short visit and when he returned he found more purging had to be done, for the people had quickly returned to their sinning. Praying, preparing, persevering and purging are ongoing duties of a godly leader. They aren't always enjoyable, but they are certainly necessary! Which of these do you need to work harder at? Set some goals and start today. You don't have any option about being a leader -- you are one. But it is up to you what kind of a leader you are!

EZRA: RETURN

TITLE: After the chief character, Ezra

AUTHOR: Ezra (priest)

DATE of WRITING: 456 BC

PLACE of WRITING: Jerusalem

TIME COVERED: 81 years (538 - 457 BC)

RECIPIENTS: Jews after the captivity

KEY VERSE: *Ezra 7:6-10 This Ezra came up from Babylon. He was a teacher well versed in the Law of Moses, which the LORD, the God of Israel, had given.*

The king had granted him everything he asked, for the hand of the LORD his God was on him. Some of the Israelites, including priests, Levites, singers, gatekeepers and temple servants, also came up to Jerusalem in the seventh year of King Artaxerxes. Ezra arrived in Jerusalem in the fifth month of the seventh year of the king. He had begun his journey from Babylon on the first day of the first month, and he arrived in Jerusalem on the first day of the fifth month, for the gracious hand of his God was on him. For Ezra had devoted himself to the study and observance of the Law of the LORD, and to teaching its decrees and laws in Israel.

KEY WORD: "Go Up/Went Up" "Jerusalem" (47 times)

PURPOSE: To show the history of Israel as they return from captivity and get re-established.

THEME: The importance of returning to God when away from Him.



King Richard III went out walking one night among his army. There he found a guard fast asleep at his post. Promptly he took a knife and stabbed him in the heart. He pinned a note to him which said, 'I found him asleep and I left him so.' It's a good thing our King doesn't do that to His subjects when they fall asleep spiritually! He tries to bring them back to alertness. The book of Ezra illustrates this spiritual truth.

RESTORATION The book opens with the Jews in captivity for their idolatry. Still God is faithfully working for them. This discipline has kept them from ever returning to idolatry since then. God blessed them materially. Previous to this time they were farmers and shepherds, but in Babylon they learned to be business men and bankers, trades they still excel in. God was working in the hearts of godly leaders as well as in King Cyrus to allow them to return. Like the father of the prodigal son, He lovingly looks for their return. He is the 'God of the Second Chance'.

When Zerubbabel sent out a call to return to the land, only 50,000 Jews answered. This was a very small percentage of those in Babylon. The majority didn't want to leave their newly-found prosperity. It was God's will for His people to live in the land He gave them, but they chose staying in the world. Only a very committed godly minority returned. Out of all mankind, it is always only a small minority which accept Jesus' free gift of salvation. And it is only a small minority of that group that then go on to put Jesus first in daily life and live as a disciple of His.

Upon arriving back in the land, Zerubbabel started rebuilding the temple. The Samaritans opposed this, so the work stopped for 15 years. Haggai and Zechariah preached during this time. When the temple finally was rebuilt it was so inferior to Solomon's Temple that those who remembered the former wept.

ESTHER Between Ezra 6 and 7 is a gap of 58 years, during which the events in the book of Esther took place.

REFORMATION Eighty years after Zerubbabel, Ezra came on the scene. He led a second group back to the land. Ezra was a priest and scribe (copied the Bible by hand). He reputedly knew the whole Old Testament by heart and was a very committed believer. He founded the Sanhedrin to decide cases and give guidance to the Jews worldwide. He instituted the synagogue system which held the Jews together while away from the temple. It was a place of teaching, worship, fellowship and community activities. The church today is based on the synagogue. Ezra also wrote 1 & 2 Chronicles, Ezra and Psalm 119. He edited the whole Old Testament, gathering the inspired books and forming them into the Old Testament as we have it today. He made sure all was perfect, in groups and order, edited and updated. In doing so he replaced the old Hebrew script with the newer, square Assyrian characters, which are still in use today. God chose Ezra because of His deep Bible knowledge. He studied, practiced and taught it (Ezra 7:10). The Bible is the key to returning to God, not emotional appeals, guilt, etc. When God's people no longer have an appetite for God's Word, it is a sign that revival is needed. Loss of appetite is a sign of sickness. Ezra fed himself and others a good, balanced diet of God's Word.

Only 1,514 able men volunteered to return with him. After 4 months of travel they arrived at Jerusalem, only to find the people had again turned from God. The sin of intermarrying unbelievers led the people from God. The unbelieving wives had to be sent home. Then the people turned back to God. Sin brings sorrow!

Return 1: Zerubbabel 536 BC

Return 2: Ezra 458 BC

Return 3: Nehemiah 445 BC

OUTLINE OF EZRA

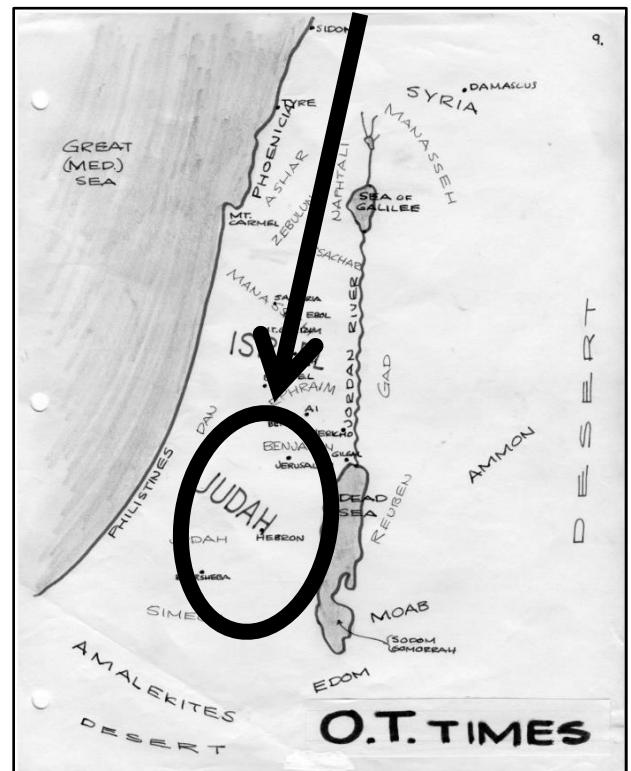
I. RESTORATION (Zerubbable, 538-516 BC) 1-6

- A. Rebuilding the People of God 1-3
 - 1. The Restoration Work 1
 - 2. The People Listed 2
 - 3. The Rebuilding 3
- B. Rebuilding the Temple of God 4-6
 - 1. The Opposition to the Temple 4
 - 2. The Support for the Temple 5
 - 3. The Completion of the Temple 6

(BOOK OF ESTHER 483-473 BC)

II. REFORMATION (Ezra, 458-457) 7-10

- A. Rebuilding the Priesthood of God 7-8
 - 1. The Restoration Work 7
 - 2. The People Listed 8
 - 3. The Return
- B. Rebuilding the Worship of God 9-10



ESTHER: PROVIDENTIAL CARE

TITLE: After the main character

AUTHOR: Unknown (possibly Mordecai)

DATE of WRITING: About 473 BC

PLACE of WRITING: Shushan, Babylon

TIME COVERED: 10 years (483 - 473 BC)

(Took place during the middle of the book of Ezra)

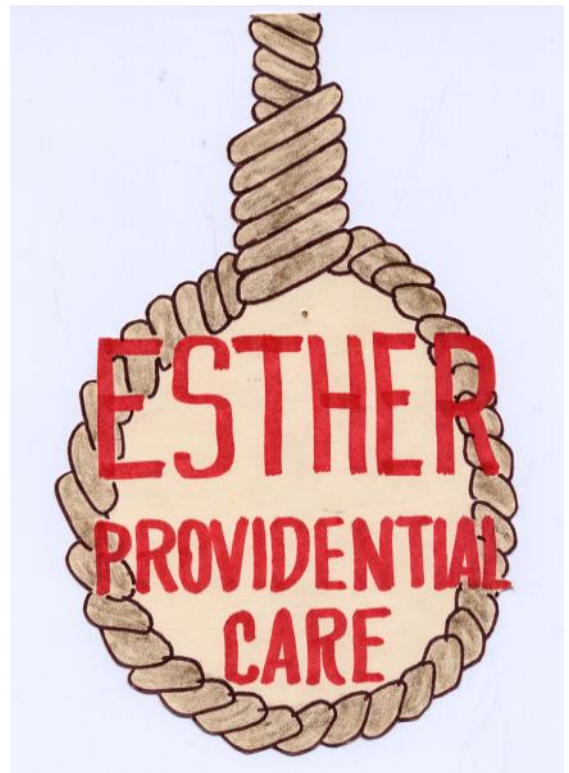
RECIPIENTS: Jews dispersed in Persian Empire.

KEY VERSE: *4:14 For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place, but you and your father's family will perish. And who knows but that you have come to royal position for such a time as this?"*

KEY WORD: The Jews (51 times); also Jew and Feast

PURPOSE: To study how all the Jews were saved from extermination by Esther

THEME: God's providential care



One day a Christian man had an orchard of thousands of trees. His whole family depended on it for food. One morning he found half-grown apples being destroyed by strange worms. Every tree was affected. The family gathered and prayed, then spent the whole day picking off worms, but they multiplied far faster than they could be picked. Weary from working all day at top speed and desperate, they prayed and went to sleep. Early the next morning they started to see hundreds of strange birds landing on the trees. They stayed all day eating worms but never hurt the trees or apples. They spent three days there, then left. All the worms were gone and the crop was saved. Coincidence? No way. Our sovereign God was in control of the whole thing. He cares for and provides for His own. Unfortunately we forget about that. When we do, we should read the book of Esther!

DANGER TO GOD'S PEOPLE (Esther 1 - 3) A sordid story unfolds (Esther 1) in the first chapter of Esther. The scene is the great Persian city of Shushan. After a series of banquets (really great drunken orgies) King Ahasuerus (Xerxes in secular history) commands his queen, Vashti, to provide the entertainment for the grand finale. Because of her own standards of modesty, she refused and was banished from the kingdom forever. Therefore the king began a world-wide search for a new queen.

A Jew named Mordecai, who had a minor job at the palace, entered his cousin (who he was raising) in the contest and she won! Now it must be noted that the Jews were not to remain in Persia. They should have returned with Ezra or Nehemiah, but didn't want to leave the prosperity and fine living in Persia for the poverty and difficulties of Jerusalem. Thus they were out of God's will. As a result there is no mention of God's name, prayer or sacrifices in the book of Esther. Still, God keeps His promises to protect His people.

After Esther is made queen Mordecai overheard a plot to kill the king, told Esther, and she reported it (Esther 3). The plot was stopped and the king saved. That's all part of God's plan.

The plot thickens when Haman, the prime minister and favorite of the king, pushes through legislation to have all the Jews in the kingdom killed. His hatred for Mordecai, who won't bow to him,

makes him miserable. That sets the scene for God's deliverance. He uses Esther to save her race and influence her stepson Artaxerxes to allow Nehemiah to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the walls.

DELIVERANCE OF GOD'S PEOPLE (Esther 4 - 10) When Mordecai hears about the plot to destroy all Jews he is really upset and sends word to Esther, asking her to intercede for her people, even though it may mean her death. To speak out to the king was forbidden, and to reveal that she was a Jew could also mean her death. However she courageously does so, inviting the king and Haman to a banquet she would have just for them (Esther 5).

Meanwhile Haman is miserable because of his hatred of Mordecai. His wife says he will feel better if he builds a large scaffold and anticipates his killing of Mordecai, so he has it built.

One night the king had a hard time sleeping (one of those little things that God uses in a big way). He read from his histories and discovered Mordecai's work in saving his life, and the next day finds out that Mordecai was never rewarded for it. He determines to take care of this.

When prideful, self-centered Haman comes to work the next day the king asks him which he thinks the king should do to honor a man he deeply appreciates. Thinking the king is referring to him, Haman lays out his own prideful dreams of glory and honor, only to find out the king meant it for his enemy Mordecai -- and he had to be the one to honor Mordecai! Talk about a bad day at the office!

Later that day, when Haman showed up for the banquet with Esther and the king, she revealed his legislation to destroy all Jews. The king was furious at how he was tricked and left the room to get control of his anger. Haman fell upon Esther begging her for mercy, and when the king entered he thought Haman was attacking Esther. He had Haman killed immediately on his own gallows! Not only that, but the Jews were allowed to kill those who wanted to destroy them. In addition, Mordecai was elevated to Haman's job as top advisor to the king! Talk about a happy ending!

Even today the Jews celebrate this important deliverance as the Feast of Purim. They give gifts, eat together, and children reenact the events in the book of Esther (similar to the way we celebrate Christmas). Truly this is a wonderful reminder of God's sovereignty and His providential care of His people, even those who are out of His will. What a great God we have!

OUTLINE OF ESTHER

I. DANGER TO GOD'S PEOPLE (Trial) 1-3

- A. Divorce of Vashti 1
- B. Discovery of Esther 2
- C. Dedication of Mordecai 2
- D. Decree of Haman 3

II. DELIVERANCE OF GOD'S PEOPLE (Trust & Triumph) 4-10

- A. Despair of Mordecai 4
- B. Decision of Esther 5
- C. Designs of Haman
- D. Defeat of Haman 6-7
- E. Decree of Ahasuerus 8
- F. Deliverance of Israel 9a
- G. Days of Purim 9b
- H. Distinction of Mordecai 10

NEHEMIAH: RENEWAL



TITLE: After the main character

AUTHOR: Nehemiah

DATE of WRITING: About 420 BC

PLACE of WRITING: Jerusalem

TIME COVERED: 30 years (445-415 BC)

RECIPIENTS: Returned Jews

KEY VERSE: 1:1-7 *Hanani, one of my brothers, came from Judah with some other men, and I questioned them about the Jewish remnant that survived the exile, and also about Jerusalem. They said to me, "Those who survived the exile and are back in the province are in great trouble and disgrace. The wall of Jerusalem is broken down, and its gates have been burned with fire." When I heard these things, I sat down and wept. For some days I mourned and fasted and prayed before the God of heaven.*

KEY WORD: Walls (32 times) Build (23 times)

PURPOSE: Tell how the walls of Jerusalem were rebuilt under Nehemiah

THEME: Steps to Renewal/revival

What comes to mind when someone uses the word "revival"? Do you think of a series of special meetings, of loud and emotional preaching? Webster's says it is the stirring of religious faith among the indifferent characterized by public confession of sin and profession of renewed faith. Basically, revival means to bring back to life. "Re" means to do again, "vive" means life. It refers to bringing something BACK to life which had been alive. Therefore revival basically refers to bringing God's people who have drifted back to a fresh closeness to Him. It is different than evangelism which appeals to unbelievers to make a first-time commitment. Salvation can't be lost, but we can become cold and in need of renewing. Periodically through history God has sparked revivals which have brought His people back to Him. One was during the time of Nehemiah.

BACKGROUND Ezra had led a small remnant of Jews back to their homeland, the majority preferring to stay in the opulence of Babylon. Fifteen years later word came to Nehemiah that things were still in bad shape in the land (Nehemiah 1). It wasn't his fault, and there didn't seem to be anything he could do from 1500 miles away. Still...

1. Revival begins with one devoted believer. Nehemiah turned to God in prayer and fasting and sincerely called upon the Lord. He confessed his sin and the sins of his people. He totally committed himself to God to be used in any way necessary. God worked in Artaxerxes' heart to let him return and give him needed supplies. Nehemiah was allowed to return to Jerusalem.

2. Revival spreads to a few ready ones first. Any good fire needs two things: a hot spark and then some kindling ready to catch fire. Nehemiah was the spark, and the first thing he did in Jerusalem was to find a few good men who were open and ready for God to work. He surveyed the situation and gathered facts before acting, then spread his vision to a few he felt were ready. You can't expect all the green wood to catch right away, only wood that is dry and ready catches right away. It takes a good core group to start a revival, then the spark spreads. Pretty soon others caught the vision and before long they were rebuilding the walls.

3. There must be unity among believers for revival to spread. Nehemiah organized the people to work on the walls, each one working near his own home. However, as is to be expected, enemies opposed. The people pulled together, though. Unity is important for a revival to spread. Disunity, unforgiveness, bitterness, jealousy, etc., can pour water on a revival fire before it really gets going.

4. Revival must be based on knowing God's Word. Nehemiah got the people together and Ezra read and taught God's word all morning. They liked it so much they asked if he'd do that in the afternoon, too. As a result they humbled themselves and worshipped God. They wanted to come back the next day for more! An

appetite for God's Word is a necessary sign for revival. Not only did they learn it, but they obeyed it, putting into practice what they learned.

5. Revival means confessing sins in prayer. The people automatically prayed and confessed their sins (Nehemiah 9), acknowledging His majesty and past help for them. Prayer, starting with confession of sin, is a must for revival.

6. Revival leads to publicly showing a renewed commitment. The people responded to Ezra's teaching by ratifying their covenant with God. They officially promised to follow God only. Publicly the Jews promised (Nehemiah 10) to not marry unbelievers, worship God on the Sabbath, pay their tithes and help provide for the temple and its priests and Levites.

7. Revival results in changed lives. As a result of this people moved back into Jerusalem and it as well as other cities thrived and prospered. The walls and city of Jerusalem were dedicated to God. Malachi ministered during this time, too.

8. To be the real thing, the results must be lasting. For 12 years things continued well under Nehemiah and Ezra's leadership. Then Nehemiah had to return to Babylon and, when he returned a year later, the promises they made had been broken. They had married unbelieving wives and weren't properly caring for God's temple. Before long they again responded to Nehemiah's and Ezra's call to renewal and revival came again.

This ended Old Testament history. After 400 silent (no Bible books were written, but the Maccabees lived during this time) John the Baptist came on the scene, preparing the way for the Messiah. With that the New Testament began -- and another call to revival. Where do you stand? Are you in need of renewing? Is your spiritual life on fire and vibrant, or does it need to be revived? Follow the steps Nehemiah and, if God wills, you'll have revival beginning in those around you.

OUTLINE OF NEHEMIAH

I. REBUILDING THE WALLS (Civil Reform) 1-7

- A. Return to Jerusalem 1-2
- B. Rebuilding the Walls 3-6
- C. Restoring the People 7

II. RENEWING THE COVENANT (Religious Reform) 8-10

- A. Reading the Law 8
- B. Response of the People
- C. Repentance of the People 9
- D. Renewal of the Covenant 10

III. RENEWING THE NATION (Political Reform) 11-13

- A. Repopulating the Cities 11-12
- B. Rededicating the Walls
- C. Reviving the People 13

HAGGAI: PRIORITIES



TITLE: After prophet who wrote it

AUTHOR: Haggai ("My Feast")

DATE of WRITING: August to December, 520 BC

PLACE of WRITING: Jerusalem

TIME COVERED: Aug-Dec, 520 BC

RECIPIENTS: Returned from captivity

KEY VERSE: 1:4 *"Is it a time for you yourselves to be living in your paneled houses, while this house remains a ruin?"*

2:9 *'The glory of this present house will be greater than the glory of the former house,' says the LORD Almighty. 'And in this place I will grant peace,' declares the LORD Almighty.'*

KEY WORD: "The Lord's House" (8 times) "Consider" (5 times)

PURPOSE: to encourage the people to rebuild the temple

THEME: God must be our number one priority

Have you ever started something you didn't finish? That happens to everyone. What causes it? We may lose interest or motivation or just not have enough time, but I think there is a reason behind these. I think it's because we change our priorities. We no longer see it as important as we once did. Unfortunately many good things in life don't get done for this very reason. They may be important in our mind, but unless we make them a top priority in our time commitments they won't get accomplished. Knowing the importance of learning the Bible means nothing unless we make spending time reading and studying it a priority.

ENTER HAGGAI Haggai found this same thing true of the Jews after they returned from captivity. Haggai lived during the time of Ezra, 14 years after the Jews started returning to Palestine from Babylon. They had started rebuilding the temple by laying its foundations, but never finished it. Haggai calls the people to finish what they started for God.

CALL TO REBUILD (1) The people were making excuses as to why they hadn't finished the building. The people made excuses: too busy and no time for God's house. Their priorities were wrong. Their lives were showing the results of wrong priorities: dissatisfaction and frustration. They worked hard but found no real joy. Zerubbabel (the governor) and Joshua (the high priest) led the people in repentance and the work on the temple was resumed..

CALL TO LISTEN (2:1-9) Seven weeks later, when the temple was almost completed, the older people started becoming discouraged because it was so grossly inferior to Solomon's temple which they still remembered (but which the Babylonians had destroyed). Haggai says they are not to live in the past (it won't return) and not to compare what they have with what God has given others. God's people aren't in competition with each other -- a good message for churches today. Outer appearances don't tell the whole story by any means. God looks at man's heart, not the size of his buildings. God focuses on eternal values, not earthly things.

CALL TO OBEY (2:10-19) Two months after the second sermon Haggai gave a third sermon, warning the people about focusing on the outer functions and rituals of their faith while their hearts stayed hard and far from God. They were just going through the motions of playing 'church.' Haggai challenges them to learn from the past, for this hypocrisy is what caused them to go into captivity in the first place. Again they repented and put God first.

CALL TO BELIEVE (2:20-23) Later that same day Haggai's fourth recorded sermon was given. He encouraged them to keep their gaze on the future and live each day in light of it. That is the only way to have correct priorities today. He talked about when the Messiah will come to rule and reign in Israel. Keeping our eyes on eternal things is the only way to have right priorities today.

How do you determine your priorities? What are your lifetime goals (what do you want to be or do during your lifetime)? In order to accomplish them, what must you do in the next year? Now, what must you be doing each day in order to accomplish those goals?

GOAL AREA	WHAT I WANT TO BE OR ACCOMPLISH DURING MY LIFE	WHAT I NEED TO DO NOW IN ORDER TO MEET THIS GOAL
SPIRITUAL	1. 2.	1. 2.
ACADEMIC & CAREER	1. 2.	1. 2.
RELATION-SHIPS	1. 2.	1. 2.

OUTLINE OF HAGGAI

I. CALL TO REBUILD (Sermon 1: Construction of Temple) 1:1-15

- A. God's Warning 1:1-6
- B. God's Solution 1:7-8
- C. God's Challenge 1:9-11
- D. Israel's Reaction 1:12-15

II. CALL TO LISTEN (Sermon 2: Courage in God) 2:1-9

- A. The Temple (Present) 2:1-3
- B. The Covenant (Past) 2:4-5
- C. The Messiah (Future)

III. CALL TO OBEY (Sermon 3: Cleanness of Life) 2:10-19

- A. The Blessing Needed 2:10-14
- B. The Blessing Not coming 2:15-17
- C. The Blessing On Hold 2:18-19

IV. CALL TO BELIEVE (Sermon 4: Confidence in Future) 2:20-23

- A. God Will Manifest His Power 2:20-22
- B. God Will Manifest His Prince 2:23

ZECHARIAH: HISTORY



TITLE: After prophet who wrote it

AUTHOR: Zechariah ("God Remembers")

DATE of WRITING: 520-518 BC

PLACE of WRITING: Jerusalem

TIME COVERED: 520 BC to eternity future

RECIPIENTS: Returned from captivity

KEY VERSE: 9:9-10 *Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of*

Zion! Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey. I will take away the chariots from Ephraim and the war-horses from Jerusalem, and the battle bow will be broken. He will proclaim peace to the nations. His rule will extend from sea to sea and from the River to the ends of the earth.

KEY WORD: "Word of the Lord" (14 times); "Lord of Hosts" (52 times)

PURPOSE: to encourage the people to rebuild the temple as well as reveal future events.

THEME: God is in control of history.

There used to be a children's book titled "The Chance World." It described a world in which everything happened by chance. The sun might rise or it might not, or it might appear at any hour, or the moon might come up instead. When children were born they might have one head or a dozen heads, and those heads might not be on their shoulders -- there might be no shoulders -- but arranged about the limbs. If one jumped up in the air it was impossible to predict whether he would ever come down again. That he came an hour ago was no guarantee that he would do it the next time. For every day, antecedence and consequence varied, and gravitation and everything else changed from hour to hour. What a world that would be!

Fortunately God didn't make the world that way. He has consistent laws that stay in effect. We live in a world where there is obviously a Power behind everything, controlling and keeping it all going. This doesn't only apply to nature, it also applies to time. God is also in charge of history. Nothing there, either, happens by chance. It is all as God plans and controls it. He is in control of everything. That should bring great comfort to us!

ENTER, ZECHARIAH Zechariah was both a priest and a prophet. His grandfather returned from Babylon with Zerubbabel and he was a young man when he began prophesying. Haggai was also preaching at this same time and place. Also at this time Esther was going through her conflict for the lives of all the Jews in the world. That, too, shows how God is in control of all.

Zechariah's book is the largest of the minor prophets. It is similar to Revelation in the New Testament: at the end of the testament, mostly about future prophecy and written to encourage God's people as they go through hard times. Both show that truly history is "His-story."

THE GOAL OF HISTORY (Part 1) (8 visions). The first section of the book consists of 8 visions showing that God is in charge of history and brining it all to the point where He Himself will rule and reign in Jerusalem. Like salmon instinctively return home to spawn, God has built it into man to return to Him. Unlike salmon, however, man has a free will and often goes in the opposite direction. Still, God uses man's rebellion for His glory. He used Augustus' census to get Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem so Jesus would be born there and fulfill prophecy (Micah 5:2). He used Domitian's exiling John to Patmos to give John the vision that resulted in the book of Revelation. God is truly in charge of history.

He used a wind to destroy the Spanish Armada and leave Protestant England free to spread the gospel. He used little snowflakes to defeat proud Napoleon and save Europe. He stopped the sun in its progression so the Jews could defeat their enemies in Joshua's time.

LESSONS FROM HISTORY (4 messages). Then Zechariah preached 4 sermons to the people. He encouraged them to learn from their past failures -- learn from history! But who ever does? They went into captivity because they just went through the motions of fasting and serving God. Now they are doing the same thing. They are 'playing church,' but God isn't first in their hearts. Zechariah tells them a time is coming when they will be fully restored and in God's presence, so they should prepare for that time by living for Him now.

THE GOAL OF HISTORY (Part 2) (2 burdens). Zechariah then writes about the coming King. In his first coming (chapters 9-11) he will be rejected and crucified. Many details are given: betrayed for 30 pieces of silver, riding a colt into town, hands pierced, dying to save others, etc. He is called Servant (3:8), Branch (3:8), Priest (6:13), King (6:13), Betrayed One (11:12-13), Pierced One (12:10), Fountain (13:1), Shepherd (13:7), God (13:7-9) and Lord over all (14:5,9). The second burden (chapter 12-14) is about the second coming of the Messiah, when the kingdom will be established on earth and Jerusalem will be the center of worship for the Messiah-King. Just as everything Zechariah said about the first coming of the Messiah came true, so will everything about the Second Coming.

OUTLINE OF ZECHARIAH STIRS

I. LEARNING FROM HISTORY I (8 Visions) 1-6

- A. God Sees 1
 - 1. Distressing Indifference of Israel 1:1-17
 - 2. Diminishing Influence of Israel 1:18-21
- B. God Speaks 2-4
 - 1. Israel's Restoration 2
 - 2. Israel's Righteousness 3
 - 3. Israel's Revival 4
- C. God Starts 5-6
 - 1. Conviction 5:1-4
 - 2. Condemnation 5:5-11
 - 3. Conquest 6

II. LESSONS FROM HISTORY (4 Messages) 7-8

- A. Failure of the People 7
 - 1. Ritual of the People 7:1-7
 - 2. Removal of the People 7:8-14
- B. Future of Jerusalem 8
 - 1. Restoration of Jerusalem 8:1-17
 - 2. Rejoicing in Jerusalem 8:18-23

III. CULMINATION OF HISTORY II (2 Burdens) 9-14

- A. King Rejected 9-11
 - 1. Coming of the King 9
 - 2. Call of the King 10
 - 3. Crucifixion of the King 11
- B. King Ruling 12-14
 - 1. Deliverance of the King 12
 - 2. Delight of the King 13
 - 3. Domain of the King 14

MALACHI: REPENTANCE



TITLE: After prophet who wrote it

AUTHOR: Malachi ("Messenger of God")

DATE of WRITING: 445 - 397 BC

PLACE of WRITING: Judah

TIME COVERED: Between 445 and 397 BC

RECIPIENTS: Israel after return from Babylon

KEY VERSE: 3:9-10 *You are under a curse-- the whole nation of you-- because you are robbing me. Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this," says the LORD Almighty, "and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it.*

KEY WORDS: "You say" (11 times), "wherein" (6), "cursed" (7)

PURPOSE: Reproof for neglect of the temple & worship

THEME: Repent and turn back to God

Once upon a time there was a young man who was 'in love' with a young lady -- at least that's what he told her. Once a week, on his day off, he called on the young lady -- that is if he didn't have other company, feel tired, or have somewhere else to go. She loved good music and great literature but he had no interest in either. Actually, he was restless and fidgety when around her. "Why couldn't he stay longer or come more often?" she wondered.

The reason was that the young man still cared for an old sweetheart. Though he had agreed to make a break, he was still spending several hours a week with her. It seemed they still had so much in common: they loved the same things, the same people and the same amusements. Yet to the young lady to whom he had recently declared his love, he would admit to no other loyalty.

What is the analogy I'm trying to make? Unfortunately it is too obvious: that's the way God's people then, the Jews, were toward God. It happens today, too. Vows and promises are made, but the pull of the world interferes. Words say one thing, but actions another.

BATTER UP! It's the end of the game. Your team is down to its last batter and you're behind 50-0. It looks kind of bleak! Malachi is the last man to step to bat, trying to win the game for God by bringing the home team back to spiritual faithfulness. Can he do it?

Malachi lived and ministered during the time of Nehemiah, who was the leader. Malachi was the prophet who preached to the people. Almost 90% of the book was spoken directly by God. The book concludes with a call to repentance. This book is a link, a bridge between the Old and New Testaments.

GOD'S LOVE QUESTIONED (1:1-5) The book opens with God clearly declaring His love for His people, but they doubted His love. "How can you love us?" they asked in their doubt and self-pity. God answers by saying His actions in the past prove His love. No matter what they did or didn't do, God still loved them. He wants His people to feel loved and secure and to respond to that love by loving Him in return.

GOD'S LAWS REJECTED (1:6 - 3:15) God expects and deserves the total honor and devotion of His people, but often He doesn't receive that. In Malachi's day the leaders were leading the people astray because of their unfaithfulness. While outwardly claiming to follow God, they married unbelieving Gentiles and let them bring their heathen idols into Israel. Throughout the nation the

family was breaking down and divorce was common. Because God hadn't judged their life styles they said God approved of what they were doing! They didn't support God's work and workers financially as they were commanded to do. They were prideful and arrogant. They needed to repent, to "change their mind" and reverse their direction. They needed to do a U-turn, an about-face, in attitude and action. If they don't there will be judgment from God.

GOD'S JUDGMENT COMING (3:16 - 4:6) There is a faithful minority in Israel and God promises to remember them even though they will suffer the consequences the whole nation faces. The majority, though, need to repent or suffer judgment. Unfortunately they didn't repent when Malachi preached or even later. The book ends with a promise of coming judgment unless God's messenger's message of repentance is accepted. *Malachi 4:5-6 "See, I will send you the prophet Elijah before that great and dreadful day of the LORD comes. He will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers; or else I will come and strike the land with a curse."*

This prophet is to be like Elijah. He will preach a message of repentance like Malachi did. If the people repent, they will be forgiven and restored. God so deeply desires this that He will soon send His Messiah, but first He will send this messenger to prepare the way for Him (3:1-6). With this call to repentance and promise of a coming messenger the Old Testament closes. Four hundred years later the New Testament opens with John, who fulfilled Malachi's prophecies, coming preaching the same message of repentance.

God's message of repentance is still being delivered today. He wants and deserves our whole being, not just some parts some times. Anything less must be repented of and changed. God still loves His people and welcomes them home. The longer we put off repentance the more we will have to repent of and the less time to repent in! Don't be like the young man in the story whose actions didn't match his profession of love.

OUTLINE OF MALACHI

I. GOD'S LOVE QUESTIONED 1:1-5

- A. God: "I Love You" 1:1-2a
- B. People: "How Can You?" 1:2b
- C. God: "I've proven it" 1:3-5

II. GOD'S LAWS REJECTED 1:6-3:15

- A. Cheating 1:6-14
- B. Unfaithfulness 2:1-9
- C. "Mixed" Marriage 2:10-12
- D. Family Breakdown 2:13-16
- E. Disobedience 2:17
- F. John the Baptist Foretold 3:1-6
- G. Robbery 3:7-12
- H. Arrogance 3:13-15

III. GOD'S JUDGMENT COMING 3:16-4:6

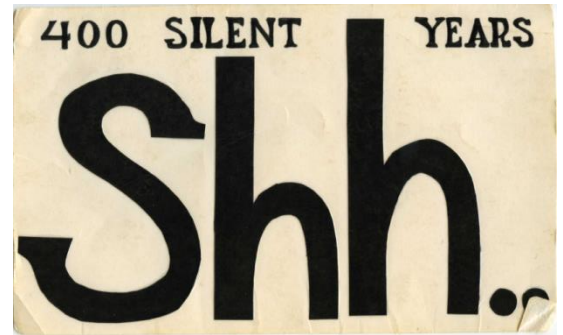
- A. Ungodly People 3:16-18
- B. Godly Judgment 4:1-6

BIBLE OVERVIEW

21. 400

SILENT

YEARS



MAIN EVENTS: Between the Old and New Testament

MAIN PEOPLE: Maccabees

BOOKS OF THE BIBLE:

BIBLE VERSE:

TIME5: 430-5 BC

WORLD EVENTS AT THIS TIME:

India invaded by Alexander the Great

India dark ages politically, golden age for art

Ashoka became emperor in India

Greece: Persian & Peloponnesian Wars

Greek Classical Age: Parthenon, Socrates, Plato, Euripides

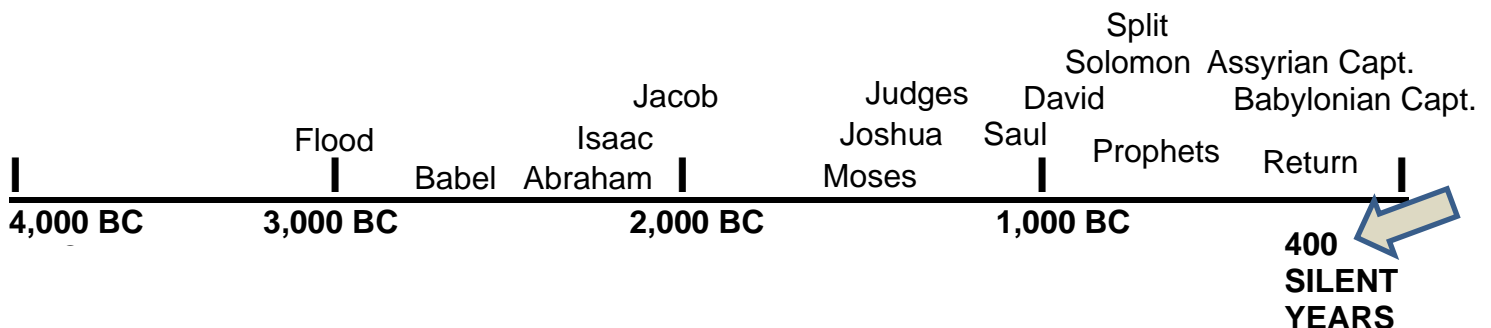
Alexander conquers Persia, Seleucids succeed him

Han dynasty in China

Rise of Roman Republic, conquers Carthage, Greece, Asia Minor and Egypt

Maccabean revolt overthrows Seleucids in Israel

GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION: Palestine



This final period in the Old Testament portion of our overview of history is called the “400 Silent Years” because no Bible books were written during that time and the Jews were, for the most part, turning from God. But much was happening in the rest of the world during the time between Malachi and Matthew. Three successive world empires operated during this time: Persia, Greece and Rome. Alexander the Great lived and died. He, too, controlled Israel for a time. The Jews revolted under the family of the Maccabees and gained temporary freedom from Greece, but lost it to Rome’s might. While no inspired Bible books were written during this time the many Apocrypha books were written. Only recently has the Catholic Church considered them on a level with other Scripture, but for 1500

years they were known to be just writings of the day. They do contain historical information about the time period, though. God was using this time to prepare everyone for the coming of the Messiah.

400 SILENT YEARS

Alfred Hitchcock (1899-1980), the movie director, told a parable in *Guideposts* (1959) about the unknown. There once was a king who was granted two wishes. His first was to see the future. But when he saw all that lay ahead -- the beauty and the pain -- he immediately asked for his second wish; that the future be hidden. "I thank Heaven," the master of suspense proclaimed, "that tomorrow does not belong to any man. It belongs to God."

HISTORY = HIS STORY In fact, ALL history belongs to God: past, present and future. Every single event is under His control, even to a bird coming to land on the ground (Matthew 10:29). The rising and falling of the most powerful nations of the world are also under God's control (Daniel 2:32-47; Acts 4:25). This is very comforting in a world that seems out of control.

One of the best examples of this is the coming of Jesus to earth. God says that this was in the very time He chose: *Galatians 4:4 But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law.* God didn't sit around waiting for the right time, He actively controlled history so that all the conditions necessary were present when He came to earth. Just what made this particular time so special?

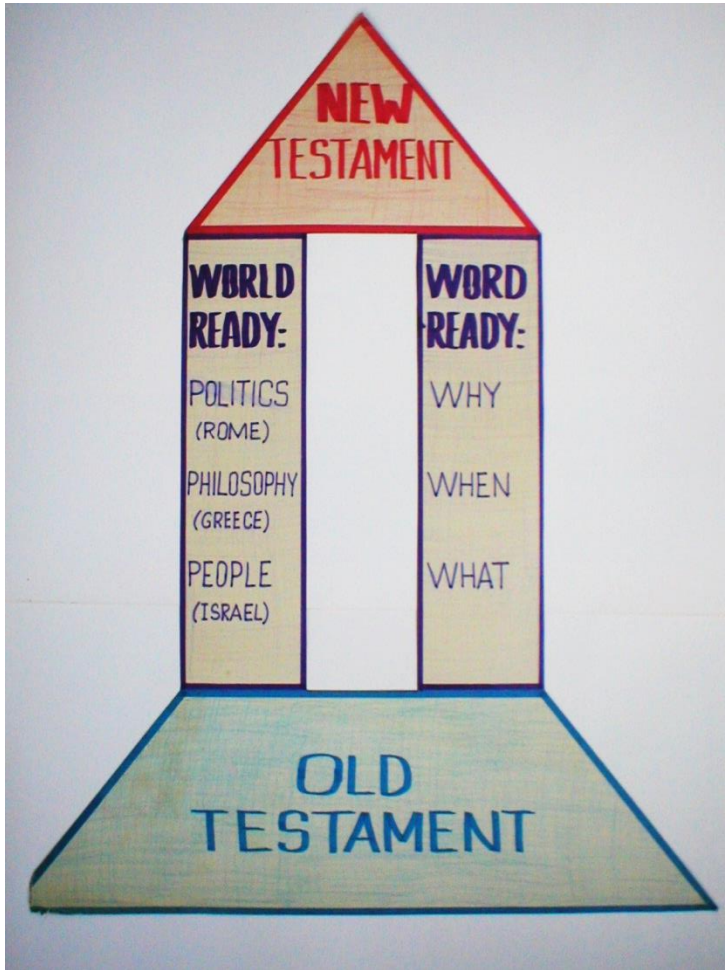
There were three main groups of people God used to prepare the world for Jesus' first coming. These affected all areas of life at that time. Everything was perfectly prepared in the area of politics (Rome), philosophy (Greece) and the people (Israel).

GREECE (PHILOSOPHY) Greece took over control of Palestine from Persia in 334 BC when Alexander was conquering the whole area. When he died in 323 the Ptolemies ruled there until the Seleucids took over in 219 BC. During this time the area was totally saturated with Greek culture, thought and philosophy (a kind of humanism not much different from New Age thought today). Many Jews bought into this, led by a group of very liberal-thinking Jews called the Sadducees. God used this Greek thought to prepare people for the coming Messiah and the spread of the early church because Greek thought was looking for answers but, despite all the attempts to find them, didn't really produce anything to fill people's hearts. There were Epicureans, Stoics, Academics, Orphism, Pythagoreans, Cynics, Skeptics and many more. Socrates, Plato and Aristotle were influencing the people. God was just an intellectual abstraction. There were no strong gods or goddesses demanding the loyalty and attention of the common people. Questions were asked but not answered.

Of great impact on the world, and the Bible, was the spread of Greek as the universal language. Now people could speak to each other in a common language -- very essential to the quick spread of the early church. Not only was Greek a universal language, but it was a very precise language. It was just what was needed to convey all the theological nuances and flavors of the New Testament. God obviously prepared Greek for His Word.

ISRAEL (PEOPLE) While the Greeks greatly influenced the land of Palestine, they never conquered the hearts of the people. Antiochus Epiphanes desecrated the temple in the most awful ways and killed any Jews who practiced their religion in any way. Even quoting a Bible verse was punishable by death. The Maccabean revolt, led by the Hasmonean family, won back Jewish independence and culminated with the rededication of the temple on December 25, 164 BC. Unfortunately the Hasmonean rulership soon became almost as oppressive as the Seleucids had been before them. A movement of conservative Jews who wanted to have the nation turn back to God and His Word arose. Called the Pharisees, they led the people in civil war which just made everything worse. This

so weakened the nation that the Romans, having defeated the Greeks, were easily able to annex Palestine in 63 BC.



During all this, though, Jews were moving into virtually every nation of the world. This dispersion was very foundational to the spread of the early church. The Jews brought their message of one God as revealed in the Bible Who wanted His people to live a holy life, to every nation, setting the groundwork for the spread of the early church. Their synagogues became perfect places to first preach the Good News of Jesus the Messiah. The church became patterned after the synagogue.

Also during this time period the Septuagint (LXX) was translated. For the first time the Jews, and also anyone who could read Greek, could read the Bible for themselves. This opened the way for the spread of the Gospel, too. God was working to bring all this about.

ROME (POLITICS) While the Greeks influenced the minds of men, Rome controlled their bodies. Rome's take-over of that whole part of the world also was important in setting the groundwork for what was to come. For the first time there was world peace, and it lasted for several hundred years. That meant it was safe to travel anywhere. Rome built marvelous

roads for travel. Travel by ship was safe, too. Pirates and robbers were kept under control. Because of peace as well as advances in technology, it was no longer for everyone to spend the vast majority of their time growing their own food. Many people moved into cities and pursued other crafts. This made it possible for Paul and the other early missionaries to go into the cities where people were already gathered and preach. This was MUCH more efficient than going from farm to farm!

Then, too, Rome allowed religious freedom. They did not dictate who or what was to be worshipped. People could decide for themselves. The old gods and idols their ancestors worshipped no longer held much interest and often didn't apply to their new lives in the cities. City life brought its share of new problems, too. Sin was rampant. Alcoholism, immorality, homosexuality, prostitution, crime, murder, extortion and political corruption were rampant. Something was needed to give meaning, peace and satisfaction in life. The stage was set for the message of Jesus

Galatians 4:4 But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law. God IS in control of history, of ALL history. He has everything set up just the way He wanted it to be for Jesus' first coming. He's doing the same right now, getting ready for Jesus' return. It's His world. He is sovereign Lord over all that happens. Praise His name!

BIBLE OVERVIEW

22 . JESUS

MAIN EVENTS: Birth, Life, Death & Resurrection of Jesus

MAIN PEOPLE: Jesus, His followers

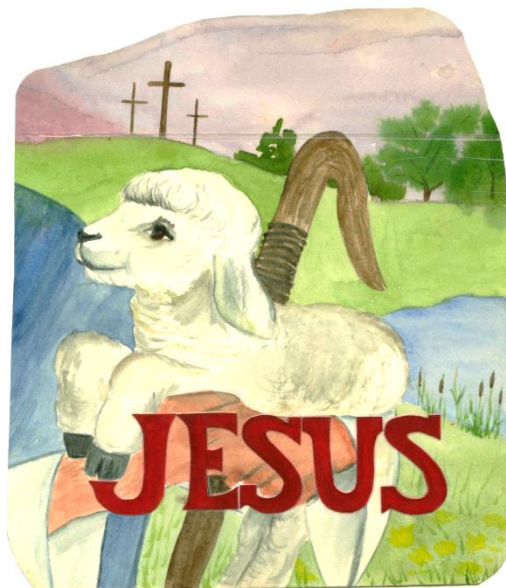
BOOKS OF THE BIBLE: Matthew, Mark, Luke, John

BIBLE VERSE: *John 3:16 For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.*

TIME: Approximately 4 BC to 30 AD

WORLD EVENTS AT THIS TIME: Rome rules the world

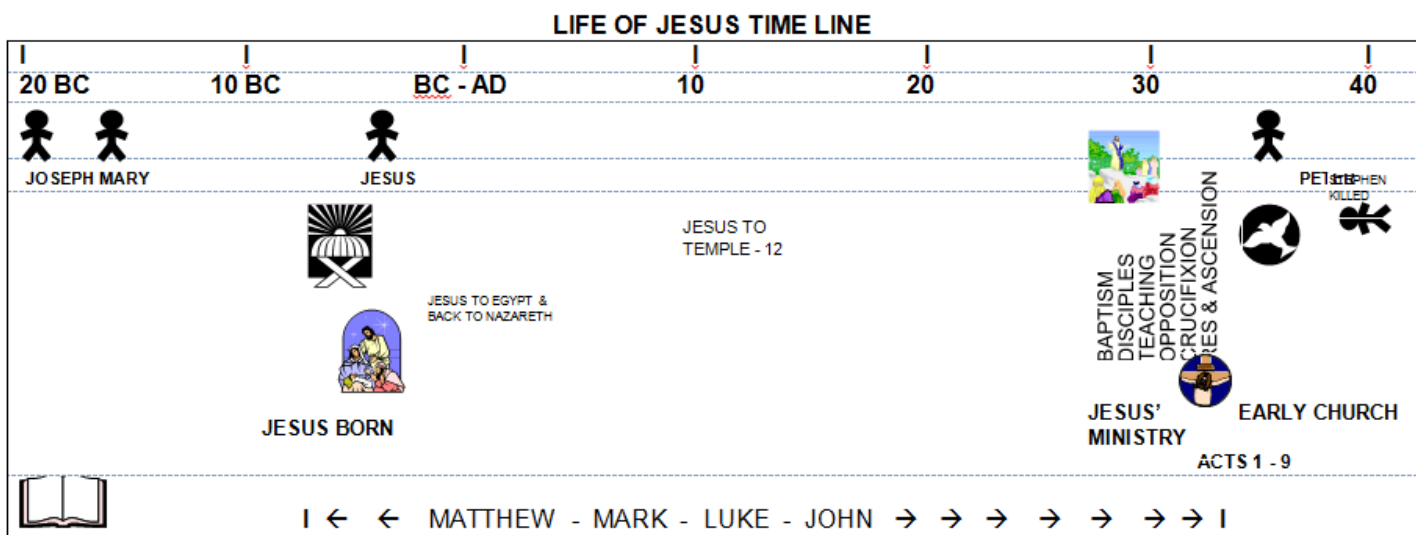
GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION: Palestine



With this stage in Bible history we leave the Old Testament and enter the New Testament. So far we have seen man's failure and need of salvation. Now we see God's solution to that need. God Himself left heaven to come to earth to die on the cross in our place and then to come back to life, proving He had conquered sin and death.

Four Gospels show Jesus' life from different angles. In Genesis 3:15 God foretold the ages-long battle between Satan and God, and how God Himself would come to earth to defeat Satan and sin. That was done by Jesus and the prophecy in Genesis 3:15 fulfilled.

The life, death and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth is the highlight of the Bible and of all world history. It is the most important event ever. Before this event, everything in history and the Bible pointed to His first coming. After His ascension everything in history and the Bible was dependent on what He had done. He is the high point, the central point, the main focus of all history and all life. Jesus should be the central point, the most important person in your life as well.



JESUS BEFORE HIS BIRTH

If you were a Jew living during the time Jesus was born, what would you know about the coming Messiah? What would you have understood about God coming to earth? These are interesting and thought-provoking questions. Understanding what Jews then knew about God who would visit earth as Jesus is very important to understanding the life of Jesus.

THE TRINITY The early church councils decreed “there is only one God, but in the unity of the Godhead there are 3 eternal and coequal persons, the same in substance but distinct in personality.” God the Father (John 6:27; Ephesians 4:6), God the Son (Hebrews 1:8) and God the Spirit (Acts 5:3-4) are one God (Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14) in three persons. The Bible says no man has seen God the Father at any time (John 1:18; I John 4:12). The Spirit’s role is not to manifest Himself but to focus on the Son (John 16:13-14). Therefore it is always God the Son who is visible God in the Bible, both the Old and New Testament.

THEOPHANIES, occurrences of God appearing to man, are recorded in the Old Testament. Usually written “Angel of the LORD,” it always refers to God the Son (Jesus before His birth - Genesis 16:13; 22:15-18; 24:7; 32:24-32; Hosea 12:4). Therefore Jews who knew their Bible in Jesus’ time would have known that God had appeared to man in the past, and would again. There is more information, though, than just appearances of God to man.

TYPES There is more in the Old Testament about God the Son than just what is actually said about Him (Luke 24:27). There are pictures of Him as well. These pictures, called types, are like shadows in reverse. You see the shadow first (Old Test.) and then the real thing (New Test.). For example, David is a type (picture) of Jesus in that there are many parallels between them, things in David’s life which show more about Jesus. Jesus Himself used the serpent on the pole as a picture of Himself (John 3:14) and He used Jonah the same way (Matthew 12:40). Much information about God the Son can be gleaned from studying the pictures of Jesus contained in things like the Tabernacle, priesthood, offering system, holy days, etc.

PROPHECIES The rabbis list 456 Messianic passages in the Old Testament. These give more precise information about God the Son and His coming to earth, than types. For example, the Bible said He would come from a woman’s seed (Genesis 3:15); born of a virgin (Isaiah 7:14), from the line of Abraham (Genesis 12:3,7; 17:7; 22:18), from the tribe of Judah (Genesis 49:10), the house of David (Psalm 132:11; 2 Samuel 7:12-13; Jeremiah 23:5), and the seed of Isaac (Genesis 21:12). He was prophesied to be born at Bethlehem (Micah 5:2), called Immanuel (Isaiah 7:14), called out of Egypt (Hosea 11:1) and preceded by John the Baptist (Malachi 3:1; Isaiah 40:3). Many, many other prophecies about His life, person, ministry, message, works, death and resurrection also abound. The odds are astronomical that even just a few of these could have been coincidentally fulfilled. Only God could have foretold and fulfilled all these.

THE SON OF GOD AS HUMAN He had a human body (Galatians 4:4; Luke 2:52; I John 1:1; Matthew 26:12) but was sinless (Hebrews 4:15). He also had a human soul and spirit (Matthew 26:38; Luke 23:46). As a man He got hungry (Matthew 4:2), thirsty (John 19:28), tired (John 4:6), sad (John 11:35) and tempted (Hebrews 4:15). He had human names (Matthew 1:21) and died a human death.

THE SON OF GOD AS DEITY He was called God (Hebrews 1:8; Matthew 16:16; 26:61-64). He was omnipotent (Matthew 28:18), omniscient (John 1:48), omnipresent (Matthew 18:20) and unchangeable (Hebrews 13:8). He was life (John 1:4) and truth (John 14:6). He did the works of God: create (John 1:3), sustain nature (Colossians 1:17), forgive sin (Luke 7:48), raise the dead (John 5:25), judge sin (John 5:27) and send the Holy Spirit (John 15:26). He accepted worship by men (Matthew 14:33) and angels (Hebrews 1:6). He claimed equality with the Father (John 14:23;

10:30). Over and over He claimed to be sent from God (John 4:34; 5:37; 7:16; 7:28-29; 8:16; 8:26; 9:4; 11:42; 14:24; 16:28; 17:18; 17:23).

CONTRASTS IN THE PERSON OF CHRIST Jesus was both God and man. He was hungry (Matthew 4:12) yet He fed multitudes (John 6:1-14). He was thirsty (John 19:28-29) yet gives the water of life (John 4:10-14; 7:37). He was tired (John 4:26) yet gives rest (Matthew 11:28). He prayed (Matthew 14:23) yet answers prayer (John 14:3,14). He was sold for 30 pieces of silver (Matthew 26:14-15) yet redeems the world (1 Peter 1:18-19; 1 John 2:2). He had nowhere to lay His head (Matthew 8:20) yet He created all things (John 1:3). He died yet He gives life (John 6:51,44). He was killed (Hebrews 2:14) yet destroys death (1 Corinthians 15:26, 54). He lay down His life, then He took it up again (John 10:17-18).

If you had been alive when Jesus was born you'd have to decide: Did you believe the accounts of God Himself coming to earth? Would He come again as the prophecies said? Would you bow down and make Him Lord and God of your life? Would you recognize Him as God and man in one - the God-man Messiah? Most of the people living then rejected the truth and turned from Him. Most still do. What about you? The facts are in. They haven't changed.

If He is God, that means He has everything in the universe under His control -- including your life and mine. HE is the king of the universe, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords (Rev 19). He is God and He is king. Make sure He is your king.

PROOF JESUS IS GOD

Did a man named Jesus really live in Palestine 2,000 years ago? Certainly, there is no doubt or question about that. No secular historian disbelieves that, for it is a proven fact of history. Many historians of Jesus' day wrote about Him. What is of much debate, however, is if He was God or not. Was He just a man like everyone else, or was He really and truly God? Did He just say He was? Or did His followers later write in such a way to make Him seem to be God when He had no such claims? The implications of these answers are great. How can we as Christians be sure? Let's look at some proofs of His deity from within and without the Bible.

LORD, LUNATIC or LIAR

First, there is no doubt that **Jesus claimed to be God**. The whole tenor of His life points to that. He verbally claimed to be God many, many times (John 8:58; 10:30; 17:5; etc.). He accepted worship as if He were God. He claimed to be able to forgive sin (Mark 2:5). Now, what are we to make of someone who claims to be God? What would you say if your neighbor started claiming to be God? There are three options or possibilities about such a person. He is crazy, a **lunatic**, for he truly thinks he is God but is wrong. He knows he isn't God but tries to convince everyone he is anyway, thus he is a **liar**. Or he really is God and **Lord** of all! Lord, lunatic or liar are our options. Just a good man, a fine teacher, a moral example -- these are not options for one who claims to be God! If He is a lunatic or liar He doesn't qualify as a good, fine person. If He is Lord He is overqualified and far more than just a good, fine person. Thus He is either God to be worshipped and obeyed or an impostor to be forgotten and ignored.

FULFILLED PROPHECIES

To prove He is Lord we turn to the Bible, not to passages about miracles and claims that could possibly have been made up by writers after His death, but to Old Testament Prophecies whose fulfillment could not have been faked. Listed below are 61 Old Testament prophecies of the Messiah with their fulfillment in the New Testament also recorded:

1. Born of the seed of woman: Genesis 3:15 (Galatians 4:4, Matthew 1:20)

2. Born of a virgin: Isaiah 7:14 (Matthew 1:18,24,25; Luke 1:26-35)
3. Son of God: Psalm 2:7; 1 Chronicles 17:11-14; 2 Samuel 7:12-16 (Matthew 3:17; 16:16 (Mark 9:7; Luke 9:35))
4. Seed of Abraham Genesis 22:18; 12:2-3; (Matthew 1:1; Galatians 3:16)
5. Son of Isaac: Genesis 21:12 (Luke 3:23,34; Matthew 1:2)
6. Son of Jacob: Numbers 24:17; Genesis 35:10-12; (Luke 3:23,34; Matthew 1:2; Luke 1:33)
7. Tribe of Judah: Genesis 49:10 (Luke 3:23,33; Matthew 1:2; Hebrews 7:14)
8. Family line of Jesse: Isaiah 11:1, 10 (Luke 3:23,32; Matthew 1:6)
9. House of David: Jeremiah 23:5; 2 Samuel 7:12-16; Psalm 132:11 (Luke 3:23,31; Matthew 1:1; 9:27)
10. Born at Bethlehem: Micah 5:2 (Matthew 2:1; John 7:42; Matthew 2:4-8; Luke 2:4-7)
11. Presented with gifts: Psalm 72:10; Isaiah 60:6 (Matthew 2:1,11)
12. Herod kills children: Jeremiah 31:15 (Matthew 2:16)
13. His pre-existence: Micah 5:2; Isaiah 9:6-7; Psalm 102:25 (Colossians 1:17; John 1:1-2; 8:58; Revelation 1:17)
14. He shall be called Lord: Psalm 110:1; Jeremiah 23:6 (Luke 2:11; 20:41-44)
15. Shall be Immanuel (God With Us): Isaiah 7:14 (Matthew 1:23; Luke 7:16)
16. Shall be a prophet: Deut 18:18 (Matthew 21:11; Luke 7:16; John 4:19; 6:14; 7:40)
17. He shall be a priest: Psalm 110:4 (Hebrews 3:1; 5:5-6)
18. He shall be a judge: Isaiah 33:22 (John 5:30; 2 Timothy 4:1)
19. He shall be a king: Psalm 2:6; Zechariah 9:9; Jeremiah 23:5 (Matthew 27:37; 21:5; John 18:33-38)
20. Special anointing of the Holy Spirit: Isaiah 11:2 (Matthew 3:16-17; 12:17-21; Mark 1:10-11)
21. His zeal for God: Psalm 69:9 (John 2:15-17)
22. Preceded by messenger: Isaiah 40:3 (Matthew 3:1-2; 3:3; 11:10)
23. Ministry to begin in Galilee: Isaiah 9:1 (Matthew 4:12,13,17)
24. Ministry of miracles: Isaiah 35:5, 6a; 32:3,4 (Matthew 9:32,33,35; 11:4-6; John 5:5-9)
25. Teacher of parables: Psalm 78:2 (Matthew 13:34)
26. He was to enter the temple: Malachi 3:1 (Matthew 21:12)
27. He was to enter Jerusalem on a donkey: Zechariah 9:9 (Luke 19:35,36,37; Matthew 21:6-11)
28. "Stone of Stumbling" to the Jews: Psalm 118:22; Isaiah 8:14; 28:16 (1 Peter 2:7; Romans 9:32-33)
29. "Light" to Gentiles: Isaiah 60:3; 49:6 (Acts 13:47,48a; 26:23; 28:28)
30. Betrayed by a friend: Psalm 41:9; 55:12-14 (Matthew 10:4; 26:49-50; John 13:21)
31. Sold for 30 pieces of silver: Zechariah 11:12 (Matthew 26:15; 27:3)
32. Money to be thrown in God's house: Zechariah 11:13 (Matthew 27:5)
33. Price given for potter's field: Zechariah 11:13b (Matthew 27:7)
34. Forsaken by His disciples: Zechariah 13:7 (Mark 14:27, 50; Matthew 26:31)
35. Accused by false witnesses: Psalm 35:11 (Matthew 26:59-61)
36. Dumb before accusers: Isaiah 53:7 (Matthew 27:12-19)
37. Wounded and bruised: Isaiah 53:5; Zechariah 13:6 (Matthew 27:26)
38. Smitten and spit upon: Isaiah 50:6; Micah 5:1 (Matthew 26:67; Luke 22:63)
39. Mocked: Psalm 22: 7,8 (Matthew 27:31)
40. Fell under the cross: Psalm 109:24-25 (John 19:17; Luke 23:26; Matthew 27:31-32)
41. Hands and feet pierced: Psalm 22:16; Zechariah 12:10 (Luke 23:33; John 20:25)
42. Crucified with thieves: Isaiah 53:12 (Matthew 27:38; Mark 15:27,28)
43. Made intercession for His persecutors: Isaiah 53:12 (Luke 23:34)
44. Rejected by His own people: Isaiah 53:3; Psalm 69:8; 118:22 (John 7:5,48; 1:11; Matthew 21:42,43)
45. Hated without a cause: Psalm 69:4; Isaiah 49:7 (John 15:25)
46. Friends stood afar off: Psalm 38:11 (Luke 23:49; Mark 15:40; Matthew 27:55-56)

47. People shook their heads: Psalm 109:25; 22:7 (Matthew 27:39)
48. Stared upon: Psalm 22:17 (Luke 23:35)
49. Garments parted and lots cast: Psalm 22:18 (John 19:23-24)
50. To suffer thirst: Psalm 69:21; 22:15 (John 19:28)
51. Gall and vinegar offered Him: Psalm 69:21 (Matthew 27:34)
52. His forsaken cry: Psalm 22:1 (Matthew 26:46)
53. Committed Himself to God: Psalm 31:5 (Luke 23:46)
54. Bones not broken: Psalm 34:20 (John 19:33)
55. Heart broken: Psalm 22:14 (John 19:34)
56. His side pierced: Zechariah 12:10 (John 19:34)
57. Darkness over the land: Amos 8:9 (Matthew 27:45)
58. Buried in rich man's tomb: Isaiah 53:9 (Matthew 27:57-60)
59. Resurrection: Psalm 16:10; 30:3; 41:10; 118:17; Hosea 6:2 (Acts 2:31; Luke 24:46; Mark 16:16)
60. Ascension: Psalm 68:18a (Acts 1:9)
61. Seated at right hand of God: Psalm 110:1 (Hebrews 1:3; Mark 16:19; Acts 2:34,35)

No one else in history ever came near to fulfilling these, and no one ever can since the birth records and tribal records of all Jews were destroyed in Jerusalem in 70 AD. The fulfillment of these prove the authenticity of the Bible as God's Word as well as the fact that Jesus is God.

The probability of just 1 through 8 coming true would be 1 in 10 with 16 0's. (If each chance is a silver dollar and they were laid down side-by-side on the state of Texas, they would cover the whole state 2' deep! One is marked, all others not. Blindfold a man and let him walk anywhere, chances he'd pick marked one are the same as the first 8 prophecies just happening!

THE RESURRECTION

In actuality, the proof of the deity of Jesus rises or falls on the truth of His **resurrection**. He said He would come back to life, then claimed to have done so. His followers clearly claimed the same thing for them. Were they right? First, it stands to reason to assume that something like resurrection from death to an eternal body isn't something a person would just make up! It would be too unbelievable, too unprovable, too far out for someone to have just made it up.

If Jesus didn't come back to life, what else could have happened to his body? Some say the disciples stole His body, but how would they gain courage to preach that they didn't have before? Why would they give up their lives for something they knew was a lie? So, others say, enemies stole the body. Then they would have said so and showed it to disprove the resurrection when that was first claimed. Neither theory explains the eye-witness accounts of over 500 people who saw Jesus alive after the crucifixion. More common is the swoon theory, that Jesus never really died but swooned then came 'to' later. But he was pronounced dead by experienced Roman executioners after having a spear run through His heart. He spent 3 days wrapped totally in cloth and covered with 100 pounds of spices, with no food or water. He would have had to revive, get out of the wrappings while leaving them there in the shape of a cocoon as if He were still in them, with hands pierced by nails move the monstrous rock from inside with no handholds, overpower the Roman soldiers, walk many miles on feet pierced by nails, and then prove to those He met that He had a superior, eternal body! That takes more faith than believing in the resurrection!

There is **additional proof of the resurrection**. Jesus appeared 10 times to over 500 people. If there was no resurrection how do we explain the change in the disciples, the spread of the early church, the conversion of Paul, the start of the Lord's Supper and baptism, the switch of the day of worship from Saturday to Sunday and the impact His life has had even to today. Ralph Waldo Emerson said, "The name of Jesus is not so much written as plowed into the history of the world." A liar or lunatic can't do that!

IF GOD BECAME MAN, THEN YOU WOULD EXPECT HIM TO:

One more line of reasoning is to ask yourself, "If God became man, what would we expect of Him?" Jesus fulfilled all we'd ask!

1. **Have an unusual entrance into life.** The virgin birth is the most unusual entrance ever. It, too, is not something someone would choose were they making the whole thing up. How would the idea of a virgin birth ever be considered if it weren't true?

2. **Be without sin.** Jesus claimed to be sinless (John 8:46). Those who witnessed His life agree to this claim: His disciples who lived with Him 24 hours a day (Peter, John, Matthew, etc.), His brothers who saw Him both in family life and with others (James, Jude), even His enemies could not point to any sin in His life (the thief on the cross, Pilate, the centurion at the cross witnessed to His sinlessness).

3. **Manifest the supernatural in the form of miracles.** Jesus claimed to do miracles, and they were attested to by Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Peter, Jude and James.

4. **Have an acute sense of difference from others.** Jesus saw Himself as different, unique, and others saw Him that way, too. Even Jewish and Roman historians saw Him as not the same as other men, as does the Koran and many scholars today.

5. **Speak the greatest words ever spoken.** Jesus said His words would never pass away and they haven't! Others said that no one spoke as He did, and that is still true. Jesus is the person most quoted by religious and secular historians, teachers and philosophers.

6. **Have a lasting and universal influence.** Historians agree that Jesus is the most influential life ever lived on this planet.

7. **Satisfy the spiritual hunger in man.** Jesus met the inner needs in Matthew, Peter, Nicodemus, Zacchaeus, the woman at the well, and countless others then and through the ages up to today. Truly Jesus satisfies!

8. **Exercise power over death.** Jesus claimed to have power over death and proved it by His own resurrection. He brought the dead back to life: widow of Nain's son, Centurion's servant, Lazarus and Dorcas (through Peter). (For more information along these lines see "Evidence That Demands A Verdict," by Josh McDowell.)

Was Jesus God? You'll have to decide for yourself. However, if He wasn't, then no one will ever be. If Jesus were not God, then He deserved an Oscar!

CHRIST'S CLAIMS OF DEITY

Claimed Equality With God Matthew 28:19; John 5:17-18; 12:45; 13:20; 14:1, 9

Claimed Oneness With God Matthew 4:7; Luke 4:12; 8:39; John 10:30, 36-38; 17:11, 21-22; 20:28

Claimed To Be Sent By God John 4:34; 5:37; 7:16, 28-29; 8:16; 9:4; 11:42; 14:24; 16:28; 17:18, 23

Claimed To Be The Son of God Matthew 16:17; 22:42-45; Mark 12:35-37; 14:61-62; Luke 20:41; John 9:35-37; Luke 22:69-70

Claimed To Be From Heaven John 6:33, 35, 51

Claimed Attributes of God John 8:42; 16:15; 17:5; 14:6

Omniscience Matthew 11:21-22; 22:18; Luke 10:13; John 16:30-31

Omnipresence Matthew 18:20; 28:20

Omnipotence Mark 14:61-63; Luke 22:69-70; John 2:19, 10:18; 11:25-27

Forgive sin Mark 2:5,9,10; Luke 5:20-21; 7:48-49

Divine Authority Matthew 7:21-23; 28:18

Honor John 5:22-23

Pre-Existence John 8:58; 17:5

LIFE OF JESUS - AN OVERVIEW

When Jesus of Nazareth was born, no one in the entire Roman Empire cared except His parents. Jesus was born in obscurity and His ministry started in obscurity. The first year only a handful knew about Him and followed Him. Gradually, His reputation spread. He was more interested in quality than quantity, though. Still, everyone needed to have and did have a fair chance to decide on their own if they would accept or reject Him.

After the first year, His popularity hit its high point. He traveled throughout Galilee with the disciples and did miracles to prove He was the Messiah. Most would have followed Him if He would have continued to provide free food for them. Instead, He challenged them to give everything up and follow Him. The masses would have cheered a military leader who would raise an army to throw off the yoke of Roman bondage. Jesus set high standards for those who would follow Him: put Him 100% first in everything and all the time, before everyone and anything else in life. It is a high requirement, and even today not many are willing to meet it. As a result, Jesus' popularity declined.

As it declined, opposition increased. The religious leaders had been against Him from the very start. He pointed out their sin from the beginning when He cleansed the temple for the first time. Gradually, they were able to turn more and more people against Jesus. People were willing to accept Jesus as Messiah. Where they got hung up was with admitting their sin and accountability before God. Pride still keeps man from God.

As public opinion shifted, so did Jesus' message and methods. Instead of going to the people offering them His message of the coming kingdom, He spent His time training and discipling His disciples. He did less and less miracles, for the people had enough proof and didn't need more. He wasn't going to force anyone to believe. He started teaching with parables to reveal truth to His followers while also hiding it from those who wouldn't accept. Instead of going to anyone everywhere, He specialized in training the disciples to keep on when He was gone.

After the end of the third year the die was cast. Opposition increased daily. The religious leaders were committed to having Him put to death to stop Him and His message. Little did they know that that was just what was needed to assure its continuing forever.

They had their chance to decide. Now is our turn. Will you accept or reject? Are you just following for the 'free food' -- what He can do for you? Are you willing to obey His challenge of taking up your cross to follow Him? It will mean rejection and opposition for those who follow Him, too. No servant is greater than His master. Still, it's the best way to live life to the fullest, to make this one life count for eternity. Don't make the mistake they did. Give up all to follow Him.

OBSCURITY (vanishing)			POPULARITY (declining)				OPPOSITION (increasing)		
Incarnation	OPENING		EXTENDED MINISTRIES				CONCLUDING EVENTS		Ascension
	EARLY MINISTRIES		SPECIALIZED MINISTRIES						
	BIRTH	Fall 26 Sp 27	Sum 27	Fall 27 Sp 28	Sum 28	Fall 28 Sp 29	Sum 29	Fall 29 Sp 30	F.W. P.R.
			Early Judean	Early Galilean	Middle Galilean	Later Galilean	Later Judean	Perean	
	1st Year		2nd Year		I	3rd Year	4th Year		

MATTHEW: JESUS the KING

TITLE: Named after the author
AUTHOR: Matthew, tax collector, disciple
DATE of WRITING: About 60 AD
PLACE of WRITING: Antioch of Syria
TIME COVERED: Life of Jesus
RECIPIENTS: Jews everywhere
KEY VERSE: *A record of the genealogy of Jesus Christ the son of David, the son of Abraham: 1:1*
KEY WORD: "Fulfill" (17 times); "kingdom of heaven" (32 times)
PURPOSE: Connect the Old and New Testaments

THEME: Jesus is the King of Israel, the promised Jewish Messiah.



Suppose you had 10 pennies in your hand shook them up, then opened your hand. What are the chances that they would all be heads? How many tries do you think it would take? On an average it would take you a little over a thousand tries! Now think of these coins as prophecies of Jesus. Pennies only have two sides – a 50-50 chance. Prophecies have many more ways of not being fulfilled than fulfilled. What if the very first time all 10 came up heads! Suppose you did it again and they were all heads, and again and again – 30 times in all and every time every penny was heads. You would think something special was going on, wouldn't you? That's just how it is with prophecies of the Messiah. He fulfilled every one of the over 300 prophecies about the Messiah. This is tremendous proof that Jesus is the Messiah.

MATTHEW WROTE TO SHOW JESUS FULFILLED PROPHECY to show that Jesus was the Messiah. "That it might be fulfilled" occurs about 20 times in his gospel. Matthew was the best-educated of all the Jews and an excellent writer. He wrote to fellow Jews, who knew the Old Testament prophecies of the Messiah, to show that Jesus fulfilled the prophecies. He includes 50 direct quotes from the Old Testament and 75 allusions to the Old Testament – double what any other Gospel has.

In Malachi, the Messiah is anticipated. The Old Testament closes looking for Him. *"See, I will send you the prophet Elijah before that great and dreadful day of the LORD comes. 6 He will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers; or else I will come and strike the land with a curse."* (Malachi 4:5) In Matthew we see the Messiah has arrived, fulfilling these prophecies.

MESSIAH The term 'Messiah' is a Hebrew word that means 'Anointed One.' The word 'Christ' is the Greek equivalent of it. Prophets, priests and kings were all anointed. The Messiah was all in one. In Matthew, and to the Jews as a whole, the main emphasis was on Messiah as King. That's what Matthew shows his readers – Jesus is the promised Messiah-King.

I. THE KING IS REVEALED (1:1 - 9:30) The first question a Jew would ask of someone claiming to be the Messiah would be, "Are you a direct descendant of David?" Here is where Matthew starts. He gives Jesus legal status through His earthly father Joseph (1:1-7). One problem arises, and that is

that there is a curse on all the physical descendants of Jehoiachin, so how could a king come from that line? The solution is that Jesus wasn't a physical descendent of his but a legal one only. Matthew explains how this could be by explaining about the virgin birth (1:18 - 2:23). About a dozen times Matthew quotes the Old Testament to show how each step fulfilled a prophecy about the Messiah.

He then tells how ambassadors came to crown the king (3:1-17), and how He proved His sinlessness when Satan tempted Him (4:1-11). The King then sets forth His moral laws for His kingdom (5:1 - 7:25). Thus Matthew shows Jesus is the Messiah by His birth and by what He said. Next He will show His qualifications by what He did.

Miracle after miracle is listed, showing Jesus' words (8:1 - 9:30). He is not only man (genealogy and birth), He is also God (miracles)

II. THE KING IS RESISTED (10:1 - 16:12) While some accepted the message of the King, many rejected it (10:1 - 12:50). Jesus' parables of the coming Kingdom show the pattern of rejection before eventual acceptance (13:1-52). Meanwhile, the Messiah was rejected by Herod, His own family, and the religious rulers (13:53-16:12).

III. THE KING IS REJECTED (19:13 - 27:66) Because the masses rejected Him, Jesus turned his ministry to training those who believed, preparing them for when He would be gone (16:13 - 20:28). He taught them about His coming rejection and death and what would happen after.

On 'Palm Sunday' Jesus clearly showed the whole nation, by actions and words, that He was the Messiah King (21:1-11). Some accepted, but most rejected. He went on to cleanse His throne room, the temple (21:12-22) and defend His kingship against those who rejected Him (21:23 - 23:39). In the Olivet Discourse (24:1 - 25:46) Jesus foretold when His kingdom would come. In the meantime, the King was turned down and crucified (26:1 - 27:66).

IV. THE KING IS RAISED (27:66 - 28:20) The power of the King over death and sin is seen in His resurrection from the dead.

Thus Matthew shows Jesus as the Messiah King, even though the religious rulers and the nation as a whole rejected Him. What about you – is He your King?

OUTLINE OF MATTHEW

I. PREPARATION OF THE KING (Revelation) 1-9

- A. The King's Person 1:1-4:11
 - 1. His Ancestry 1:1-7
 - 2. His Advent 1:18-2:23
 - 3. His Ambassador 3:1-17
 - 4. His Adversary 4:1-11
- B. The King's Plan 4:12-25
- C. The King's Preaching 5:1-7:29
- D. The King's Proof 8:1-9:30
 - 1. Power 8:1-34
 - 2. Pardon 9:1-17
 - 3. Power 9:18-38

II. PRESENCE OF THE KING (Resistance) 10-16:12

- A. The King's Program 10:1-11:1
- B. The King's Problems 11:2-12:50
- C. The King's Parables 13:1-52
- D. The King's Persecution 13:53-16:12
 - 1. By His Own Townspeople 13:53-58

2. By Herod 14:1-36
3. By the Scribes and Pharisees 15:1-39
4. By the Pharisees and Sadducees 16:1-12

III. PREACHING OF THE KING (Rejection) 16:13-27:66

- A. The King's Principles 16:13-20:28
 1. About His Church 16:13-20
 2. About His Death 16:21-28
 3. About His Glory 17:1-21
 4. About His Betrayal 17:22-23
 5. About Taxes 17:24-27
 6. About Humility 18:1-35
 7. About Human Problems 19:1-26
 8. About the Kingdom 19:27-20:28
- B. The King's Presence 20:29-28:39
 1. Power of the King 20:29-34
 2. Presentation of the King 21:1-11
 3. Purification of the King 21:12-22
 4. Confrontation with the King 21:23-22:46
 5. Rejection of the King 23:1-39
- C. The King's Prediction 24:1-25:46
 1. Destruction of the Temple 24:1-2
 2. Signs of the End of the Age 24:3-28
 3. Signs of His Coming 24:29-25:46
- D. The King's Punishment 26:1-27:66
 1. The Preparation 26:1-16
 2. The Passover 26:17-30
 3. The Betrayal 26:31-56
 4. The Trials 26:57-27:26
 5. The Crucifixion 27:27-66

IV. PREEMINENCE OF THE KING (Rising) 28

- A. The King's Power 28:1-10
- B. The King's Persecutors 28:11-15
- C. The King's People 28:16-20



MARK:

JESUS the SERVANT

TITLE: Named after the author

AUTHOR: Mark, young friend of Paul

DATE of WRITING: About 50 AD

PLACE of WRITING: Rome

TIME COVERED: Ministry of Jesus

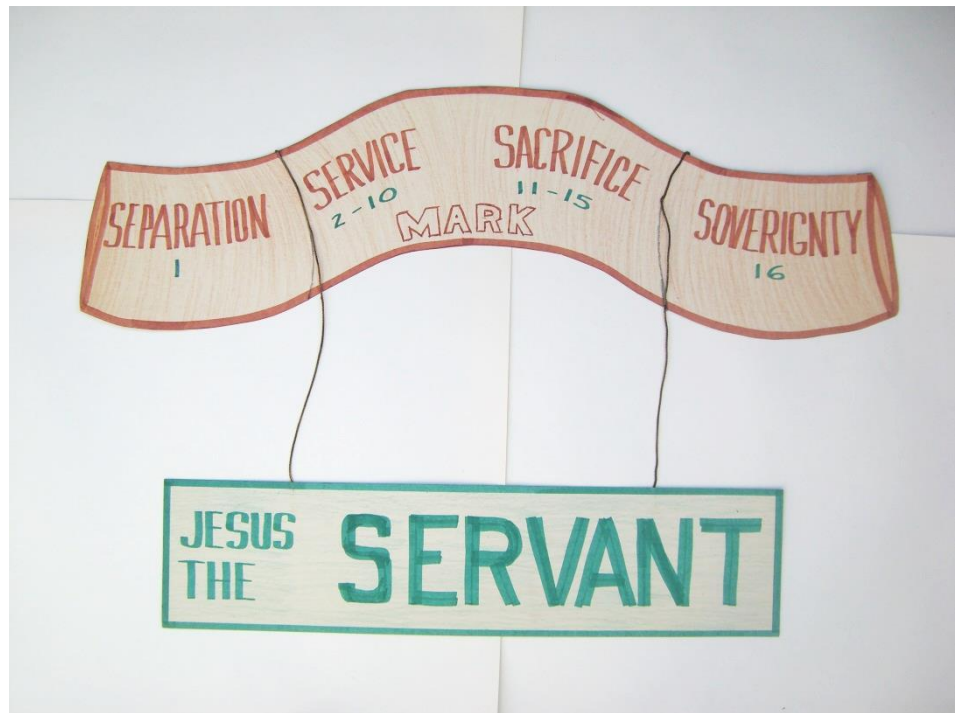
RECIPIENTS: Gentiles

KEY VERSE: *For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.* (Mark 10:45)

KEY WORD: "Straightway" (40 times in KJV; "right away" "at once" in NIV); "Multitude" (17 x)

PURPOSE: Short account of Peter's preaching (gospel tract) to distribute

THEME: Show Christ as the perfect and absolutely faithful servant



In many churches today someone who is a 'deacon' is looked up to as being in a position many aspire to, for they are often seen as occupying a level a little above others. In the New Testament, though, a 'deacon' was one who waited on tables – a servant/slave. Church leaders are to be servants of others, following the example of Jesus, the ultimate Servant. *"I did not come to be served, but to serve"* (Mark 10:45).

MARK WROTE TO SHOW JESUS WAS A SERVANT Mark, in his short gospel, paints a picture of Jesus the servant/slave. While Matthew wrote to Jews to show Jesus as the Messiah/King, Mark wrote to Gentiles to show Jesus as a servant. Mark wasn't with Jesus, although it seems the Last Supper was held in the upper room in his house. Mark wrote down what Peter taught and preached, so really the Gospel of Mark is Peter's words.

"Straightway" and "immediately" are used over 40 times in Mark. The focus is on Jesus' actions and miracles. There aren't many quotes of his teaching or recounting of parables. After all, a servant is known by his actions, not how good a servant he claims to be!

A servant is someone who will deliberately, voluntarily, sacrificially and joyfully give up their own goals in order to help someone else meet their goals. Mark shows Jesus doing just this. In life He served God by obeying Him in all He wanted, and in death He served Him by giving up His own life to redeem us.

SEPARATION OF THE SERVANT (1:1-13) Mark starts with John the Baptizer (1:1-8). There is no mention of Jesus' birth, parents, etc. After all, the background of a slave isn't important. Also, Mark's Gentile readers weren't as interested in that sort of thing as Matthew's Jewish readers. Jesus' baptism shows Jesus committing Himself to serve God (1:9-11) and His resisting Satan's temptations (1:12-13) show Him as being 100% obedient to His own Master only. When John was arrested the focus of attention switched to Jesus.

SERVICE OF THE SERVANT (1:14 - 10:52) Usually a servant/slave doesn't have servants/slaves, but Jesus did (1:14-20). He called disciples to follow Him to become servants like Him. Mark then lists a series of miracles to show that, while being a servant, Jesus was also God and could therefore call servants (1:21 - 3:12). The majority rejected this, but some believed. Those that did were with Him 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to learn from Him how to be servants (3:13-35). Jesus taught them using stories (parables), showing them the importance of serving God (4:1-34).

Next Mark shows how this Servant was sovereign over nature, demons, sickness, death, rejection and physical ailments (4:35-9:1). There are a few words of His quoted at this point, His teachings about His glory, death, hell, divorce, children and eternal life (9:2 - 10:52).

SACRIFICE OF THE SERVANT (11:1 - 15:47) The true test of a servant is His submission. Jesus doesn't ask His followers to do anything He wasn't willing to do – and He did the worst of all. After showing Himself to be King (11:1-11) and being rejected, He went on to teach His followers how to live like a servant after He was gone (11:12 - 13:37). A few did recognize Who He really was, and committed themselves to a lifetime of service to Him (14:1-9). However, one of His closest followers betrayed Him for 30 pieces of silver – the price of a slave (14:10-11). Still, Jesus was submissive to His Master's will. He instituted the Last Supper, showing that it was His free will choice to go through with the crucifixion (14:2-52). He also submitted to His arrest and unfair trials, which culminated in His crucifixion (14:53 - 15:47).

SOVEREIGNTY OF THE SERVANT (16:1-20) That seemed to be the end of the suffering Servant – but it wasn't so! The suffering was done, but not His service. He came back to life (16:1-8). Mark has very little to say about the resurrection and time after, just enough to let his readers know that it happened. He is no longer a servant, His followers are to now take over His servant chores on earth.

Do you see Jesus as a servant? Do you see Him as YOUR servant, Who died for you? Since He did that for us, He has the right to ask us to lay down OUR lives for Him, to die for Him by living for Him each moment of each day. He continues to serve us by interceding for us, helping and protecting us, providing for our needs and keeping us safe from Satan's destruction. He needs us to serve Him by serving each other in this life. Since He is no longer here to do it, He wants it done through us. Remember, everyone serves someone. If it isn't God, it is self, sin or Satan. Honestly, which do YOU serve? Which do your actions say you serve? How good a servant are you? What can you do to improve your service now?

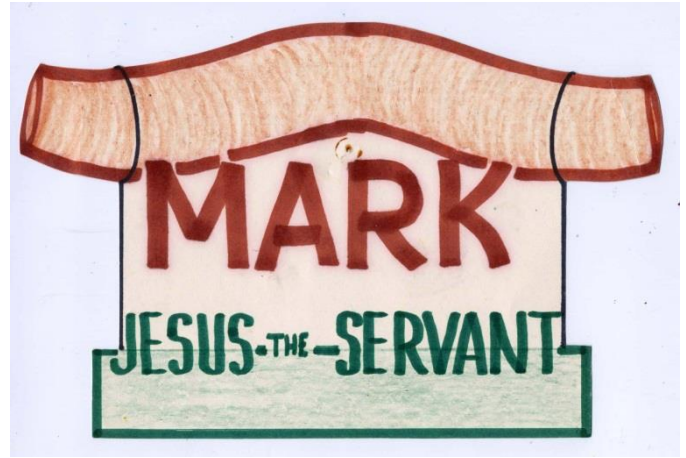
arrival

OUTLINE OF MARK

I. THE SERVANT'S SERVICE (In Life, AD 27-30) 1-10

- A. The Servant's Start 1:1-13
 - 1. John is Preaching 1:1-8
 - 2. Jesus is Baptized 1:9-11
 - 3. Jesus is Tempted 1:12-13
- B. The Servant's Service 1:14-10:52
 - 1. The First Disciples 1:14-20
 - 2. The First Miracles 1:21-3:12
 - 3. The First Apostles 3:13-35
 - 4. Parables by the Sea 4:1-34
 - 5. Power Over Nature & Satan 4:35-9:1
 - a. Over a Storm 4:35-41
 - b. Over Demons 5:1-20
 - c. Over Sickness and Death 5:21-43

- d. Over Rejection 6:1-6
- e. Over the 12 6:7-13
- f. Over Herod 6:14-29
- g. Over Hunger 6:30-44
- h. Over Gravity 6:45-52
- i. Over Sickness 6:53-56
- j. Over Tradition 7:1-23
- k. Over Gentiles 7:24-30
- l. Over Deaf Mute 7:31-37
- m. Over Hunger 8:1-9
- n. Over Pharisees 8:10-13
- o. Over Sin 8:14-21
- p. Over Blindness 8:22-26
- q. Over Peter 8:27-33
- r. Over Disciples' Lives 8:34-9:1
- 6. Lessons for the Disciples 9:2-50
- 7. Teachings for the Disciples 10:1-52



II. THE SERVANT'S SACRIFICE (In Death, Final Week AD 30) 11-16

- A. The Servant's Sacrifice 11-15
 - 1. Entering Jerusalem 11:1-11
 - 2. Cleansing the Temple 11:12-19
 - 3. Teaching in the Temple 11:20-13:37
 - 4. Anointing in Bethany 14:1-9
 - 5. Betrayal by Judas 14:10-11
 - 6. Last Supper and Arrest 14:12-52
 - a. Preparation for the Last Supper 14:12-16
 - b. Partaking of the Last Supper 14:17-21
 - c. Institution of the Lord's Supper 14:22-25
 - d. Walk to Gethsemane 14:26-31
 - e. Prayer in Gethsemane 14:32-42
 - f. Betrayal and Arrest 14:43-52
 - 7. Trials and Denials 14:53-15:15
 - a. Christ before Caiaphas 14:53-65
 - b. Peter's Denial 14:66-72
 - c. Christ before Pilate 15:1-15
 - 8. Crucifixion of the Servant 15:16-47
 - a. Abuse by the Soldiers 15:16-20
 - b. Crucifixion of Jesus 15:21-32
 - c. Death of Jesus 15:33-41
 - d. Burial of Jesus 15:42-47
- B. The Servant's Sovereignty 16
 - 1. Resurrection First Appearance 16:1-8
 - 2. Resurrection Other Appearances 16:9-18

LUKE:

JESUS the MAN

TITLE: Named after the author

AUTHOR: Luke, a Gentile doctor

DATE of WRITING: About 60 AD

PLACE of WRITING: Rome

TIME COVERED: Life of Christ

RECIPIENTS: Theophilus, then everyone

KEY VERSE: *For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost.*" (Luke 19:10)

KEY WORD: "Son of Man" (26 times)

PURPOSE: To confirm Theophilus' faith by basing it on historical facts about Jesus (1:3-4). Then to present Jesus as the Son of Man (humanity of Jesus is emphasized) Whom Israel rejected (which opened the door for Gentiles to enter).

THEME: Give an accurate record of Jesus as the perfect God-man.



Hundreds of names are used for Jesus in the Bible, but the one He chose for Himself was "Son of Man." It's used 27 times in Luke. If Jesus would have called Himself "Messiah" then people would have thought He was claiming to be a military leader who had come to lead a revolt against Rome, for that is what the people thought the Messiah would do.

If Jesus would have called Himself "Messiah" then people would have thought He was claiming to be a military leader who had come to lead a revolt against Rome, for that is what the people thought the Messiah would do.

LUKE WROTE TO SHOW JESUS THE MAN The title "Son of Man" comes from Daniel's vision of God the Son coming to reveal future events to him (Daniel 7:13; 8:17). Using it is an obvious claim to deity, but also a term of identification with man. "Son of," in Jewish idiom, doesn't mean inferior or lesser. Rather, it means 'related to, part of, extension of.' Thus, when Jesus used this, and Luke focused his gospel around it, the focus was not on the connection with God as in Daniel, but with Jesus' identification with man: "Son of Man." The Messiah was to be God and man. While John focuses on Jesus as God, Luke focuses on Him as a man.

Luke was certainly the person to write about the human side of Jesus. As a doctor, he was very attuned to the physical aspect of people. As a scientist, Luke approaches his subject in a very scholarly, objective way. The miracles he includes are those of healing, and he is quite specific in his descriptions.

The fullest account of Jesus' birth, childhood and home life is in Luke's gospel. He shows Jesus' human side and feelings. Social contacts and human relationships are emphasized. His prayer life is emphasized. His interest in downtrodden and needy individuals is clearly shown as well. This is the longest book in the New Testament.

I. COMING OF THE SON OF MAN (1:1-4:13) Luke gives the most complete and detailed account of Jesus' human beginnings: birth and childhood (1:1 - 2:59). By being baptized He was identifying with humanity, calling man to repent from sin (3:1-22). While Matthew includes Jesus' royal/kingly genealogy, Luke records His human descent through Mary, all the way from Adam (3:23-38). His temptation by Satan showed He was subject to temptation as a man: hunger, pain, loneliness, pride, etc. He withstood the temptations as a man (4:1-13).

II. CONDUCT OF THE SON OF MAN (4:14 - 9:50) Jesus' first claims to being the Messiah were made in Nazareth, but the people there, who watched Him grow up, could only see Him as a man, not as God and man (4:14-30). To prove He was no ordinary man Jesus performed miracles to show His authority. He had power over demons, disease, disciples, defilement and deformity (4:31 - 6:11).

Jesus, by living His message, was attracting a strong group of followers, men and women who wanted to live their lives like Him. This is one reason He became a man: to show us how to live life on earth (6:12-49). As a man He cared about other people and showed His compassion by healing and feeding them (7:1 - 9:50). Then He was Transfigured to show He was more than a mere man.

III. CONFLICT OF THE SON OF MAN (9:51 - 19:27) While people were quick to take the healing and free food Jesus provided, they didn't want to follow His life style (9:51 - 11:54). To the ones who did, He taught them how to live as God wanted them to (12:1 - 19:27). He warned against hypocrisy, taught about love and salvation, even warned about His coming death.

IV. CRUCIFIXION OF THE SON OF MAN (19:28 - 23:56) His death is just what happened next. When He presented Himself as the God-man Messiah, most rejected Him. Weeping loudly because His heart was breaking over what rejection would mean to Jerusalem, He showed He knows what we feel and go through (19:28-44). He showed other emotions, too – like anger when He cleaned out the temple (19:45-48). He showed need of human companionship when lonely at the Lord's Supper (22:7-38). In Gethsemane He experienced emotional pain (22:39-46), as He did when mocked during His unfair trials (22:47-53). Peter's denial hurt, too (22:54-62). He experienced extreme physical pain when they beat and crucified Him (22:63 - 23:49). He died as a man and was buried (23:50-56).

V. CONQUEST BY THE SON OF MAN (24:1-53) But that wasn't the end of it. He came alive physically again, showing that will happen to all who follow Him (24:1-49). It was a new, resurrection body He had that replaced His earthly, human body.

How does it make you feel to think about Jesus as a man: humbling Himself to be one of us because He loved us, setting an example for us to follow, showing us God's perfect standard for us to follow, and paying for our sins on the cross? He knows what we go through when we are tempted, lonely, angry, in pain or stressed out. He understands. He's been there. Go to Him and He'll understand. activities

OUTLINE OF LUKE

I. COMING OF THE SON OF MAN (Preparation) 1-4:13

- A. Son of Man's Cousin (John is Born) 1:5-80
- B. Son of Man's Cradle (Jesus is Born) 2:1-38
- C. Son of Man's Childhood (Jesus Grows Up) 2:39-52
- D. Son of Man's Call 3:1-22
- E. Son of Man's Family Line (Genealogy) 3:23-38
- F. Son of Man's First Battle (Temptation) 4:1-13

II. CONDUCT OF THE SON OF MAN (Identification) 4:14-9:50

- A. Son of Man's Introduction 4:14-30
- B. Son of Man's Conquest 4:31-6:11
 - 1. Over Demons 4:31-37

- 2. Over Disease 4:38-44
- 3. Over Disciples 5:1-11
- 4. Over Defilement 5:12-16
- 5. Over Defectiveness 5:17-26
- 6. Over Despisers 5:27-39
- 7. Over Days 6:1-5
- 8. Over Deformity 6:6-11
- C. Son of Man's Followers 6:12-49
 - 1. Call of the Disciples 6:12-16
 - 2. Characteristics of the Disciples 6:17-49
- D. Son of Man's Love in Action 7:1-9:50
 - 1. In Sickness 7:1-10
 - 2. In Death 7:11-17
 - 3. In Doubt 7:18-35
 - 4. To Sinners 7:36-50
 - 5. About Finances 8:1-3
 - 6. Shown Through Parables 8:4-21
 - 7. In Storms 8:22-25
 - 8. Over Demons 8:26-39
 - 9. In Death and Despair 8:40-56
 - 10. Through the Disciples 9:1-9
 - 11. To Physical Needs 9:10-17
 - 12. Of Prediction 9:18-50

III. CONFLICT OF THE SON OF MAN (Instruction) 9:51-19:27

- A. Son of Man's Criticism 9:51-62
- B. Son of Man's Commissioning the 72 10:1-24
- C. Son of Man's Teaching 10:25-11:13
- D. Son of Man's Rejection 11:14-54
 - 1. Rejection by the Nation 11:14-36
 - 2. Rejected by Religious Leaders 11:37-54
- E. Son of Man's Messages 12:1-19:27
 - 1. About Hypocrisy 12:1-12
 - 2. About Covetousness 12:13-34
 - 3. About Faithfulness 12:35-48
 - 4. About Division and Signs 12:49-59
 - 5. About Repentance 13:1-9
 - 6. About Hypocrisy 13:10-17
 - 7. About the Kingdom 13:18-35
 - 8. About Inflexible People 14:1-6
 - 9. About Inflated People 14:7-11
 - 10. About Invited People 14:12-14
 - 11. About Indifferent People 14:15-24
 - 12. About Indulgent People 14:25-35
 - 13. About Love for Sinners 15:1-32
 - 14. About Wealth 16:1-31
 - 15. About Forgiveness 17:1-6
 - 16. About Service 17:7-10
 - 17. About Gratitude 17:11-19
 - 18. About the Kingdom 17:20-37

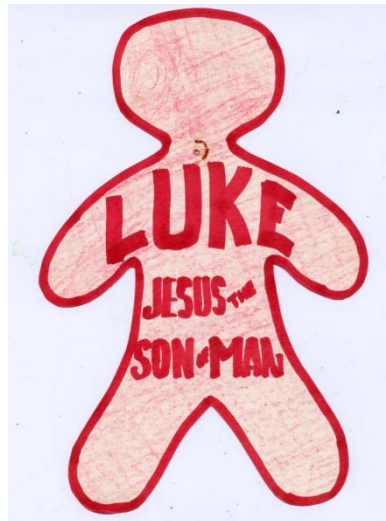
- 19. About Prayer 18:1-4
- 20. About Entrance Into the Kingdom 18:15-30
- 21. About His Death 18:31-34
- 22. about Salvation 18:35-19:10
- 23. About Faithfulness 19:11-27

IV. CRUCIFIXION OF THE SON OF MAN (Sacrifice) 19:28-23:56

- A. Son of Man's Triumphal Entry 19:28-44
- B. Son of Man's Confrontation with the Religious Rulers 19:45-22:6
 - 1. Temple Cleansed 19:45-48
 - 2. Temple Teaching 20:1-21:38
 - 3. Judas Possessed by Satan 22:1-6
- C. Son of Man's Last Supper 22:7-3:8
- D. Son of Man's Arrest & Trials 22:39-23:25
 - 1. Gethsemane 22:39-46
 - 2. Arrest 22:47-53
 - 3. Peter's Denial 22:54-62
 - 4. Christ Beaten 22:63-65
 - 5. Christ Before Sanhedrin 22:66-71
 - 6. Christ Before Pilate 23:1-5
 - 7. Christ Before Herod 23:6-12
 - 8. Christ Before Pilate again 23:13-25
- E. Son of Man's Cross 23:26-56
 - 1. Crucifixion 23:26-49
 - 2. Burial 23:50-55
 - 3. In the Tomb 23:56

V. CONQUEST BY THE SON OF MAN (Victory) 24:1-53

- A. Son of Man's Resurrection 24:1-49
- B. Son of Man's Ascension 24:50-53



JOHN:

JESUS the SON of GOD

TITLE: Named after the author

AUTHOR: John, beloved disciple of Jesus

DATE of WRITING: About 80 - 90 AD

PLACE of WRITING: Ephesus

TIME COVERED: Life of Jesus

RECIPIENTS: Believers

KEY VERSE: *"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life". (John 3:16)*

KEY WORD: "Father" (121); "World" (78); "Believe" (98); "Love" (57); "Life" (52); "Son" (42)

PURPOSE: Add a written account of Jesus' life including information Matthew, Mark and Luke didn't include.

THEME: To show Jesus is God, Savior of the world.



Years after Matthew wrote to Jews to show Jesus as the Messiah, Mark to Gentiles to show Jesus as man, and Luke wrote to show Jesus as a man, John wrote and added information that wasn't covered by the others. If he hadn't done this, our knowledge about Jesus' earthly life would be much weaker, both in quantity and quality.

JOHN WROTE TO SHOW JESUS AS GOD John was the perfect one to write a Gospel, for he was one of the inner three, and perhaps the closest one to Jesus on earth, for he was called "the disciple whom Jesus loved." Knowing everyone would recognize John in that description means they must have been VERY close. Thus John could provide a unique perspective on Jesus' life. Matthew, Mark and Luke are called synoptic gospels because they contain roughly the same material. John, however, contains 92% new material. John's focus is on showing that Jesus is God. Six times He is called the "Son of Man."

I. DEITY OF THE SON OF GOD (1:1-18) John starts with the divine genealogy of Jesus, showing He was always God and was with God before the world was created. In fact, John says He created the world, then became man to reach us with God's message and die for our sin. Luke shows Jesus' humanity ("Son of Man") and John shows His deity ("Son of God"). These opening verses give a summary of the whole book. He then expands and fills in details showing that Jesus was indeed God.

II. DEBATE WITH THE SON OF GOD (1:19 - 12:50) Jesus was shown to be God by John the Baptizer (1:19-51) and His own miracles, such as turning water to wine (2:1-11) and cleansing the temple (2:12-25). He revealed Himself to Nicodemus (3:1-21), a Samaritan Woman (4:1-42), and a Nobleman in Capernaum (4:43-45).

Not everyone believed His claims to deity, though. Despite miracles the religious rulers disbelieved (5:1-47). When the masses found He wasn't there to wait on their needs they, too, turned (6:1-71). John then shows a series of debates between Jesus and the religious rulers (7:1 - 12:11), all showing in various ways that Jesus was God. This section culminates in Jesus' triumphal entry (12:12-50) with His claim to be the God-man Messiah.

III. DECLARATIONS BY THE SON OF GOD (13:1 - 17:26) John uses about half of his gospel to detail information about Jesus' death and resurrection. He starts with a detailed account of Jesus' teachings during His final meal on earth (13:1 - 16:33). He foretold the future and just what would happen, then He prayed for His followers (17:1-20) as He still prays for us.

IV. DENIAL OF THE SON OF GOD (18:1 - 19:42) Although He had power to resist, Jesus allowed the authorities to arrest Him (18:1-11) and put Him through a series of degrading trials (18:12 - 19:16), culminating with His death on the cross (19:17-42). Even that showed His deity in that He paid for our sins and conquered sin and death.

V. DELIVERANCE OF THE SON OF GOD (20:1 - 21:25) The ultimate proof that Jesus is God, of course, is His resurrection (20:1 - 21:25). That shows completely and finally who He is.

It's been said that Jesus is either Lord, Lunatic or Liar. Having claimed so often to be God, there is no way He could be just a good teacher and fine example. If someone over and over claims to be God, always have existed and be able to forgive sin, He is either crazy (lunatic), lying (liar) or Who He claims to be (Lord). What is your choice?

OUTLINE OF JOHN

I. DEITY OF THE SON OF GOD (Coming) 1:1-18

II. DEBATE WITH THE SON OF GOD (Confrontation) 1:19-12:50

A. Demonstration of the Son of God 1:19-4:54

1. By John the Baptist 1:19-34
2. To John's Disciples 1:35-51
3. At a Wedding in Cana 2:1-11
4. At the Temple 2:12-25
5. To Nicodemus 3:1-21
6. By John the Baptist 3:22-36
7. To the Samaritan Woman 4:1-42
8. To an Official of Capernaum 4:43-54

B. Disagreements with the Son of God 5:1-12:50

1. At a Feast in Jerusalem 5:1-47
2. At Passover in Galilee 6:1-71
3. At the Feast of Tabernacles 7:1-10:21
4. At the Feast of Dedication 10:22-42
5. At Bethany 11:1-12:11
6. At Jerusalem 12:12-50

III. DECLARATIONS BY THE SON OF GOD (Comfort) 13:1-17:26

A. Doctrines by the Son of God 13:1-16:33

1. About Forgiveness 13:1-20
2. About His Betrayal 13:21-30
3. About His Departure 13:31-38
4. About Heaven 14:1-14
5. About the Holy Spirit 14:15-26

6. About Peace 14:27-31
7. About Fruitfulness 15:1-17
8. About the World 15:18-16:6
9. About the Holy Spirit 16:7-15
10. About His Return 16:16-33

B. Deliberation of the Son of God 17:1-26

IV. DENIAL OF THE SON OF GOD (Crucifixion) 18:1-19:42

- A. Decision about the Son of God 18:1-11
- B. Degradation of the Son of God 18:12-19:16
 1. Before Annas 18:12-23
 2. Before Caiaphas 18:24-27
 3. Before Pilate 18:28-19:16
- C. Death of the Son of God 19:17-42
 1. Crucifixion 19:17-37
 2. Burial 19:38-42

V. DELIVERANCE OF THE SON OF GOD (Resurrection) 20:11-21:25

- A. Defeat of Death by the Son of God 20:1-10
- B. Defense of the Son of God 20:11-21:25
 1. To Mary Magdalene 20:11-18
 2. To Disciples (Without Thomas) 20:19-25
 3. To Disciples (With Thomas) 20:26-31
 4. To Seven Disciples 21:1-14
 5. To Peter and John 21:15-25

SEVEN "I AM'S" IN JOHN

1. "I am the Bread of Life": (6:35)
2. "I am the Light of the World" (8:12)
3. "I am the Door of the Sheepfold: (10:7, 9)
4. "I am the Good Shepherd" (10:11, 14)
5. "I am the Resurrection and the Life" (11:25)
6. "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life" (14:6)
7. "I am the True Vine" (15:1, 5)



MATTHEW, MARK, LUKE, JOHN:

Compared & Contrasted

Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Their names are very familiar to us. They fit together in our minds, in that precise order. We are so familiar with them that we take them for granted. But why wasn't it Philip, Peter and Paul? Or just Andrew? Why four gospels? Why these four? Why a New Testament at all? It's important to know the answer to these questions to be able to correctly interpret the Gospels. The answers are quite interesting.

WHY A NEW TESTAMENT? From God's viewpoint, the New Testament was to complete the incomplete revelation of the Old (Hebrews 1:1-2; Jeremiah 31:31-34; Mal 3:1), to show the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies (Luke 4:21; John 13:18; 17:12; Acts 1:16), to fully present the way of salvation (John 20:31) and to give all needed information for God's people to live for Him (John 4:25; 17:8; 16:12-13; Matthew 16:18; Ephesians 5:23-32). From man's viewpoint, it was written to have a clear and accurate record of Jesus' life on earth. The eye-witnesses were dying off and heresies were growing and spreading false teachings. Plus, Christianity was spreading and expanding, and the best way to carry the truth to faraway places was in written form.

WHY THE GOSPELS FIRST? The Old Testament shows the promises and prophecies of a coming Redeemer and why He is needed. The Gospels show that Jesus fulfilled those prophecies and met man's need. Acts shows the results of the Messiah's coming. The Epistles add further teaching about the Messiah's work and its results as well as how that applies to our daily lives. The book of Revelation shows the final culmination of all things, when all prophecies are totally and completely fulfilled with God Himself on David's throne.

WHY MORE THAN ONE GOSPEL? Various men viewed Jesus from different perspectives. They wrote to vastly differing audiences. Several writers help to confirm what the others say, and shed light on each other's accounts.

WHY FOUR GOSPELS? The Law required the testimony of 2 witnesses (Dt 19:15; Matthew 18:16). For something this important, twice the number of witnesses is given. Also, the number four in the Bible and to the Jews stands for earthly completeness: four season's directions on a compass, walls in a building, phases of the moon, etc. Together Matthew, Mark, Luke and John show the completeness of Jesus' life on earth.

WHY THESE FOUR GOSPELS? Actually several other gospels were written to help spread the message of Jesus, but aren't included in the New Testament. The four that are included were the ones God Himself chose. He inspired them and kept them perfect for us.

WHICH GOSPEL WAS WRITTEN FIRST? Most scholars agree that Mark wrote first, recording Peter's message in tract form. About 10 years later, in the 60's, Matthew and Luke wrote. They had Mark's gospel and elaborated on much of what he wrote. Then, 20 years later, John supplemented what they wrote by adding much new material focusing on the deity of Jesus.

WHO DO MATTHEW, MARK, LUKE AND JOHN COMPARE? Matthew, Mark and Luke are called 'synoptic' gospels because so much in them is 'synonymous' (similar) material. They all cover virtually the same events. John, however, includes almost all (92%) new material which they didn't cover. The synoptic focus on Jesus' outer life, giving facts about Him as a person. John goes deeper inside and focuses on showing Jesus as God. Matthew's focus is Jesus as the prophesied, mighty

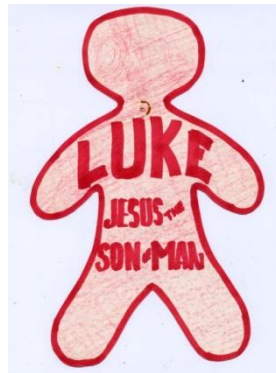
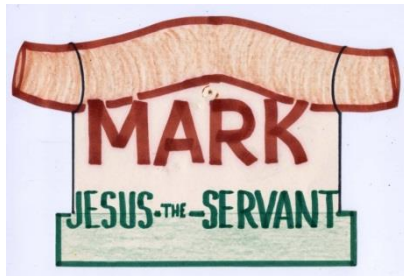
King. Mark shows Him as the obedient, lowly Servant. Luke pictures Him as the perfect, ideal Man. Matthew wrote to convince the Jews that Jesus is the Messiah (1:1; 23:37-39), Mark to spread the gospel among Gentiles (10:45), Luke to give an accurate history of His earthly life (10:10) and John to help believers to grow by trusting in Jesus' power as God (3:16).

WHY DOES MATTHEW COME FIRST? Since Mark was written first, why is Matthew put first? Thematically, Matthew links the Old Testament with the New Testament by showing that Jesus of Nazareth fulfilled the prophecies and is, indeed, the promised Messiah. Mark moves away from Judaism, but not completely. Luke presents Christ as the Savior of the Gentiles. John then concludes with a strong, clear declaration that Jesus is in essence God, the Savior of all mankind.

SPECIFICALLY HOW DOES THIS APPLY? The Triumphal Entry is one of the very few events in the life of Jesus that is included in all four Gospels. It was so important and so pivotal that each had to include it. We can use it as an example of their various perspectives and purposes. This shows why understanding the differences in the gospels is so important.

Matthew gives it 15 verses (21:1-11, 14-17), Mark 11 verses (11:1-11), Luke 16 verses (19:29-44) and John 8 verses (12:12-19). Mark wrote first, a short account showing Jesus as a humble servant who makes Himself available, but doesn't shove Himself on Israel. Matthew, who adds more details to Mark's story, structures his account around three prophecies which Christ then fulfilled (Zechariah 9:9; Psalm 118:26; 8:2), quoting them and showing his Jewish readers how this further proves Jesus is the Messiah. Luke also builds on Mark's account. Doctor Luke focuses on Jesus as a man, a human being like us, but a man who was also God. He records that Jesus wept (41) as a man but also prophesied the future (43) as God. Only Luke records the religious rulers challenging Jesus the man to stop His disciples (39) as well as Jesus' response that if they are silent the stones will cry out (40) because they are proclaiming Him Messiah - God and man in one. John, writing last, doesn't repeat the details that the others have already recorded but, in accordance with his theme, shows Jesus is God. He refers to His resurrection (16) and miraculous signs He had been doing (18).

Thus it is important to understand the history of the writing of the four gospels to accurately interpret them. It is true that ALL Scripture is inspired and important for us (2 Timothy 3:16). God's Word is so special, so important, so precise, so wonderful and so life-giving that we must immerse ourselves in it all we can. Spend some time in the Bible today.



CHRONOLOGY OF THE LIFE OF JESUS

Listed below are the major events in Jesus' life in chronological order.

EVENT	MATTHEW	MARK	LUKE	JOHN	LOCATION
Preface			1:1-4	20:30-31	
Genealogies	1:1-17		3:23-38	1:1-18	
5 BC to AD 26					
Birth of John Announced			1:5-25		Jerusalem
Birth of Jesus Announced	1:18-25		1:26-38		Nazareth
Mary Visits Elizabeth			1:39-56		Judea Hills
Birth of John			1:57-80		Judea Hills
Birth of Jesus			2:1-12		Bethlehem
Wise men visit	2:1-22				Bethlehem
Flight to Egypt			2:13-22		Egypt
Childhood of Jesus	2:23		2:22-40		Nazareth
Temple visit			2:41-52		Jerusalem
FALL 26					
John paves the way	3:1-12	1:1-8	3:1-20		Jordan River
Jesus begins His ministry	1:1-17; 3:13-17	1:9-11	3:21-38	1:19-34	Jordan River
Temptation of Jesus	4:1-11	1:12-13	4:1-13		Judea hills
SPRING 27					
First Disciples				1:35-51	Judea hills
First Miracle				2:1-11	Cana
Ministry in Capernaum				2:12	Capernaum
SUMMER 27					
1 st Passover, Temple, Nicodemus				2:13-3:21	Jerusalem
Early Judean Ministry				3:22-36	Judea
FALL 27					
Samaritan Woman				4:1-42	Samaria
Early Galilean Ministry	4:17	1:14-15	4:14-15	4:43-45	Galilee
Nobleman's Son Healed				4:46-54	Cana
SPRING 28					
Preaching in Nazareth			4:16-30		Nazareth
Capernaum teaching, miracles	4:12-17; 8:14-17	1:21-45	4:31-5:7		Capernaum
Disciples called (four)	4:18-22	1:16-20	5:8-11		Sea of Galilee
Healings and Deliverances		1:21-45	4:31-5:16		Capernaum
Healings, Matthew called	9:1-17	2:1-22	5:17-39		Capernaum

EVENT	MATTHEW	MARK	LUKE	JOHN	LOCATION
SUMMER 28					
2 nd Passover, healing				5:1-47	Jerusalem
Sabbath controversies	12:1-14	2:23-3:6	6:1-11		Galilee
Many Healed	12:15-21;4:23-25	3:7-12	6:17-19		Horns of Hattin
12 Disciples Chosen	10:2-4	3:13-19a	6:12-16		Horns of Hattin
Sermon on the Mount	5:1-7:29		6:20-49		Horns of Hattin
Centurion's Servant	8:5-13		7:1-10		Capernaum
Widow of Nain's Son			7:11-17		Nain
John the Baptist's message	11:2-30		7:18-35		Galilee
Anointing of Jesus			7:36-50		Galilee
Galilean tour with disciples			8:1-3		Galilee
Warning to Scribes, Pharisees	12:22-45	3:19b-30			Galilee
FALL 28					
Teaching by the Sea	12:46-13:53	3:31-4:34	8:4-21		Sea of Galilee
Miracles by the Sea	8:23-9:26	4:35-5:43	8:22-56		Sea of Galilee
Blind Dumb Man Healed	9:27-34				Capernaum
SPRING 29					
Nazareth Rejection #2	9:35; 13:54-58	6:1-6			Nazareth
Charge to the Disciples	9:36-11:1	6:7-13	9:1-6		Galilee
Death of John the Baptist	14:1-12	6:14-29	9:7-9		Macherus
SUMMER 29					
Jesus Feeds the 5,000	14:13-23	6:30-46	9:10-17	6:1-15	Sea of Galilee
Jesus Walks on Water	14:24-36	6:47-56		6:16-21	Sea of Galilee
Bread of Life				6:22-71	Capernaum
Eating with Unwashed Hands	15:1-20	7:1-23			Capernaum
Girl, Deaf-Mute Healed	15:21-31	7:24-37			Phoenicia
Jesus Feeds the 4,000	15:32-38	8:1-9			Decapolis
Signs Demanded	15:39-16:12	8:10-21			Magadan
Blind Man Healed		8:22-26			Bethsaida
Peter Acknowledges Jesus	16:13-20	8:27-30	9:18-21		Matthew Hermon
Death & Resurrection Foretold	16:21-28	8:31-9:1	9:22-27		Matthew Hermon
Transfiguration	17:1-13	9:2-13	9:28-36		Matthew Hermon
Demon Possessed Boy	17:14-20	9:14-29	9:37-43a		Matthew Hermon
Death Resurrection foretold	17:22-23	9:30-32	9:43b-45		Galilee
Payment of Taxes	17:24-27	9:33a			Capernaum
Talk on Humility, Forgiveness	18:1-35	9:33-50	9:46-50		Capernaum

EVENT	MATTHEW	MARK	LUKE	JOHN	LOCATION
FALL 29					
Tabernacles, Adultery Woman				7:1-8:11	Jerusalem
Light of the World				8:12-59	Jerusalem
Jesus Leaves Galilee					Galilee
Man Born Blind Healed				9:1-41	Jerusalem
Good Shepherd				10:1-21	Jerusalem
70 Disciples Sent Out			10:1-24		Judea
Good Samaritan			10:25-37		Judea
Mary & Martha Visited			10:38-42		Judea
Teaching about Prayer			11:1-13		Judea
Pharisees Criticized			11:14-54		Judea
Parables and Teaching			12:1-13:9		Judea
Sabbath Healing Defended			13:10-21		Judea
Dedication, Beyond Jordan				10:22-42	Jerusalem
SPRING 30					
Teaching about Salvation			13:22-30		Perea
Jesus Warned about Herod			13:31-35		Perea
Jesus at Pharisees house			14:1-24		Perea
Cost of Discipleship			14:25-35		Perea
Parables: Prodigal Son			15:1-16:31		Perea
Jesus on Forgiveness, Faith			17:1-10		Judea
Lazarus Back to Life				11:1-54	Bethany
Ten Lepers Healed			17:11-19		Judea
Coming of the Kingdom			17:20-37		Judea
Parables, Perseverance			18:1-14		Judea
Jesus on Divorce	19:1-12	10:1-12			Perea
Little Children Blessed	19:13-15	10:13-16	18:15-17		Perea
Rich Young Ruler	19:16-20:16	10:17-31	18:18-30		Perea
Crucifixion Foretold	20:17-19	10:32-34	18:31-34		Perea
James and John Rebuked	20:20-28	10:35-45			Perea
Two Blind Men Healed	20:29-34	10:46-52	18:35-43		Jericho
Zacchaeus Visited			19:1-10		Jericho
Parable of the Pounds			19:11-27		Bethany
Anointing in Bethany	26:6-13	14:3-9	11:55-12:11		Bethany
FINAL WEEK, SUNDAY					
Triumphal Entry	21:1-11	11:1-11	19:28-44	12:12-19	Jerusalem
FINAL WEEK, MONDAY					
Fig Tree Cursed	21:18-19	11:12-14			Jerusalem
Authority in the Temple	21:12-17	11:15-19	19:45-48		Jerusalem
The Greeks Visit				12:20-36	Jerusalem

EVENT	MATTHEW	MARK	LUKE	JOHN	LOCATION
FINAL WEEK TUES/WED					
Fig Tree Withers	21:20-22	11:20-25			Jerusalem
Authority of Christ Questioned	21:23-27	11:27-33	20:1-8		Jerusalem
Parables of Warning	21:28-22:14	12:1-12	20:9-19		Jerusalem
Questions from the Jews	22:15-40	12:13-34	20:20-40		Jerusalem
Jesus Asks a Question	22:41-46	12:35-37	20:41-44		Jerusalem
Woes Against the Pharisees	23:1-39	12:38-40	20:45-47		Jerusalem
The Widow's Mite		12:41-44	21:1-4		Jerusalem
Olivet Discourse	24:1-26:2	13:1-37	21:5-38		Jerusalem
Plots: Priests/Judas, Anointing	26:3-16	14:1-11	22:1-6		Jerusalem
The Jews Unbelief				12:37-50	Jerusalem
FINAL WEEK, THURSDAY					
Passover Feast, Lord's Supper	26:17-30	14:12-26	22:7-30	13:1-30	Jerusalem
Christ's Farewell	26:31-35	14:27-31	22:31-38	13:31-16:33	Jerusalem
Christ's Prayer for Believers				17:1-26	Jerusalem
FINAL WEEK, FRIDAY					
Gethsemane	26:36-46	14:32-42	22:39-46	18:1	Jerusalem
Betrayal and Arrest	26:47-56	14:43-52	22:47-56	18:2-11	Jerusalem
Jewish Trials	26:57-27:10	14:53-72	22:54-71	18:12-27	Jerusalem
Roman Trials	27:11-31	15:1-20	23:1-25	18:28-19:16	Jerusalem
Crucifixion	27:32-56	15:21-41	23:26-49	19:16-37	Jerusalem
Burial	27:57-61	15:42-47	23:50-56	19:38-42	Jerusalem
FINAL WEEK, SATURDAY					
Watch at the Tomb	27:62-66				Jerusalem
FINAL WEEK, SUNDAY					
Resurrection	28:1-10	16:1-11	23:56-24:12	20:1-18	Jerusalem
Report of the Guards	28:11-15				Jerusalem
Journey to Emmaus		16:12-13	24:13-35		Emmaus Road
Appearance in Jerusalem		16:14	24:36-43	20:19-25	Jerusalem
POST RESURRECTION APP					
Appearance to Thomas				20:26-31	Jerusalem
Appearance to Seven				21:1-24	Sea of Galilee
Appearance to Eleven	28:16-20	16:15-18			Galilee
Appearance to 500, James				I Cor 15:6	Galilee
Appearance & Ascension		16:19-20	24:44-53	Acts 1:4-11	Jerusalem
Attestations of John				21:25	

GEOGRAPHY IN PALESTINE IN JESUS' TIME

In addition to understanding the chronological flow of the events in the life of Jesus, it is also important to know their geographical locations and the significance of each as well.

GALILEE was located in northern Palestine, between the Mediterranean Sea and the Sea of Galilee. It was about 40 miles wide by 70 miles north to south. It didn't have any large towns, but had about 240 small villages. Thus, it was a very rural area. It was mostly hill country: rich, beautiful and fertile. The temperature averaged 45 to 80 degrees.

Joshua conquered the area from the Canaanites, and the tribes of Asher, Naphtali, Zebulun and Issachar first settled the area. It was part of Israel after the split.

Half the inhabitants of Galilee were Gentiles and half were Jews. They were farmers, shepherds, fishermen and craftsmen. As rural people often are, they were warmhearted, generous, patriotic, practical and hardworking. They were sincere people who were open to God, but not nearly as legalistic as the Jews in Judea. This area was home to Jesus and all the disciples but Judas. It was in this area that Jesus' message found its most fertile ground, and where most of His followers came from. They then left this area to spread the word throughout the world.

JUDEA was located in the southern part of Palestine, between the Mediterranean Sea and the Dead Sea. It was named for Judah, the tribe that settled in this area. A ridge of tall mountains went north and south through the middle. On the west was a coastal plain and the east the Dead Sea Valley. The land was dry, barren, with temperatures 55 to 88 degrees. The rough, rugged hills were used for pasture in the north but in the south the land was too desolate to be used for anything.

Few farmers lived in Judea. Mostly businessmen and craftsmen lived in the few large cities that comprised Judea. They were more materialistic and legalistic than those in Galilee. They had a reputation for being prideful, cold and driven. They were perfectionist in all areas of life, strict on themselves and others. This applied to their religion, too. Perhaps this explains why so few from this region followed Jesus. Its main claim to fame is Jerusalem, God's special city then and His earthly capital, the only city on earth which He said was His and which He graced by His presence.

SAMARIA was the region in between Galilee and Judea. It was named after the main town of the area, Samaria. When Joshua conquered it from the Canaanites it was settled by Manasseh, Ephraim and Gad. The town of Samaria became the capital for the north (Israel) when the nation split. When the Assyrians conquered the northern kingdom, they took the best Jews away and moved Gentiles in instead. This created a mixed breed of people, 'Samaritans.' The pure-blooded Jews to the north and south hated and rejected them because of their mixed blood. They would have nothing to do with them or their land.

The land of Samaria was a mix of Galilee and Judea. It was similar to Galilee but a bit rougher and less developed. They were semi-Jews in their religion. They believed the Pentateuch (Genesis - Deuteronomy) but made Samaria the seat of their worship instead of Jerusalem. Without the priesthood or temple, they substituted their own rituals and beliefs. For this, too, the Jews hated them. When Jesus used a Samaritan as an example of one who showed love to his neighbor, proper Jews were shocked (parable of the Good Samaritan - Luke 10:29-37). The good Samaritan was kinder to the hurt Jew than the good and proper Jews who passed by on the other side. The Samaritan's benevolence is all the more meaningful in light of how he, as a Samaritan, was viewed and treated by the Jews.

Jesus had a real love for the people of Samaria. They were quick to respond to Him. He went there specifically to offer eternal life to an immoral woman (John 4). Jews never talked to Samaritans, nor even set foot on their land. A man would never talk to a woman in public, especially if the man was a rabbi, and even more so if the woman was immoral. In light of all this, Jesus'

reaching out to the woman at the well was all the more remarkable, as was her response. Many others believed in Jesus, and without any miracles done. This is in strong contrast to the Jews, who had much proof in the way of miracles but didn't show the faith the Samaritans did! And that isn't the end of the story. When Philip returned to Samaria after the resurrection a great revival broke out (Acts 8), greater than in Galilee or Judea.

Note the pattern: rich, educated, cultured urban Judea almost totally rejected Jesus; rural Galilee was more responsive, but rejected Samaria responded more than either of them. That shouldn't surprise us. The same is true today. "Not many rich" the Bible says (1 Corinthians 1:26-27). God blesses the humble, but rejects the proud and self-sufficient. "He gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says: 'God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.'" (James 4:6; 1 Pt 5:5; Job 30:12; Prov 3:34). If you lived in Palestine in Jesus' day, where would you fit in?

As we go through the life of Jesus we will divide it into various sections to make it easier to understand. We will look at His birth, baptism and temptation, miracles, teaching, crucifixion, resurrection and ascension.

22a. JESUS IS BORN

Matthew 1:1-2:23; Luke 1:1-3:38; John 1:1-18

At the right time in history, God left heaven to come to earth as a man. While there were many miraculous events that were part of this story, His actual birth was very normal. He came as a baby when He could have come as a full-grown man, like Adam. But He came to experience all we go through in life, to live just as we live, but without sin. He voluntarily set aside that part of His deity which would have made His life easier (omniscience, omnipotence, omnipresence, etc.) but was still God (Philippians 2:5-8). Thus He faced life as we face it, so He knows what we go through, yet He was without sin (Hebrews 4:15; 2:16-17).

JESUS IS BORN

GABRIEL COMES TO ZACHARIAS (Luke 1:5-25) Because of the large number of priests, they took turns serving in Jerusalem several weeks a year. The rest of the time they ministered in their own home areas: teaching, judging, encouraging and helping in any way they could. When in Jerusalem they served in the temple, helping with the sacrifices, worship and ritual duties to the thousands who came to the temple each day. The highlight of the day was in the morning and late afternoon, when a priest went into the Holy Place to trim the wicks on the lampstand and put fresh incense on the golden altar (a picture of prayers as a sweet savor ascending to God). The late afternoon was the most important of the two. Because of the special nature of these duties, priests to perform the duties were chosen by lot. Fortunate, indeed, was the priest who would be chosen once in his lifetime. Zechariah had served many years and had never been chosen before this day.

Entering God's house was a privilege but also a responsibility, for God could strike dead any who entered without His blessing. It was rumored that the angel of death would appear to them and they would die. You can imagine why Zechariah was so fearful when he saw Gabriel.

When he was told he'd have a son and disbelieved, Zechariah was letting out some of the hurt, and even bitterness, of all the years of going childless. Children were considered blessings from God, and to not have a child was a curse from God. It was an awful, terrible stigma, especially for one trying to serve God as a priest! Why would God bless many who didn't love Him with children when he and Elizabeth remained childless?

GABRIEL APPEARS TO MARY (Luke 1:26-38) It must have surprised Mary greatly for a strange man to enter her presence and speak to her. Such things were never done in her world.

MARY GOES TO SEE ELIZABETH (Luke 1:39-56) While Mary undoubtedly had the trust and understanding of her parents, she knew what the local gossip about her would be. To talk to someone also having a supernatural pregnancy would be very helpful. Perhaps someone in her family accompanied her to Elizabeth's, or she went with a caravan of local friends who were heading south. It would have taken several days, walking and camping at night, to get there.

JOHN IS BORN (Luke 1:57-80) It was the custom for a child to be named after a family member, the first son being named after the father. Refusal to do so was often interpreted as claiming the son was not his. When Zacharias didn't name his son after himself everyone was very startled! Surely Elizabeth hadn't been unfaithful? Actually God Himself was claiming this son as His in a special way by naming him. He would raise and train him, and He did.

GABRIEL APPEARS TO JOSEPH (Matthew 1:18-25) I admire Joseph greatly. Mary had a daytime appearance of Gabriel as well as several months of talking with Elizabeth. She knew she was still a virgin. All Joseph had was one dream to go by, and he staked everything on it. He wanted to marry

her despite her pregnancy, but the law forbid it and, following and obeying God, he wouldn't go against His law. While stoning for adultery wasn't practiced much anymore, it was still a possibility. Other options were open to Joseph. He could have had her publicly disgraced in the synagogue as an example to other young women, keeping his reputation intact and getting his dowry back. This would have been the legal way to get revenge, hurting back someone who has hurt you. The final option is the one Joseph had chosen: a quiet divorce where he would bear the brunt of the disgrace and reproach instead of Mary. He would lose his reputation and dowry, but Mary would be protected. Despite feeling so deeply betrayed by Mary, Joseph still chose to sacrifice himself to protect her. No wonder God chose such a man to be the earthly father to His son!

JESUS IS BORN (Luke 2:1-20) While Christmas cards often show Jesus being born in a barn, historians and scholars agree it was more likely a cave. Caves dotted the limestone hills at Bethlehem, and were used by local homes as a place to keep animals. Wood was very scarce and wasn't used to build houses, much less barns or sheds. Also, some towns had 'inns,' which were really places for traveling herdsmen to keep their flocks while they spent the night before traveling on. Only the large towns would hire someone to oversee their operation and sell feed to the traveling herdsmen. Bethlehem was not nearly large enough for an 'inn keeper.' Being born in a humble cave, though, was appropriate for Jesus' first coming. In both His birth and death He was wrapped in linen strips after having the blood wiped from His body by a man named Joseph. He was laid in the dark on a cold stone shelf in a cave, unknown and rejected by most. His entrance into life was a foretaste of His exit from this world.

Choosing shepherds to be the ones to come worship was something only God would do, for shepherds were the bottom of society, rejected and looked down on by all. They would have best understood the loss of innocent animals killed, for perhaps some of the sheep they raised were destined for temple sacrifices. David had been a shepherd on these very hills.

JESUS IS PRESENTED IN THE TEMPLE (Luke 2:21-38) It wasn't mandatory for boys to be dedicated in the temple, but Mary and Joseph did it to show their respect for Who Jesus was. Mary's ritual cleansing from childbirth came first. Simeon was probably the officiating priest. That they only had pigeons for offerings showed how poor they were.

THE MAGI ARRIVE (Matthew 2:1-18) Here's another place where our Christmas cards influence our theology. The Magi were really king-makers from Persia. Hundreds would have come, with Calvary, all on white horses (and some camels to carry tents and supplies). It would have taken months to get ready and make the trip. In fact, the Greek word for Jesus is no longer 'infant' but 'young child.' Also, Mary and Joseph had moved to a house by this time. They had long since moved out of their house. They wanted to stay in Bethlehem, near Zacharias, instead of going back to Nazareth and the gossip about Mary's early pregnancy.

22b . BATISM & TEMPTATION

FALL 26 AD

Matthew 3:1 – 4:11, Mark 1:1-13, Luke 3:1-4:13; John 1:19-34

Jesus had a normal childhood, but didn't get married in His teens as was the custom. He lived at home until He was 30 when his cousin, John the Baptizer, began preaching and calling everyone to repentance to prepare them for the coming of their Messiah. After accepting John's acknowledgement that He was God's Messiah, He went into the wilderness to seek God's will for what was to come. There Satan tried to disqualify Him by getting Him to sin, but Jesus resisted every attempt by quoting Scripture and won the battle.

There comes a defining time in everyone's lives, a time when they have to make a tough choice about which path to take. These watershed decisions often aren't fully realized until years later. Sometimes we know we are 'crossing the Rubicon' and sometimes not. Jesus fully realized this time in His life. He had spent about 30 years working with His father, Joseph, building from stone and wood. Then God's Spirit started to stir in His spirit, drawing Him to where His relative John had been baptizing. He was well aware of where this path would lead.

It is important to understand all the historical and cultural implications of what was happening in those days to fully interpret these passages in the life of Jesus. Our purpose isn't to be exhaustive in all aspects, but to point out cultural and geographical facts that help us better understand John's ministry as well as Jesus' baptism and temptation.

THE BAPTIZER (Matthew 3:1-12; Mark 1:1-8; Luke 3:1-18) John had grown up in the wilderness when his older parents died, living off the land. His lifestyle was similar to the Essenes and those in Qumran (who hid the Dead Sea scrolls), but he wasn't part of any group. As a Nazirite (Numbers 6) he didn't touch anything dead (including, some say, eating meat), cut his hair, or drink any fruit of the grape (wine or juice).

Unlike modern evangelists, John required the people to come find him. It often took several days travel. Then what they heard was a message of repentance. Why would people go? God's Spirit drew them. Some say it was a Sabbatical year, when there would be time for, as well as interest in, Sabbatical things. It seems like John came in the fall of the year AD 29, near Rosh Hashanah which focused on repentance.

John calls himself a 'herald.' When a king was coming into an area he would send a 'herald' ahead so the people could prepare for his visit. They would repair the roads and clean up the area to make the trip safe and easy for the king.

Baptism was familiar to the Jews. All their synagogues were built with pools or near water sources, for water was used for ritual cleansing (see Acts 16:13). Washing in water was done in a mikveh and was a picture of cleansing. Thus the Jews were familiar with what John was doing. That, too, is why he didn't think he should baptize Jesus.

THE BAPTIZED (Matthew 3:13-17; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:19-23) It would have been very unusual for someone not to marry but to live at home into their thirties. It must have been hard to put down His tools and say good-bye to His mother and father as He followed His heavenly Father. How much was Jesus aware of what lay ahead? Did He know details or just vague generalities? Remember, He had voluntarily laid aside all the divine attributes which would have made life as a man easier (Philippians 2:6-8). He was still holy and righteous and eternal, keeping His attributes of Being. He voluntarily decided to not use anything in His deity that would have given Him any advantage over any of us, for He went through all things we go through (Hebrews 2:18; 4:14-15). Thus His omniscience was set aside, too. That's why He spent so much time in prayer with His Father. He got His direction by the Spirit, the same as is available to all of us today. He faced temptation and Satan the same way we do, too.

THE DEVIL (Matthew 4:1-11; Mark 1:12-13; Luke 4:1-13) God's Spirit led Jesus into the wilderness, which is a semi-desert area between Jerusalem and the Dead Sea. It is a very dry, arid, barren place -- terrible to live in but great for solitude and privacy. Jesus went to have time connecting with His heavenly Father and preparing Himself for service. He was so intense in His prayer and communion with God that He didn't eat for the whole time, although it seems He did drink water when He found some.

Satan didn't hit Him until the 40th day of His fast. Up to that time, the body lives off stored fat, but about that time the fat is all gone and the body starts digesting its own organs to feed itself. This is starvation and soon ends in death. After the first couple days of a fast, hunger pangs are gone --

until about the 40th day when it hits VERY hard! Thus Satan's temptation to turn a stone into bread to eat was very real. There wasn't anything wrong with getting bread and eating it. Jesus Himself made bread for the 4,000 and the 5,000 by the Sea of Galilee. What was wrong was that it wasn't God's timing. Often we aren't tempted to do a thing that is right in itself, but the timing of it is wrong (marriage, sex, job change, move, purchase, etc.). Patiently awaiting God's leading is the key to it all.

Then Satan took Him (physically or mentally -- we don't know and it doesn't really matter for the opportunity was real) to highest point of the temple and challenged Him to jump down, knowing the angels would catch Him. The Jews had a belief that the Messiah would come from the highest point of the temple, and to see a man jump from there and be caught by angels would certainly impress everyone so much that they were sure to make Him Messiah then and there. Again, there was nothing wrong with being recognized as Messiah -- this was why He came. However the means doesn't justify the end. It would have meant bypassing the cross. Getting the crown without going through the cross must have been very tempting, but also very wrong. Remember that when you are tempted, not to take the easy way out.

Finally Satan used his ace card, the one he didn't think he would have to use but was prepared to in order to win. He had used it on the first sinless man, offering him a chance at being like God, and man quickly fell. Then Satan had won rulership of all the earthly kingdoms from Adam. Now he was willing to use that to bait his trap and offer Jesus instant access to ruling like God, right then, over all the earth. The problem was that it would again mean missing the cross. Also, getting his authority from Satan would mean He was under Satan -- the very one He came to dethrone.

These temptations were very subtle. They came at an extremely vulnerable time. They were all for Jesus to meet legitimate needs, but to meet them in His way and time, not in God's. They were self-focused and now-focused, not looking for what was better for others and for the long run. Satan did the same basic thing with Adam and Eve (Gen 3), and still works that way today (1 John 2:16). Watch out!

22c . MIRACLES

SPRING 27 – SUMMER 28

Matthew 4:12-23:45. Mark 1:14-3:30, Luke 4:14-8:3, John 1:35-5:47

There were many who came claiming to be the Messiah. How would people know who was really God Himself come to earth with so many counterfeits? It would be the one who had God's power, who could do only what God Himself could do. How would anyone believe Jesus could heal a soul and forgive sin? When they say Him heal a body, which they could see, they would know He could heal a heart, which they couldn't see. By His casting demons out of those who were demonized they would know His power was greater than Satan's power. So to authenticate His message, Jesus spent the first year or two doing miracles. It was God's way of showing who He was,. When people believed His works, they would then believe His words.

YEAR 1: MIRACLES

Everything went "well" for Jesus during the fall of 27 AD. First He met the woman at the well, then He returned to Galilee where He was well received, and finally He made a nobleman's son well. Indeed, things were going very well at this point. John was the only Gospel writer to record these events.

WOMAN AT THE WELL (John 4:5-42) Prompted by the Holy Spirit, Jesus chose to return home to Galilee by going through the region of Samaria to the city of Samaria. He was still ministering in relative obscurity, just beginning to make Himself known to the nation Israel. As important and pressing as this work was, individual souls were even more important. God always puts people before programs.

Left alone at the well, Jesus met and spoke with a woman who came in the hottest part of the day to get water. She probably did this to be alone, for other women wouldn't think much of someone with 5 husbands, and now living with a man she isn't married to. While seeking for love, she ended up settling for lust -- a common substitute even today. Jesus knew this and sought her out to meet that need with His unconditional love.

She was shocked that a Jew, especially a man, especially a rabbi would seek her out and actually initiate a conversation with her! That just wasn't done! What's more, He asked to drink from her water bucket. Jews just didn't touch non-Jews, nor anything they touched -- He would be ceremonially unclean if He drank her water!

While He asked her for water, it was really He who wanted to give to her -- spiritual water to refresh and satisfy her for her whole life. She was confused and unsure, but certainly interested! When she finally understood just what He was offering -- eternal life -- she jumped at the chance to have it. Having ascertained to her satisfaction that He was the Messiah, God Himself come to earth, she went back to town and told everyone about His miraculous offer.

Jesus ended up staying there for several days to meet the needs of those who were interested in His free gift of salvation. It must have been really encouraging to Jesus to have this wholehearted response, especially after the opposition He was already receiving from the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem.

Many believed and started following Jesus. This set the foundation for a great revival in that area under the leadership of Philip and other disciples after the resurrection. Truly everything went very well in this encounter by a well!

WELL RECEIVED IN GALILEE (John 4:43-45) By the time Jesus eventually got back to Galilee, word about what had happened in Jerusalem at the Passover Feast had been spreading there. Interest in someone who would drive out moneychangers from the temple was spreading fast! They also had heard about His miracles and were quite interested. Was this the Messiah? What was this all about?

In a time when there was no news coverage, no telephones, not even mail, word spread only by mouth. Still, that was quite effective. Since there was virtually nothing in the way of entertainment or excitement for the people, news about someone driving out the powerful religious rulers, who most people secretly resented, brought much attention and talk. Without much else to do, people wanted to find out all they could. Seeing the Man who had done this, as well as the miracles He reputedly did, was well worth the time and effort. Curiosity was strong, probably stronger than spiritual commitment.

NOBLEMAN'S SON MADE WELL (John 4:46-54) When Jesus got into Galilee coming from the south through Samaria, Cana was one of the first places He would reach. A royal official with a sick son, who it seemed would soon die, came to Jesus asking for help. Jesus healed his son, without even going to him. It was the first of several long-distance healings.

When the father got home and found his son had been healed at the exact time Jesus said He would be healed, the man and all his household believed. The reason Jesus did miracles was to show His message was from God.

Don't misunderstand, it's not that Jesus didn't care about people and want to see them well, for He really did. However, if that was His only, or even His main reason for healing, what about all He didn't heal? Didn't He care for them? Miracles were Jesus' 'calling card,' to show that He had God's

stamp of approval on all He said. Miracles were only a means to an end, not an end in themselves. They were to show people Jesus was worth listening to, to gain Him a hearing, so He could tell them about the gift of salvation He was offering. Physical healing would last for a few years, then the person would die. Spiritual healing affected not only this life, but all eternity as well. That is what Jesus was mostly concerned about. That's why, in a little over a year, He will virtually stop doing public miracles -- people only want the physical benefits He could give (healing, free food, etc.) but weren't interested in listening to His message. Unfortunately there are many today, too, who come to Jesus only for what they can get from Him, not what they can give to Him. Jesus wants us to follow Him because we love Him and are willing to do whatever He wants no matter what. If you follow Him because He can give you peace and joy, remove your guilt, help you in times of trouble, etc., you are following Him for what you can get out of it. These are fine side benefits, but shouldn't be our main reason for serving Him. That is self-centered, not Jesus centered.

For now, though, everyone was interested in every word Jesus had to say (Luke 4:14-15). He told them to repent of their sins and follow Him, believing His good news of salvation (Matthew 4:17; Mark 1:15). That is His message to us today, too -- don't miss it!

MIRACLES This was the third of four major times of miracles in history. The first was during the time of Moses and Joshua, second during Elijah and Elisha's time, and the fourth will be during the Tribulation. In each case, God is authenticating His chosen messengers and showing everyone that they have His power and message.

A miracle is not a coincidence of natural happenings. It's not magic. It is overriding natural laws by a higher law. Jesus called them 'signs.' We realized they were done for a purpose -- proof that Jesus was God. The focus was not to be the miracle itself but what it taught about Jesus. If He had power over physical ills, He could also heal spiritual ills. If He could deliver from demons, He could deliver from sin. If He could give physical sight He could give spiritual sight. If He could feed with physical bread, He could feed with spiritual manna. If He could bring the physically dead back to life, He could do the same with the spiritually dead. If He can stop a storm on an ocean, He can stop Satan's attacks against us. When we are helpless, He can deliver.

There was no single pattern: some asked to be healed, others didn't. Some had faith; others didn't even know who Jesus was. Whatever the illness, whatever the need - Jesus met it. He had total control over nature: calming the sea, cursing a fig tree, turning water to wine, catching many fish when there weren't any there a moment before -- all these are done by Jesus with just a word. Miracles were a means to an end, not an end in themselves. That's why not every sick person in Palestine was healed.

Satan can do miracles, too. He can counterfeit God's power with shows of his own (Matthew 7:22-23). His power is limited by God, however. He can't stop Jesus' power. Jannes and Jambrees counterfeited and challenged Moses, but lost to God's power.

YEAR 2: PREACHING

The spring of 28 AD was a very active time in Jesus' ministry. Word about His claims of being the Messiah were spreading. Interest was high. People were starting to have to decide about Jesus' claims. Some believed, others didn't. It was a crucial time, which way would the momentum go? Would the nation accept Him as the Messiah or would they reject Him?

REJECTION IN NAZARETH (Luke 4:16-30) As Jesus tells us (Acts 1:8) we are to go to our family and friends first with His message. As Jesus found, though, they won't always be open. When Jesus went back to His hometown, Nazareth, where He had lived from approximately age 4 to 30, He was rejected. They were proud to think the Messiah came from THEIR town, but when it came time to

submit to Him and follow Him in obedience, they wouldn't do that. It was too much to accept. Like today, it's easier to believe an 'expert' from another state. It's much harder to believe someone you knew from a child, someone you watched grow up, someone whose 'diaper you changed,' so to speak. We run into that today, and so did Jesus. In fact, it was so bad in Nazareth that they tried to actually kill Jesus, but He was supernaturally delivered because it wasn't the time, place or way for Him to die.

As a result, however, He moved to Capernaum to live (Matthew 4:13-16), for that is where much of His extended family lived. Many of His new followers and disciples were from there, and a good number were part of this extended family. They were accepting of Him.

CATCHING FISH (Luke 5:1-10) A faith-test for His followers there came one day not too long after Jesus moved there. Peter and others had been fishing all night, as was the custom, and came home tired and empty. They spent much time repairing and cleaning their nets and were looking forward to getting to bed when Jesus told them to go back out and drop their nets in deep water. This was the wrong place and the wrong time to fish, plus they'd have to clean their nets again. Also, they were very tired as well as discouraged. Many times the things Jesus wants us to do don't seem to make sense to us. We have our faith tests today, too.

As you know, though, they made a tremendous catch of fish! This greatly increased their faith in Jesus. Soon after, He asked Peter, Andrew, James and John to leave their fishing to spend all their time with Him, so He could teach them how to catch men as fish (Matthew 4:18-22; Mark 1:16-20; Luke 5:10-11). They had enough faith and commitment to leave their successful business to serve Him. When He calls us to leave what seems satisfying and successful in our world to follow Him, we must not hesitate or hold back either.

DEMONIZED MAN IN SYNAGOGUE HEALED (Mark 1:21-28; Luke 4:31-37) Another event after His moving to Capernaum was the healing of a demonized man in the synagogue. Jesus wouldn't let the demons speak, but cast them out. Everyone who saw the event became more aware of Jesus' power and authority, even over Satan himself.

PETER'S MOTHER-IN-LAW HEALED (Matthew 8:14-17; Mark 1:29-34; Luke 4:38-41) After a synagogue service, perhaps the same one in which the demonized man was delivered, Peter invited the disciples home for a meal. The problem was that his mother-in-law was sick and therefore his wife was busy taking care of her. Peter often acted impulsively, without a lot of forethought or planning. Jesus bailed him out this time by healing the mother-in-law so quickly and completely that, not only was her fever gone, but her strength and energy returned immediately so she could help Peter's wife feed the surprise visitors. Jesus cares about our daily needs, our inter-personal dealings, and the burden of our daily work load.

GALILEAN TOUR WITH 4 DISCIPLES (Matthew 4:23-25; Mark 1:35-39; Luke 4:42-44) Before long it was time to take His message to surrounding communities again, so Jesus took the 4 ex-fishermen He had called to be with Him along, as a teaching and training time for them as well. It seems too many were coming to Him in Capernaum just for healing -- what they could get out of it. They weren't interested in Him as much as themselves. Thus, it was time to go to other people who haven't heard. He went to local synagogues and spoke there, healing and delivering the demonized. Large crowds came from all over to hear and see Him.

One of the people Jesus healed was a leper (Matthew 8:2-4; Mark 1:40-45; Luke 5:12-16). After healing Him, Jesus told him to go straight to Jerusalem as proof to the priests there that Jesus was the Messiah. Instead, he started telling everyone what had happened to him. Unfortunately many came to Jesus just for healing -- for what they could get from Jesus. As a result Jesus withdrew. He always called His followers to build His kingdom, He never submitted to follow their desires to have Him build their own little kingdoms.

PARALYTIC HEALED (Matthew 9:1-8; Mark 2:1-12; Luke 5:17-26) When He got back to Capernaum, Jesus continued teaching and supporting His verbal claims by miraculous acts. One such was healing a paralyzed man who was led down through the roof because there was no other way to get to Jesus. The clear connection between Jesus' physical and spiritual healing is seen in this event, for Jesus said He healed him physically as outer proof that He could and did heal him spiritually (forgive his sins and remove his guilt). The religious rulers were indignant, but the common people were amazed and impressed.

CALL OF MATTHEW (Matthew 9:9-13; Mark 2:13-17; Luke 5:27-32) A despised tax collector named Matthew worked the Capernaum roads, collecting as much as he wanted and turning a portion of it over to Rome. Despite Matthew being hated by the Jews, Jesus knew his heart was empty and, when He called Matthew to leave that work and be a full-time follower of His, Matthew quickly accepted. Proof of his complete change was that he didn't even want to be treasurer of the disciples, leaving Judas to handle that job. Jesus used Matthew as an example of the kind of people He came for: those who are needy and know it. Unless we know our need and take it to Jesus, it will never be completely filled. Satan's substitutes don't satisfy.

FEASTING AND FASTING (Matthew 9:14-17; Mark 2:18-22; Luke 5:33-39) A delegation of John the baptizer's followers came and asked Jesus why He didn't fast as they did. He explained that there will be a time for that, but now that the Messiah was here it was a time of rejoicing. And a time of rejoicing it was. Except for His rejection by those in Nazareth and the religious rulers (pride of both), Jesus is being well accepted everywhere He goes. So far.

22d. TEACHING

FALL 28 – SPRING 30

Matthew 8:23-20;34; 26:6-13, Mark 3:31-10:52, Luke 8:4-9:50, John 6:1-11:54

Despite doing miracles of healing and deliverance, most people rejected Jesus as their Messiah. Some wanted a military leader who would defeat Rome and restore their national independence. Others reacted against Jesus' call to humble themselves and repent. Still others didn't want to pay the price required to put Him first and live for Him. Because of their pride, they preferred to put their faith in their good works. So Jesus made a subtle but important switch in His focus about half way through His 3 ½ years of ministry. Instead of inviting the multitudes to follow Him and proclaiming Himself as the Messiah, He turned to those who had put their faith in Him and trained them. Teaching disciples replaced preaching to multitudes. Parables replaced miracles. Jesus even chose 12 men to train to carry on the work when He was gone. This became the emphasis of the last half of Jesus' ministry on earth.

STARTING YEAR 3

The main events during the fall of 28 AD revolved around the Sea of Galilee. Jesus was staying a little closer to home. He probably went to Jerusalem in early fall for the Feast of Tabernacles, but nothing is recorded about that visit. A subtle but distinct change has taken place in Jesus' ministry. No longer is He trying to reach the masses with His message and doing miracles in front of all to validate His words. Now He is training His disciples, preparing them to take over for Him (although they don't realize that yet). Miracles for the masses are replaced by parables for His followers. He begins using a common teaching device of all times: short stories that help explain and illustrate truth. This makes His meaning clearer to his followers. But it also hides His special truths from those who would reject and mock it.

KINGDOM OF HEAVEN PARABLES (Matthew 13:1-53; Mark 4:1-34; Luke 8:4-18) One day by the sea of Galilee Jesus told His disciples a series of parables which would explain what was happening and what would happen. He was being rejected, not because anything was lacking in Him, but because many hardened their hearts or put themselves first (parable of the sower). Still, some would accept and grow in Him, but they would be a small minority.

Even among that minority, though, the enemy would sow weeds to harm the crop. Satan will plant false disciples among the true to mislead and confuse them. Ultimately God would prevail, but it would often be hard to tell true from false followers.

The parables of the mustard seed and yeast show that the growth of the kingdom will start slow (a handful at the crucifixion), but ultimately grow to include the whole earth (during the Millennium). For those who find Him, though, Jesus says it's like finding a treasure hidden in a field or a merchant discovering fine pearls. They will give up anything and everything to have this relationship with Him. For those who find Him, that will be the best thing that ever happened to them, or to us!

JESUS STILLS THE SEA (Matthew 8:8, 23-27; Mark 4:35-41; Luke 8:22-25) Later that day Jesus got in a boat with His disciples and headed to the other side of the lake. Being tired (Jesus was every bit as human as we are and therefore knows what we go through) He fell asleep. Even a terrible storm didn't wake Him up, so the disciples did. He rebuked the storm and immediately, instantly the storm stopped. Even the rough water settled down. His disciples were amazed! They had seen hundreds of miracles that He performed, so that didn't surprise them. However it's different when it's your neck in the noose!

GADARENES DEMONIZED MEN DELIVERED (Matthew 8:28-34; Mark 5:1-20; Luke 8:26-39) It may have been that Satan was trying to keep Jesus from His destination because he knew Jesus was invading his territory. Two men who were deeply demonized and ran naked in the graveyard, cutting themselves and breaking chains that were to hold them, were indwelt by so many demons that they called themselves 'Legion.' Jesus immediately cast them out of the men, who returned to their right mind and put their faith in Jesus. The local people wanted Jesus to leave, though, because He allowed the demons to go into a herd of pigs (unclean animals and forbidden to the Jews) who drowned themselves. The men became witnesses to him in their home area, though. They set the foundation for later work by the apostles.

JAIRUS' DAUGHTER BROUGHT BACK TO LIFE (Matthew 9:18-19, 23-26; Mark 5:21-24, 35-43; Luke 8:40-42, 49-56) Having accomplished what He crossed the lake to do, Jesus then went back to Capernaum, where a Jewish leader named Jairus came and asked Jesus to heal his daughter who was dying. On the way to this man's house, Jesus was interrupted by a woman who had been bleeding for 12 years (Matthew 9:20-22; Mark 5:25-34; Luke 8:43-48). She reached out in faith and touched Him, and He healed her. This distraction, though, slowed up Jesus' progress and before He could reach Jairus' daughter, word came that she had died so there was no more reason for Him to come. Jesus went there anyway and brought the girl back to life! This was the second time He had done this (the widow of Nain's son was first; Lazarus will be the third and last). What Jesus did was resuscitate the girl so she could go on living in her earthly body until she again died. What would happen to Jesus' body was resurrection, a new body not limited to the dimensions of this earth. That's what we will get, too!

BLIND MEN HEALED (Matthew 9:27-31) Jesus healed two blind men who came to Him in faith, but told them not to tell anyone what had happened. He didn't want crowds coming just to have Him perform miracles for them. That time had passed.

DEMONIZED DUMB MAN HEALED (Matthew 9:32-34) Right after the healing of the two blind men, a demon-possessed man who couldn't talk was brought to Jesus. Jesus drove the demon out and the man could speak, praising Jesus. The people, too, praised Jesus. However, the religious rulers wouldn't believe. They couldn't deny the miracle, so they changed the source of it. They said that He had authority over demons from Satan, thus saying He was working by Satan's power, not God's. This rejection of these was so strong that they would never be open to Him. They were jealous of His popularity. They were angry when He didn't bow down to them and their laws and regulations.

Thus the shift that started a few months ago is continuing, even growing. While individuals can still come to Jesus for salvation, it seems the nation itself has rejected Him. The religious leaders have, and the majority are either against Him because they don't want to submit to Him, or are too apathetic to care one way or the other. Where do you stand?

THE TURNING POINT

The summer of 28 AD marked the middle of the 3+ years of Jesus earthly public ministry. So far, so good. There has been rejection in Nazareth and by the religious rulers, both from pride and jealousy, but the majority of the people are open and interested, coming for healing and listening to His Messianic claims. Soon that is about to change, however. Now that people know His claims, they will start hearing His demands. He didn't come just to make their lives easier and more pleasurable. He came to call them to give all that up to follow and serve Him. That isn't nearly as popular. Still, in honesty Jesus must tell them. He didn't change or sugar-coat His call to lifelong discipleship just to have more come follow Him. The summer of 31 AD was a time of challenging those who were following Him and forcing them to make some hard choices, choices we all must make.

IMPOTENT MAN HEALED AT A POOL ON THE SABBATH (John 5:1-47) Jesus attended the 3 main feasts in Jerusalem each year which men were supposed to attend: Declaration (December), Passover (April) and Tabernacles (September). When there for the feast of Passover, exactly 2 years before He would be killed there and one year after His talk with Nicodemus, He healed a crippled man. He used this as a time to teach the people about Who He was and why He came.

SABBATH CONTROVERSIES

Disciples pluck grain on the Sabbath (Matthew 12:1-8; Mark 2:23-28; Luke 6:1-5) On the way back from Jerusalem, while walking through Galilee, Jesus and the disciples plucked grain from the edges of the fields (an act allowed, even encouraged, by God's Law). They rubbed the shell off and ate the raw grain as they walked. The religious leaders used this to accuse them of breaking the law, for they did this on the Sabbath. Jesus broke their man-made laws, but not God's law. Jesus used the opportunity to try and show them that God was more concerned about heart attitudes than outer actions. We need to watch that ourselves.

Man with withered hand healed on the Sabbath (Matthew 12:9-14; Mark 3:1-6; Luke 6:6-11) When Jesus entered the Capernaum synagogue, there was a man with a crippled hand there. Could He heal him on the Sabbath? Of course, Jesus said -- it's always lawful to do good and help others. Jesus then healed him. For the first time, now, though, the religious leaders start plotting how they can kill Jesus to get rid of Him. There is no other way to stop Him, and considering His claims to be true is unthinkable to them. He must be removed.

JESUS WITHDRAWS INTO THE HILL COUNTRY

He heals (Matthew 12:15-21; Mark 3:7-12) Knowing of their desire to kill Him, and that the time, place and means aren't right, Jesus moved out into the Galilean countryside. As He traveled He preached, supporting His message with miracles of healing and deliverance.

He calls disciples (Mark 3:13-19; Luke 6:12-16) Arriving at the Horns of Hattin in northern Galilee, Jesus spends the night in prayer seeking God's will. In the morning, He chose 12 men from all the followers to be with Him 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. This was the typical way a rabbi chose and trained disciples. As Jesus senses the multitudes turning from Him and the nation rejecting Him, plan "B" comes into play. He will start training those who will carry on the work after He is gone. A subtle shift begins from preaching and doing miracles for the multitudes to teaching and training a small group of disciples.

He preaches (Matthew 5:1 - 8:1; Luke 6:17-49) As a rabbi calling followers, Jesus tells them and all who are listening just what He demands of His followers. Instead of telling them what He will do for them, as a good politician wanting supporters would do, He tells them what He wants them to do for Him. Of course they will ultimately be the main benefactors of this, but often this message strikes against man's basic selfishness and pride. Thus the Sermon on the Mount called followers to forsake all else and follow Him completely, no matter the cost. This is the challenge He still gives to those who would follow Him today. It isn't easy, but the benefits are 'out of this world!'

TRAVELING, TEACHING AND HEALING

Centurion's servant healed (Matthew 8:5-13; Luke 7:1-10) When Jesus went back to Capernaum, He healed a servant of a Gentile officer in the Roman army, commending him for his great faith. Sometimes it is surprising who will believe in Jesus and who won't.

Widow's son raised (Luke 7:11-17) Jesus was always on the go these months. As he approached Nain, He brought a widow's son back to life. Bringing back the dead should be proof positive that He has power over life and death. Jesus is making sure no one is without opportunity to know and believe in Him. This miracle just couldn't be explained away!

John has some questions... (Matthew 11:2-19; Luke 7:18-35) John, who is in prison, starts wondering if Jesus really is the Messiah. He, too, expected everyone to be following Him by now, but many, including the influential religious leaders, are totally against Him and His claims. He is confused. Jesus explains to him that just because everyone isn't accepting Him doesn't mean He isn't the Messiah. It is the hardness of their hearts and their self-centeredness that keep them from humbly seeking forgiveness and living their lives for Him.

Galilee cities reject Jesus (Matthew 11:20-30) Jesus warned the places that had seen many great miracles, yet rejected Him, that they were under judgment and very accountable.

First anointing of Jesus' feet (Luke 7:36-50) Amidst all this gloom and rejection, there are still bright rays of hope and changed lives. While at a religious ruler's home, being treated in a barely civil manner, an immoral woman comes and pours out her life savings along with her heart at Jesus' feet. She receives Jesus' love and forgiveness,

Second Galilee tour with the 12 (Luke 8:1-3) Jesus took the 12 this time when he went from city to city. He healed a demon-possessed blind and dumb man (Matthew 12:22-37; Mark 3:20-30). He told those who rejected Him that the only additional 'sign' they would receive, having rejected His miracles, would be the sign of Jonah (His resurrection)(Matthew 12:38-45). Even his family and friends started turning against Him, saying He is crazy to claim to be God (Matthew 12:46-50; Mark 3:31-35; Luke 8:19-21).

Truly the summer of 28 AD was a turning point, and not for the better. Each must decide about Jesus' claims. What have you decided? Where do you stand?

THE 12 DISCIPLES

NAME	FAMILY	HOME	WORK	MINISTRY	DEATH
ANDREW	Son of Jonas & Joanna Brother of Peter	Bethsaida Capernaum	Fisherman Follower of John	Jerusalem (Acts 5:18-19; 8:1; 11:1,18); then ministered in Ephesus, Russia, Scythia Greece	Tied on an "X" cross in Scythia, preached 2 days until dead 11-30-69
NATHANAEL (Bartholomew)	Unknown	Cana	Fisherman Follower of John	Jerusalem (Acts 5:18-19; 8:1; 11:1,18); ministered with Philip in Asia Minor, Armenia	Flayed alive, beheaded, cast into sea by barbarian king Astyages
JAMES (son of Thunder)	Son of Zebedee**	Bethsaida Capernaum	Fisherman Follower of John	Jerusalem (Acts 5:18-19; 8:1; 11:1,18)	Beheaded by Herod Antipas, 44 AD Acts 12:1-2
JAMES the Less	Son of Cleopas *	Capernaum	Fisherman	Jerusalem (Acts 5:18-19; 8:1; 11:1,18); Palestine & Egypt	Crucified in Egypt
JOHN	Son of Zebedee**	Bethsaida Capernaum	Fisherman Follower of John	Jerusalem (Acts 3; 5:18-19; 8:1; 11:1,18); Wrote John, I, II, III John, Rev, Ephesus (with Mary), Patmos	Natural death (very old) - attempts to martyr him failed
JUDAS (Jude, Thaddaeus)	Son of Cleopas *	Capernaum	Fisherman	Jerusalem (Acts 5:18-19; 8:1; 11:1,18); Assyria & Persia	Beaten to death in Persia/Syria with a large club
JUDAS (Isariot)	Unknown	Judea (only one not from Galilee)	Treasurer	None	Suicide
MATTHEW (Levi)	Son of Cleopas *	Capernaum	Tax Collector very well educated	Jerusalem (Acts 5:18-19; 8:1; 11:1,18); Wrote Matthew, Ethiopia & Persia	Head split open with an ax in Egypt
PETER (Simon)	Son of Jonas & Joanna Brother of Andrew	Bethsaida Capernaum	Fisherman Follower of John	Jerusalem, leader of early church (Acts 2 - 11, 15); Wrote I, II Pt; Mark written about him, Asia Minor, Britain (?), Rome w/ wife	Crucified upside down in Rome by Nero after wife martyred
PHILIP	Unknown Greek name	Bethsaida	Unknown	Jerusalem (Acts 5:18-19; 8:1; 11:1,18); Ministered in Phrygia, Galatia, France (?), , Asia Minor	Hung against a pillar at Hieropolis (near Colossae)
SIMEON (Zealot)	Unknown	Galilee	Zealot under-ground freedom fighter	Jerusalem (Acts 5:18-19; 8:1; 11:1,18); Ministered various places	Crucified
THOMAS	Son of Cleopas *	Capernaum	Fisherman	Jerusalem (Acts 5:18-19; 8:1; 11:1,18); Parthia, Persia & India	Body run through with spear in East India

* Cleopas also called Alphaeus, probably Joseph's brother; Mary his wife was with Jesus throughout His ministry; children seem to have been Matthew & Thomas (twins?), James the Less and Judas Thaddaeus, therefore all were probably cousins of Jesus

** Zebedee's wife was Salome, the sister of Mary, children were James and John, they were cousins of Jesus

REJECTION

By the spring of 29 AD, it was clear Jesus was being rejected and, if possible, killed.. Jesus was not going to be accepted as the Messiah. The religious rulers and the nation as a whole were not going to submit themselves to His rulership in their lives. The only ones who didn't see the handwriting on the wall were the disciples. They still were under the delusion that sometime soon they would be among the top leaders in Jerusalem, next to Jesus when He sat on David's throne. Jesus knew better.

SECOND REJECTION AT NAZARETH (Matthew 13:54-58; Mark 6:1-6) It was time for Jesus to return to Nazareth, His home town, to give them another chance to follow Him. Maybe His first time there they were caught by surprise. Maybe now that they've had time to think and listen. Maybe... But nothing doing! When He again spoke in the synagogue, as rabbis were allowed to do, the people were quicker and stronger in their rejection. That was their last chance, their final vote. Jesus won't go back to their synagogue again, and nothing about any kind of visit to Nazareth is recorded.

TWELVE SENT OUT

Leaving Nazareth, **Jesus sent out His twelve disciples two by two** (Matthew 9:35 - 10:15; Mark 6:7-11; Luke 9:1-5). This was not only part of their hands-on training for when He would be gone, it was also a way of reaching as many people as possible with His message. Everyone had heard one way or another, but Jesus wanted to have each one have as much opportunity as possible to believe. It's the same thing He had just done with Nazareth.

Before sending them out, Jesus went into detail telling them **what to expect** (Matthew 10:16-23). Most of His words had to do with handling rejection. He was warning and preparing them so they wouldn't be surprised. We, too, shouldn't be surprised when people reject our message. Still Jesus sends us anyway, to make sure everyone has as clear an opportunity as possible.

Then Jesus talked to them about **discipleship** (Matthew 10:24-42). After all, how were they to feel about being sent out to be rejected? Why should they even bother going? Well, a disciple shouldn't be surprised when he goes through what his Master has to go through. A disciple gives up all his own desires and goals to serve his Master. Discipleship isn't easy. It is very costly. It costs all of us. But then Jesus is giving all of Himself for His disciples. What better use of a life is there than to give it in service of God and His kingdom?

The **results** were that the disciples spread God's word with power (Matthew 11:1; Mark 6:12-13; Luke 9:6).

JOHN THE BAPTIZER DIES (Matthew 14:1-12; Mark 6:14-29; Luke 9:7-9) Lest there be any doubt about what awaited Jesus, John is now killed. His message was rejected and he was killed to silence his words. What happens to the forerunner is what will happen to the One who sent him to prepare the way. Jesus knows this. It is obviously the beginning of the end. Now it's just a matter of time until Jesus Himself is also killed. Jesus has one year of life on earth left.

Why was Jesus rejected? Why didn't the Jews accept Him as their Messiah and King? If He would have just given without calling for anything from them they would have followed Him in a moment. Free food, healing of illness -- these everyone wants. But when He called on them then (and us now) to admit their sin and helplessness and come to Him for forgiveness and restoration, it is often more than a person in their pride will admit. Then to those who will accept His free gift of salvation, Jesus challenges them (and us) to lay down their own life and desires in order to daily serve Him and do His will instead of their own. To a self-centered person, who isn't sure about the existence of God to begin with, such a life seems utterly ridiculous! Their whole world view is entirely different, far different.

SIX MONTHS TO LIVE

Jesus, in the **FALL OF 32 AD** knew He only had 6 months to live. Jesus knew He'd die because the nation as a whole, as well as the vast majority of the people, were rejecting Him. He told His followers a couple times, but they didn't think about it until after the resurrection. Seeing Jesus activities during the fall of 32 AD in light of this takes on new light. How would He respond? What would He do? Let's see.

Despite a fresh round of **rejection by His own brothers** (John 7:2-10) and people in Samaria (Matthew 8:19-22; Luke 9:51-62), Jesus went to Jerusalem for the Feast of Tabernacles (John 7:11-52). While there He rescued a woman caught in adultery (John 7:53 - 8:11). He tried to tell the people to watch out for the darkness but follow His light (John 8:12-20), for in doing so they would be following God, not Satan (John 8:21-59). To show that He could remove spiritual darkness and blindness, He healed a man of physical darkness/blindness. His attitude was still that of a servant. Instead of thinking about Himself and His needs, what was fair and what wasn't, He continued to reach out to others, to minister to their needs and to try and bring them to salvation. He said He was the good Shepherd Who was going to lay down His life for His sheep (John 10:1-21). Even in His last months of life, Jesus put others and their needs first. He continued to give of Himself, committed to following God's plan and purpose for His life no matter what.

After the Feast of Tabernacles, instead of going home to Capernaum in Galilee, where the majority of His followers lived, where He could have found some solace and support, Jesus stayed in **Judea**. Since the end was near He wanted to make sure everyone had a fair chance to hear and respond. Despite the facts that their hearts were harder and there was little response from the Judeans, Jesus did all He could to reach them. Only one of His 12 disciples were from Judea, and that one was Judas. To cover more ground and reach more people, and also to continue their training, Jesus sent out 70 of His followers two by two, warning them they wouldn't always be accepted (Luke 10:1-24).

To teach His values Jesus told the **parable of the Good Samaritan** (Luke 10:25-37). He spent time with His good friends Mary, Martha and Lazarus (Luke 10:25-37) and gave them a lesson in servanthood, too. Serving others was His theme (Luke 11:1-13). Even after healing a dumb man (Luke 11:14-28) the people demanded He prove to them He was God (Luke 11:29-36). Jesus said the only proof they'd have any more would be the resurrection (the "sign of Jonah").

Jesus **condemned hypocrisy** (Luke 12:1-12) and warned them against greed (Luke 12:13-34). He encouraged them to be alert and watchful (Luke 12:35-41) as well as faithful (Luke 12:42-48). He taught them what He expected (Luke 12:49-53) and told them to watch the signs of the times (Luke 12:54-59). He called them to repentance and faith in Him (Luke 13:1-9). He did some healing, like when He healed a crippled woman (Luke 13:10-17), but the times of large numbers of healings before large groups was long past. He taught about the coming Kingdom, that it would start slow and gradually grow (Luke 13:18-21). It certainly was starting slowly.

Then, when it was time for the Feast of Dedication, Jesus again went to **Jerusalem** (John 10:22-39). His death was now just a few months away. He has spent the last months reaching out to those in need.

You see, Jesus' sacrifice of Himself didn't just begin on the cross. It started long before that. Actually it started before the world was created, when the Second Person of the Trinity volunteered to come to earth as a man and die for our sins (Revelation 13:8). His whole existence on earth was one of self-giving and sacrifice, for His enemies as well as for His friends (John 13). Knowing His time was short didn't change His life, it just intensified His focus. That should be the way it is with us, too. As He "washes our feet," so we are to "wash one another's feet" (John 13:14). We, too, are to live lives of sacrificial service for others, putting them and their needs before our own. We are to be like

our Master, laying down our lives in daily sacrifice of service to others. That doesn't mean we don't have legitimate needs of our own, nor does it mean we are to let people use us, take advantage of us and walk all over us. We are to be innocent as doves but wise as serpents (Matthew 10:16). It's not easy, in fact humanly speaking it is impossible, but with His help all things are possible. Living for self is empty and means losing everything. Living for God and others is the only way to have meaning and purpose in life, now and for eternity (Matthew 10:39). The choice is yours. Choose wisely.

JESUS' FINAL WEEKS

The end is inevitable. Jesus has been rejected and will die. Nothing will change that, for God won't do anything to force man's free will choice. However, the rest of the script needs to be read, the final events played out. Now it's a matter of waiting for the right time. The Lamb must die on Passover day, and that is still 3 months away. The waiting is always the hardest. One's mind can run to one extreme or the other. Staying focused during such a time is very hard, but that's what Jesus did during the **SPRING** of **30 AD**.

Galilee had been thoroughly evangelized. Everyone had heard about Jesus. Each had opportunity to find out more. Minds were made up. Hearts were set. Their verdict: Jesus is a nice person, the free food is great, and if He would overthrow the Romans that would be great – but to give up all and follow Him as God and Savior, that's asking too much!

Knowing this, Jesus went to **Perea** (John 10:40-42), an area east of the Jordan. Not only was He safer there (He knew it wasn't time for Him to be killed yet), but He was able to give those who hadn't heard a chance to follow Him. He did the same teaching there that He had done in Galilee and Judea. Only Luke records Jesus' teachings there. He spoke about salvation (13:22-30) and warned them about Herod (13:31-35). He performed a healing in a Pharisee's home (14:1-6) and told parables about an ambitious guest (14:7-14) and the great supper (14:15-24). After explaining about the importance of discipleship (14:25-35) He gave parables about a lost sheep, coin and son (15:1-32) and an unjust steward (16:1-13). These were spoken to show them the importance of following Jesus completely and of the judgment and loss that awaited those who didn't. He warned against covetousness (16:14-17) and answered questions about divorce (16:18). One of His best-known teachings was that of Lazarus and the rich man (16:19-31), another warning against putting faith in position and possessions. He concluded His time there teaching about forgiveness (17:1-6) and the importance of being a servant (17:7-10).

Then came a very pivotal event. In looking at Jesus' life, one can see several times when it seems He went out of His way to force the Jews to have to decide if they would accept or reject Him. The first was when He chased out the sellers and money changers the first time He came to the temple after His baptism. This hit the religious leaders where it hurt – in their wallet! They were forced to notice Him and take a stand one way or the other. Now He is going to do the same thing – do something so extreme they must notice and act one way or the other. He'll do that by bringing Lazarus back to life right under their noses, and then a few weeks later by riding a donkey into town proclaiming Himself the Messiah and King. These events couldn't be ignored.

The **raising of Lazarus** (John 11:1-44) was so obviously a supernatural miracle that none could deny it or explain it away. It was so close to Jerusalem that many people there knew Lazarus (evidently a well-to-do and influential man) and came to talk to him about what had happened to Him. When the religious rulers checked it out they couldn't find any way to explain it away. They decided Jesus and Lazarus both would have to die to stop this strange movement that was gaining so much

support. They were jealous. While most people didn't accept Jesus as Messiah and Savior, the majority did take His side in His conflict with the proud and controlling religious rulers. Having set in motion the events that would soon end in His death, Jesus then withdrew to Ephraim where it was safer (John 11:45-54) for it still wasn't time to die for sin.

Jesus made His last trip through Galilee and Samaria and **healed 10 lepers** (Luke 17:11-19). He taught about the coming kingdom (Luke 19:20-37), the importance of persistence in prayer (Luke 18:1-8) and having the proper attitude (Luke 18:9-14). Jesus visited His home area for the last time, setting His face to Jerusalem. Only He knew what was coming as He left Galilee and headed south.

Jesus then swung through Perea again, completing the work He had started there. He again **taught** about divorce (Matthew 19:1-12) and how man is to become like a little child to enter the kingdom (Mark 19:13-15). A rich young ruler came to Him and asked about eternal life, but Jesus knew He'd have to deal with His love of money before He could truly follow Jesus (Mark 19:16-22). With time getting shorter every day, Jesus focused on talking about eternal life by teaching (Matthew 19:23-30) and by use of parables (Matthew 20:1-16). He told those who would listen that He would be crucified and rise again (Matthew 20:20-28) but no one wanted to think of that, so they didn't let it really register. Pride and self-centeredness seemed to be the norm, as when Jesus rebuked James and John for this (Mark 20:20-28).

Leaving Perea, Jesus headed toward Jerusalem for His fourth **Passover** since His baptism and temptation. On the way through Jericho He healed some blind men, one of which (Bartimaeus) became a follower of His (Luke 18:35-43). Zacchaeus was another resident of Jericho that responded to Jesus' love and forgiveness and gave up all to follow Him (Luke 19:1-10). Jesus again warned His followers that the kingdom would be delayed (Luke 19:11-29), but people tend to hear what they wanted to hear. The followers of Jesus only wanted to hear about Jesus' coming rulership of Israel, and their exalted positions with Him. Thus, He in effect walked alone as He turned His face toward Jerusalem for the final events of His life on earth.

As Jesus walked toward Bethany and His final week on earth, what thoughts must have gone through His mind? Soon the waiting would be over, and the agony would begin: the rejection and suffering and pain. Jesus had faithfully carried out His life's mission on earth, even these last few months when the final choice was certain. His attitude was still one of love and patience for the people. He didn't panic, fear or flee. He persevered faithful to the very end. What a perfect example He sets for us of faithfulness during those hard times of waiting. With His help we, too, can keep a good attitude and faithfully persevere no matter what is to come.

22e . CRUCIFIXION

SPRING 30

Matthew 21:1-27:66, Mark 11:1-15:47, Luke 19:28-23:56, John 12:12-19:42

Despite Jesus' teachings about His coming death and resurrection, and in the face of several Old Testament prophecies about it, His disciples were unprepared for what happened to Jesus. The rejection of the religious leaders and the majority of the people culminated in Jesus being crucified. It was the only way the jealous leaders could silence Him. But God used the worst thing that ever happened and brought about the best thing that ever happened from it. He used that event as the means by which He Himself would pay for every sin that has ever been committed, taking our eternal torment in hell condensed and placed on Him. As perfect man He could be our substitute, as God He could endure the torment of eternity in hell condensed in a much shorter of time. The time was less, but the suffering was unimaginable. Why would He do such a thing? There is only one reason –love for us!

JESUS' LAST WEEK ON EARTH

As the time winds down in a football game, every snap & handoff takes on extra importance. As time starts to run out in a basketball game, each pass and shoot takes on special significance. There is no room for error. Little mistakes get magnified into major disasters. Every movement and every action counts. So it was with Jesus during His final days on earth. His clock was moving closer and closer to 0. No one realized that but Jesus (and perhaps Mary who anointed him at Lazarus' home). Jesus knew that each word, each activity was magnified in importance. Now, especially, there was no room for error. That which was planned before the world was even created was almost near. It was a crucial time to carry out the 'game plan' God had created. Thus the final days in Jesus' life take on special meaning. And just as the final series of plays at the end of the Superbowl which bring victory are minutely analyzed and even memorized, so the final days of Jesus deserve even more careful notice than the previous activities in His life.

It all began **Friday, March 27, 30 AD** when Jesus arrived in Bethany (John 12:1; Luke 19:28). To the others it was just another (the fourth) Passover trip to Jerusalem since John baptized Jesus. To Jesus, however, the events had much greater significance. The religious rulers had already decided they would have to kill Jesus to stop His influence from spreading (John 11:55-57). The recent resuscitation of Lazarus, in the very outskirts of Jerusalem, was something with which the religious rulers just couldn't compete. Jesus and His disciples probably went to synagogue services with Mary, Martha and Lazarus as well as other friends in Bethany. It would be His last opportunity to do this, for the next Friday He would be in the tomb.

Saturday, March 28, 30 AD was the Sabbath, so not much travel could take place. Mary, sensing what was about to happen, anointed Jesus with valuable perfume as her way of showing her love (Matthew 26:6-13; Mark 14:3-9; John 12:2-8). It was also her way of saying good-bye. When greedy Judas complained about this 'waste' of money, Jesus rebuked him. This seemed to be a turning point for Judas, who started to make plans in his heart to betray Jesus.

The next day, **Sunday, March 29, 30 AD** was when the religious rulers planned to kill Lazarus, too (John 12:9-11). His testimony was influencing too many for Jesus.

Then came the final major turning point, when Jesus literally forced everyone to decide if they would accept or reject Him. It happened on **Monday, March 30, 30 AD**. It was like when Jim Bowie took his knife and drew a line in the dirt in the Alamo, challenging each man to stay where he was or cross the line. Jesus drew the line by clearly and publicly claiming to be the Messiah-King by coming into the Eastern gate from the Mount of Olives, riding an unriden donkey, and allowing the people to say “Hosannah” while waving palm branches, thus using symbols and following precedents that clearly claimed Him Messiah (Matthew 21:1-9; Mark 11:1-10; Luke 19:29-44; John 12:12-19). Everyone understood this. His followers shouted their praises and support, and the religious rulers told Him to make them stop. Up to this point Jesus had told people to not tell others who He was, but now He is putting everyone in a position where they must join in His parade or turn away. Only a minority responded positively. Jesus, knowing what this meant for the Jews as well as Himself, started crying loud and long as He approached the city. The people melted away and those in town reacted with surprise and doubt (Matthew 21:10-11; Mark 11:11). Oh, a few responded, like the boys choir in the temple (Matthew 21:14-16), but the leaders and majority of the people rejected this claim to Messiahship. At least Jesus gave them one more clear, fair chance to accept Him. No one could say they didn’t know His claim. None could say they were ignorant. Jesus again spent the night in Bethany (Mark 21:17; Mark 11:11).

Jesus had three days left to minister before His death, and He made the most of them. On **Tuesday, March 31, 30 AD** He cursed a fig tree on the way down the Mount of Olives into town (Matthew 21:18-19; Mark 11:12-14). While appearing to be lush and healthy, closer inspection saw it wasn’t bearing fruit. This was the purpose for its existence. It was a fake, a hypocrite. The tree, of course, was a picture of the nation Israel. When He entered the temple, He drove out the money changers once again (Matthew 21:12-13; Mark 11:15-18), closing His ministry in the same way He started it. He did much teaching that day (John 12:20-36) to those who would listen, then went to spend the night on the Mount of Olives (Mark 11:19). This gave Him more privacy to think and pray and it drew danger away from Mary, Martha and Lazarus.

Jesus and His disciples passed the fig tree He had cursed the day before on their way into Jerusalem on **Wednesday, April 1, 30 AD**. It was dead and withered, as if it had been dead for many months (Matthew 21:21-22; Mark 11:20-25). Upon entering the temple courts, Jesus immediately got into a long and bitter dialogue with the religious rulers which took up most of the morning (Matthew 21:23 - 23:39; Mark 11:27 - 12:40; Luke 20:1-47). They kept looking for ways to publicly discredit Jesus, but He parried each thrust and drove home point after point of His which unveiled their hypocrisy and self-centeredness. When that was finally over Jesus, exhausted and saddened by their hardness, drifted into the Court of Women for some quiet reflection. There He saw something that really encouraged and excited Him. A poor woman gave all she had to God in love and devotion (Mark 12:41-44; Luke 21:1-4). There were some who did love God and put Him first.

As they left the temple area, Jesus foretold its destruction and answered the disciple’s questions about when it would happen and what it would be like (Matthew 24:1-25:46; Mark 13:1-37; Luke 21:5-36). He gave the clearest explanation up to that point about when He would return.

Later, in the temple again, Jesus continued to preach and teach (John 21:37-38). He again predicted His crucifixion (John 22:1). Meanwhile, the religious leaders were planning Jesus’ arrest (Matthew 26:3-5; Mark 14:1-2; Luke 22:20) and taking Judas up on his offer of betrayal (Matthew 26:14-16; Mark 14:10-11; Luke 22:3-6).

The next day, **Thursday, April 2, 33 AD**, time would expire and it would be all over.0

JESUS' LAST DAY

This was it: the moment all history had pointed to. This was the focal point of all time: past present and future. This was the key incident, the most important occurrence ever, the event which changed everything for everyone forever. Nothing ever happened, or ever will happen, that was as important as this. This was it. This was **IT**.

Thursday, April 2, 30 AD dawned like every other day. Disbelief hung over the city like a blanket (John 12:37-43). Jesus entered the temple for a final time of preaching (John 12:44-50). Meanwhile Jesus had sent some of the disciples to prepare for the Passover which those from Galilee would be observing that evening (Matthew 26:17-19; Mark 14:12-16; Luke 22:7-13). The majority of the people, everyone else, would be observing it the following day. As a firstborn male, Jesus (and other of the disciples) had been fasting all day in preparation for the Passover.

That **evening** after sunset the disciples gathered in the upper room, probably John Mark's home. Jesus entered the room wanting and needing their support and help as He approached the cross with all its horror and suffering. Instead all He got was immature, self-centered arguing and complaining. No one wanted to serve another, and the stink of it all hung throughout the room. Jesus had to wash their hearts as well as their feet, and He warned them of what was to come (Matthew 26:20-35; Mark 14:17-31; Luke 22:14-38; John 13:1-38). No one, not even Peter, took His warnings seriously, though. Instead of heeding His rebuke, they just became fearful at the prospect of His leaving them. Instead of getting comfort from them, Jesus needed to then comfort them (John 14:1-31). He gave a final warning to Judas, and while reassuring him of His love (giving him the sop) offered Judas a way of escape from what he planned. Judas turned it down and left.

As this important evening unfolded, Jesus changed the meaning of the Passover Lamb's body given and blood shed to Himself: His body that was to be given and blood that was about to be shed (Matthew 26:26-30; Mark 14:22-26; Luke 22:17-20; 1 Corinthians 11:23-32).

It was **late night** when the meal ended with a song (Matthew 26:30; Mark 14:26; Luke 22:39). As they walked through the dark, deserted streets of Jerusalem, Jesus gave His parting words to them: be like a branch attached to the vine in order to prosper (John 14:31-16:33). He also prayed for Himself, them and us today (John 17:1-26).

Despite being so tired, when they entered Gethsemane Jesus prayed. It was probably **early Friday, April 3, 30 AD**. Again He needed the disciples' support but they again failed (Matthew 26:36-46; Mark 14:32-42; Luke 22:40-46; John 18:1). Before long Judas led the arresting party to Jesus, who had gone to the exact place He knew Judas would come to looking for Him. He could have escaped arrest by His power when He said "I Am" or when Peter tried to lead an attack. Jesus knew that was not the way and resisted the temptation to take the easy way out.

At about **3 AM** He was taken to Annas for His first religious trial (John 18:12-23), then to Caiaphas at about **4 AM** (Matthew 26:57-72; Mark 14:53-70; Luke 22:54-58; John 18:18, 24-25). They were frantically scrambling to find some charge against Him that would stick. They knew they were breaking about every rule in their book for a fair trial. They were forced to act sooner than they wanted when Judas informed them Jesus knew about their plot and this would be the last chance he had to help them. At about **5 AM**, select members of the Sanhedrin who would support Annas no matter what he proposed gathered to condemn Jesus without the required waiting period, proof, fair trial, legal defense, etc. (Matthew 26:73 - 27:1; Mark 14:70 - 15:1; Luke 22:59-71; John 18:26-27). Hate and jealousy drove them. It was during this time that Satan withdrew his influence from Judas and trashed him. When the guilt and remorse accompanying the reality of what he had done hit Judas, he saw taking his own life as the only escape (Matthew 27:3-10; Acts 1:18-20).

It was now about **6 AM**. Jesus was taken to Pilate for approval to carry out the death sentence, for the Jews could not do that without Rome's OK. Pilate proved difficult for a while (Matthew 27:2-14; Mark 15:1-5; Luke 23:1-5; John 18:28-38). He even sent Jesus to Herod about **7 AM** (Luke 23:6-12) but by **8 AM** He was back before Pilate, who eventually caved in to pressure and approved their death plot (Matthew 27:15-26; Mark 15:6-15; Luke 23:13-25; John 18:39-19:16). Every time the Jews complained to Caesar, Pilate's job became less stable. Pilate had Jesus beaten nearly to death in hopes they would consider this sufficient punishment, then he offered them Jesus or Barabbas as the holiday release, but neither of these caused the Annas-paid mob to change their mind. At **8:45 AM** Jesus was on His way to Golgotha, paraded through the streets as a detriment to others (Matthew 27:31-32; Mark 15:20-21; Luke 23:26-31; John 19:16-17). By **9 AM** He was on the cross (Matthew 27:33-37; Mark 15:22-26; Luke 23:33-38; John 19:17-22).

Crucifixion was the cruelest death man had been able to devise. It combined the maximum amount of pain for the maximum time. Relief by fainting or death was denied while awful pain continued for hours and days. Jesus had been spit on, mocked, punched numerous times by soldiers and had a crown of long sharp thorns forced down on His head. For two days He had no sleep and only one meal. His back was whipped raw, to where the bone and nerves were exposed. It had been covered with salt and a robe, which was violently pulled off for the crucifixion. From loss of body fluids Jesus was dehydrating. He was wracked with gangrene. Spikes through the great nerve centers in His wrists and ankles caused excruciating agony. Then there was the public shame of nudity before everyone, including His own mother, as well as mockery and taunts. Crucifixion caused near asphyxiation, for a person would have to pull themselves up by the nails, rubbing their exposed back against the rough wood, every time they inhaled. No wonder Jesus didn't have much to say (Matthew 27:35-50; Mark 15:24-37; Luke 23:34-46; John 19:23-39). The worst of it all, though, was God withdrawing His presence and forsaking Jesus as He poured out the consequences for every sin ever committed. All every person would experience in an eternity in hell was poured on Jesus during that time! As Satan and his demons cheered and tormented Jesus, God and His angels watched helplessly. The battle for the souls of men was on. Our eternal destiny hung in the balance. Would Jesus endure? Would He even try (He could have just called some angels to rescue Him and been relieved of His agony). For six long hours the battle raged. Finally, at **3 PM** the eternal penalty for every sin ever committed was paid. God's justice was satisfied. Jesus was the victor. His work on earth was over, accomplished 100%. "It is finished," He declared and voluntarily returned to heaven. At that very instant, the Passover lamb was killed on the altar, and the veil in the temple was torn, showing that the price was paid and every man was now invited to enter God's presence any time they wanted. All this and more was a testimony to Jesus' deity (Matthew 27:51-54; Mark 15:38-39; Luke 23:45, 47). His body was put in a grave (Matthew 27:55-66; Mark 15:40-47; Luke 23:48-56; John 19:31-42), but He Himself was alive in heaven forever, just where He told the thief He would be ("Today you will be with Me in Paradise").

He did it! He really pulled it off! The greatest victory in the history of the universe was won. One Man, fighting for all mankind, had defeated sin, Satan and death. Indeed, "It is finished!"

JESUS' LAST HOURS

This is written as if Barabbas, the man released instead of Jesus, might have written it.

"Hello! My name is Barabbas. Really it is Bar-Abba. Bar means son of and Abba means father. I was "son of the father" because my father was a well-known rabbi. My first name was very common – Jesus, the same as Joshua in the Old Testament. Thus I was Jesus Bar-abba (Jesus, son of the father) and I was fighting for the physical deliverance of Israel. My life crossed paths with

another Jesus, Bar-Joseph, Who was working for the spiritual deliverance of Israel. What a way our paths crossed!

BACKGROUND “I was an insurrectionist. I was a leader in the underground. We wanted rebellion against Rome and would murder soldiers whenever we could. Today you would call us terrorists. We called ourselves Zealots.

“I was full of hate and bitterness for anyone and everyone. If anyone wasn’t for us he was our enemy. That included this other Jesus. I first heard of Him from Simon the Zealot, who left us to be one of His disciples. When he tried to tell me about this better way of love and peace, I spit on him and walked away. I was too disgusted to talk.

“I never met that Jesus in person. He was in the same prison I was in but in a different place. There were no prison terms then. Prison was just a temporary holding place until trial, and then one was flogged, executed or released. It was April 13, 33 AD and I was awaiting execution. I had been arrested and found guilty and was to die that morning. It was to be a public, horrible death as an example to others.

RELEASE “From the Maccabean times it was the custom to release a prisoner at Passover, symbolizing the release of the Jews from Egyptian bondage. Rome carried on this practice. Evidently Pilate used this as a way to have the other Jesus released. I could hear the crowds from my cell, but not Pilate. I heard the crowds start chanting “Barabbas,” then after a pause “Crucify! Crucify! Crucify!” I assumed I was doomed. A cold chill shook me as the reality of crucifixion settled over me. I was as hard and cold as anyone, but I was still human! When soldiers then burst through my cell door and dragged me out I assumed that was it. When they opened a side door and threw me out into the street I couldn’t believe it! I quickly scampered away, but not too far. My two buddies were still there, about to be killed this day. I felt like I was deserting them, although I wasn’t about to go back inside. I was very curious about why I was released. Was it the prisoner exchange? If so, who was taking my place?

“When I saw it was this other Jesus I didn’t care. I hated Him. He was weak. He could have turned the crowds into an army and fought the Romans but didn’t. I had no respect for cowardice like that. Still, something started changing inside me. For the first time since I was a child I felt pity, sorrow for another human being. I guess it’s because I could identify with Him. He was taking my place on my cross.

TO GOLGOTHA “Then I saw Him for the first time, carrying my cross toward Golgotha. It was the whole cross, 200 pounds. An awful curse from God went with it (Deuteronomy. 21:23). Of course they made Him and my two friends go the long way, weaving up and down streets, before exiting the city. This was so more could see them. Their crimes were written on boards which were carried in front, then nailed to their cross. Funny, all He said was that He was the “King of the Jews.”

“Going outside the city pictured exclusion, rejection by God. That’s where the ‘scapegoat’ was sent. I wondered how someone who claimed to be God would handle that. Before He got there, though, it all was too much for Him physically so Simon of Cyrene was pressed into service.

EXECUTION “Golgotha was an awful place! It meant ‘skull,’ and that’s what the place looked like. It had the smell and feel of death everywhere. Some mercy was shown, though, by offering a narcotic (gall or myrrh). Surprisingly Jesus rejected it. That made me curious.

“I watched as He was stripped naked and thrown backward on to the wood. I involuntarily flinched myself as His raw, bloody back hit the rough wood. I turned away as His arms were spread and nailed, and then His feet. That was my cross. That should have been me.....

"The cross was lifted and dropped into its hole with a jarring thud. There He was. His arms and knees were flexed a bit so He could pull Himself up to allow air into His lungs. Perhaps I'd better quote what a medical doctor in your day says about crucifixion:

"The cross is placed on the ground and the exhausted man is quickly thrown backwards with his shoulders against the wood. The legionnaire feels for the depression at the front of the wrist. He drives a heavy, square wrought-iron nail through the wrist deep into the wood. Quickly he moves to the other side and repeats the action, being careful not to pull the arms too tightly, but to allow some flex and movement. The cross is then lifted into place. The left foot is pressed backward against the right foot, and with both feet extended, toes down, a nail is driven through the arch of each, leaving the knees flexed. The victim is now crucified. As he slowly sags down with more weight on the nails in the wrists, excruciating fiery pain shoots along the fingers and up the arms to explode in the brain--the nails in the wrists are putting pressure on the median nerves. As he pushes himself upward to avoid this stretching torment, he places the full weight on the nail through his feet. Again he feels the searing agony of the nail tearing through the nerves between the bones of his feet. As the arms fatigue, cramps sweep through his muscles, knotting them in deep relentless, and throbbing pain. With these cramps comes the inability to push himself upward to breathe. Air can be drawn into the lungs but not exhaled. He fights to raise himself in order to get even one small breath. Finally, carbon dioxide builds up in the lungs and in the blood stream, and the cramps partially subside. Spasmodically, he is able to push himself upward to exhale and bring in life-giving oxygen. Hours of limitless pain, cycles of twisting, joint-wrenching cramps, intermittent partial asphyxiation, searing pain as tissue is torn from his lacerated back as he moves up and down against rough timber. Then another agony begins: a deep, crushing pain deep in the chest as the pericardium slowly fills with cerium and begins to compress the heart. It is now almost over--the loss of tissue fluids has reached a critical level -- the compressed heart is struggling to pump heavy, thick, sluggish blood into the tissues -- the tortured lungs are making frantic effort to gasp in small gulps of air. He can feel the chill of death creeping through his tissues... Finally, he can allow his body to die..."

"That's why He didn't talk much, and when He did, it was for others: forgiveness for those doing the crucifixion and for one of my friends there with Him and assistance for His mother.

THE END COMES "Then it got dark, like midnight. Even I could feel an evil chill in the air. Even though I didn't believe in them, I couldn't help thinking that Satan and his demons were everywhere, attacking Him as He hung there in my place. He cried out, really yelled, that God had deserted Him. I found out later that during that time He was literally taking my place in hell. Then, after 3 hours of dark torture, He seemed to have peace. He said His work was done and it looked like He voluntarily died. Then the sun shone again, but an earthquake hit at that very moment. Satan and sin were defeated. The Seed of the Woman had indeed defeated the serpent, Satan himself (Genesis 3:15). What a time! I mean, it really touched me. He took my place, know what I mean?"

22f. RESURRECTION

SPRING 30

Matthew 28:1-20, Mark 16:1-20, Luke 23:56-24:53, John 20:1-12:25

Three days after the worst day the world has ever known happened, the best day ever occurred! Jesus, who had come back to life, showed Himself to his disciples and followers. Sin and death had been forever conquered, and all rejoiced in that glorious truth.

Everyone likes a story with a happy ending. Unfortunately many of life's stories don't have happy endings. This one does. Does it ever! It's been called the greatest story ever told. It certainly has the greatest ending ever told. It's great for us, for our perspective in time, for we can see the end as clearly as the start. Jesus' friends and disciples in Jerusalem on **Sunday, April 5, 30 AD** didn't know the ending.

When Jesus died and was buried, they thought that was the end of all their hopes and dreams. The only ones who remembered Jesus' promise to rise again were the religious rulers, who sealed the tomb and posted a guard of Roman soldiers outside.

Everything was quiet Friday from 3 to sunset (day 1) and from sunset Friday to sunset Saturday (day 2) for that was the Sabbath. Movement and activity were severely limited. After sunset Saturday (day 3) the women could go back to the tomb to finish covering Jesus' body with ointment (to cover the stench from decay). Travel at night was dangerous. Still, the women left before daylight to get to the tomb as soon as possible (Matthew 28:1; Mark 16:1; Luke 24:1; John 1). They weren't even aware of the seal and the guards. I don't know how they expected to move the large stone!

God knew their needs even before they did. During the night He sent an angel to scare away the soldiers (Matthew 28:11-15) and move the stone – not to let Jesus out but to let the women in! As they walked the High Priest was waving the Barley Sheaf in front of the torn veil in celebration of Firstfruits. It was the first harvest, in promise of more to come. This is exactly what Jesus' resurrection was for us.

Anyway, when the women arrived at the tomb they found the stone gone for two angels were inside and one outside. They were startled, scared, confused. "Don't be afraid, He's not here, He's risen just as He said!" was their gentle rebuke and reminder. He wasn't resuscitated, whereas He'd grow old and then die again. He was resurrected – He had a glorified new body. Confused, the women returned to the upper room and told Peter and John that someone stole Jesus' body! Things had gone from bad to worse! John outran Peter for he was younger and arrived first. He stopped outside and looked around. When Peter arrived he rushed right in but was confused and didn't know what to think, either. Then John went inside and saw Jesus' linen covering like a cocoon, just lying there as if the person inside simply evaporated. The head covering was neatly folded and set to the side. While John still didn't remember Jesus' prophecies about resurrection, he did start realizing that the signs were pointing to the fact that Jesus was alive (Matthew 28:2-7; Mark 16:2-8; Luke 24:2-8; John 20:1). Wondering about this, they headed back to the upper room.

Meanwhile **Mary Magdalene**, the unmarried leader of the women, from whom seven demons had been cast out, had started back to the tomb following John and Peter. She traveled much slower and was uncontrollably weeping. She must have taken a different route, for she didn't pass the men as they returned. When she got to the tomb she just wanted to be where Jesus had last been, her way of connecting ever so slightly with the One she loved so much! One of the angels asked her why she was crying. Then Jesus Himself asked her the same thing. She, thinking He was the gardener

who had taken Jesus' body, asked where it was so she could go get it. "Mary" Jesus said and she immediately knew who He was. She fell on her knees and hugged Him, intending to never let Him out of her sight again! Jesus had to tell her that things had changed and she couldn't cling to Him physically as she had done before (Mark 16:9; Luke 24:12; John 20:2-18).

Other women, concerned about Mary Magdalene in her grief, started following her to the tomb. When they arrived they saw the same thing (Matthew 28:8-10; Mark 16:10-11; Luke 24:9-11). They returned to tell the men what had happened, but the men were very skeptical.

Sometime later, **Peter** must have gone out on his own, for Jesus appeared to him personally (1 Corinthians 15:5). It must have been a wonderful time of reconciliation for Him. After all, the last time he had seen Jesus, he had denied he ever knew Him! Nothing is recorded of this meeting, for it was a private time between Jesus and Peter.

Later that same day, though, Jesus spoke to **Cleopas** (Joseph's brother) and **Mary** (cousin of Mary, mother of Jesus). James the Less and Joseph, two followers of Jesus, were their sons. He overtook them on the road to Emmaus and ended up explaining the Old Testament pictures and prophecies about the Messiah dying and rising again (Mark 16:12; Luke 24:13-32). They rushed back to Jerusalem to tell the others they had talked to Jesus, then Jesus miraculously appeared in the locked room to the **10 disciples** and whoever else was there (Mark 16:4; Luke 24:36-49; John 20:19-25). Thomas and Judas were missing.

A week later Jesus again appeared, this time to the **11 disciples**. Thomas had come back (John 20:26-29). Jesus did many miracles to prove He was God (John 20:30-31).

The disciples saw Jesus next in Galilee when **7 disciples** were fishing and Jesus made breakfast for them (John 21:1-24). He put Peter on the spot after he had bragged he was better than the other disciples and wouldn't deny Jesus, having him humble himself before them and take back his bragging. This also assured Peter and the others that Jesus forgave Peter. These both were necessary for him to keep on leading the disciples.

Jesus also appeared to **many others**, but only those who believed in Him. He commissioned them to take His word to everyone else (Matthew 28:16-20; Mark 16:15-18). One time He even appeared to a group of over **500** at one time (1 Corinthians 15:6). His brother **James**, who became a believer after His crucifixion, also saw Him (1 Corinthians 15:7) as did **many others** (John 21:25).

Then everyone ended up back in Jerusalem where Jesus **ascended** from the Mount of Olives (Mark 16:19-20; Luke 24:50-53; Acts 1:3-14). The disciples were joyful and spread the word everywhere. It truly was a story with a happy ending. In fact, the happy ending continues on and on. It's still going on today. Despite what is going on in your life now, it, too, will have a happy ending if you believe in Jesus as your Savior. Because Jesus conquered sin, Satan and death, so will those who accept His free gift of salvation. Eternity in heaven is God's free gift to us. What could possibly be happier than that?

22g. ASCENSION & NOW

SPRING 30 – PRESENT

Mark 16:19-20, Luke 24:44-53, Acts 1:4-11

Forty days after His resurrection, Jesus ascended to heaven in bodily form, right before the eyes of His watching disciples. It was assurance He was in heaven and would be leading His Body, the Church, from His heavenly throne. There He prays for us, defends us and continues His work on earth through those who serve Him.

The disciples all gathered in Jerusalem one last time and walked out of the city to Bethany on the Mount of Olives. They had been there many times and memories, both good and bad, flooded their minds as they walked. They knew this was the spot where God's Shekinah Glory (His literal Presence) ascended into heaven when He left the temple during Ezekiel's time. They also knew that Jesus said He would one day come to earth again, and this would be the very spot where His foot would touch ground! They knew He would soon be leaving, but how would they manage without Him? They needed Him so very much. They couldn't carry on without Him. As had so often happened over the years, Jesus answered their question before they even asked it. It was uncanny how He could read their thoughts – but then He is God, isn't He? He quickly reminded them that the Holy Spirit, Whom He had often talked about (especially at the last supper the night before He was crucified), would indwell them and do what He done for them – and do even more! He told them to wait in Jerusalem for the Spirit to come. Then the Spirit would show them what to do next. With His presence in them they would be able to manage nicely.

As He was saying these things, He started ascending into heaven. He just started going up and instantly the disciples all knew that this was good-bye. This wasn't like the other times when He temporarily left. This was the end of one chapter and the beginning of another.

Again their questions were anticipated and answered – this time by 2 angels who said that Jesus would certainly return, and it would be in exactly this same way as He went. Later, when the Holy Spirit did come and indwell all of them, He helped the disciples remember these things as Jesus had said the Spirit would.

The disciples remembered other words He spoke to them that time they ate together for the last time in the Upper Room. "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going." (John 14:1-4) Knowing He was going to prepare a place for them to come be with Him gave them a lot of comfort. It was further assurance they would spend eternity with Him! Knowing that will come can really help us face whatever the future may have for us!

They lost Jesus' presence at the ascension, but they gained much more than they lost. Instead of living among us, He then started lived in His people by the Holy Spirit. That is true for everyone who puts their faith in Him. Jesus had to go to heaven to assume headship over the Church (Hebrews 10:12, 13; Ephesians 4:8, 10; Psalms 68:1) as well as send the Holy Spirit (John 16:7, 14; Acts 2:33; John 14:16-19). Now that He is in heaven, He is our mediator and defender, He intercedes for us at the right hand of God (Romans 8:34; Hebrews 6:20). So we have Him inside us now and when we die we will go to be with Him forever! That's a good deal no matter how you look at it!

BIBLE OVERVIEW

23. PETER

MAIN EVENTS: Start of the early church

MAIN PEOPLE: Peter, John, Philip, Stephen

BOOKS OF THE BIBLE: Acts 1-12

BIBLE VERSE: *Acts 1:4-5 Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. 5 For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit."*

TIME: AD 30-40

WORLD EVENTS AT THIS TIME:

Kushan Dynasty rules in northern India.

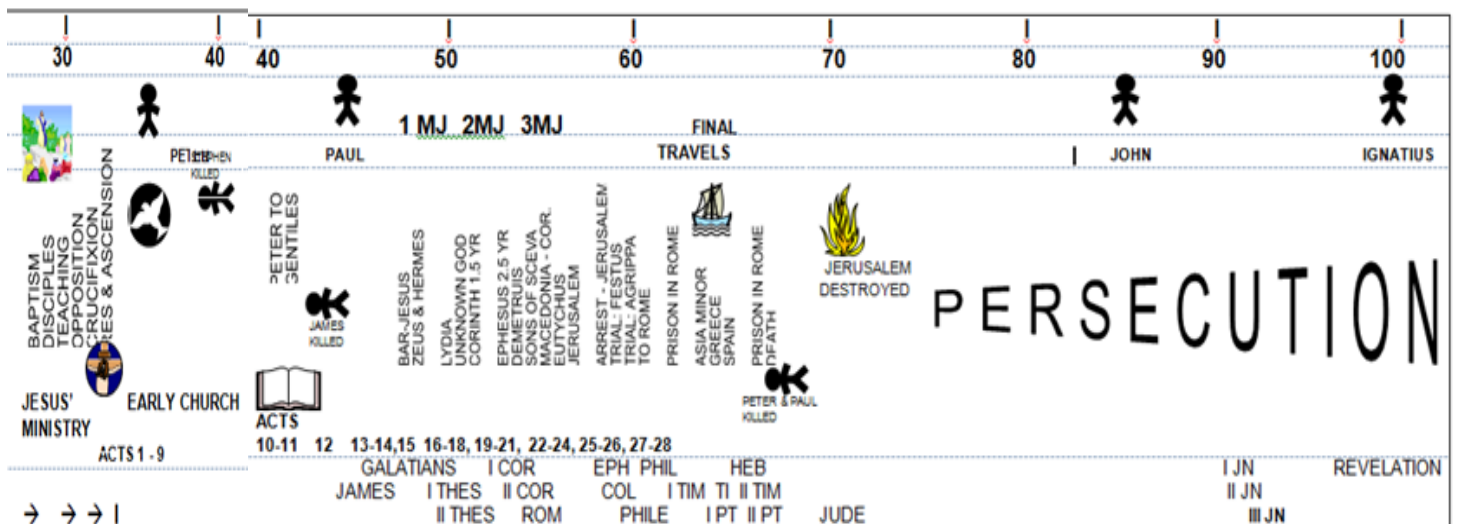
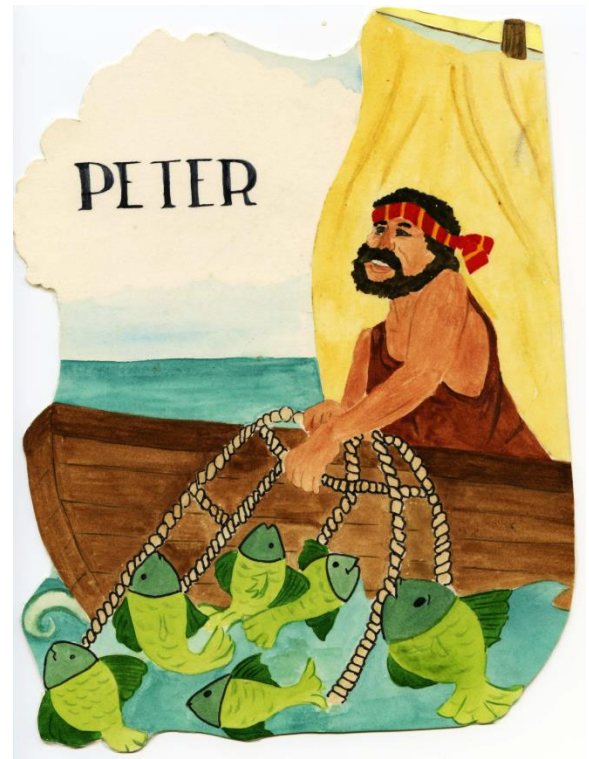
Han Dynasty started in China. It brought Buddhism to China

Roman Emperor Caligula is assassinated

GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION: Palestine (Judea, Samaria)

Peter is the first leader of the early church following Jesus. His denial of Jesus humbled him so he was open to let God work in him instead of doing things in his own strength. John, brother of James, was with him helping in leadership as well. The early church needed someone gentle and encouraging to get started and Peter was the perfect man for the job. Filled with courage and wisdom from the Holy Spirit, he oversaw the work of the growing church in Jerusalem.

During this time James, the brother of John, was killed and James, the half-brother of Jesus, wrote the book of James. He was one of the leaders in the early church as well. Peter also wrote two books later on, but we will include them in this section since the focus is on Peter.



ACTS: EARLY CHURCH

TITLE: After the ACTions of the Holy Spirit

AUTHOR: Luke

DATE of WRITING: About 63 AD

PLACE of WRITING: Various places

TIME COVERED: AD 30 - 60

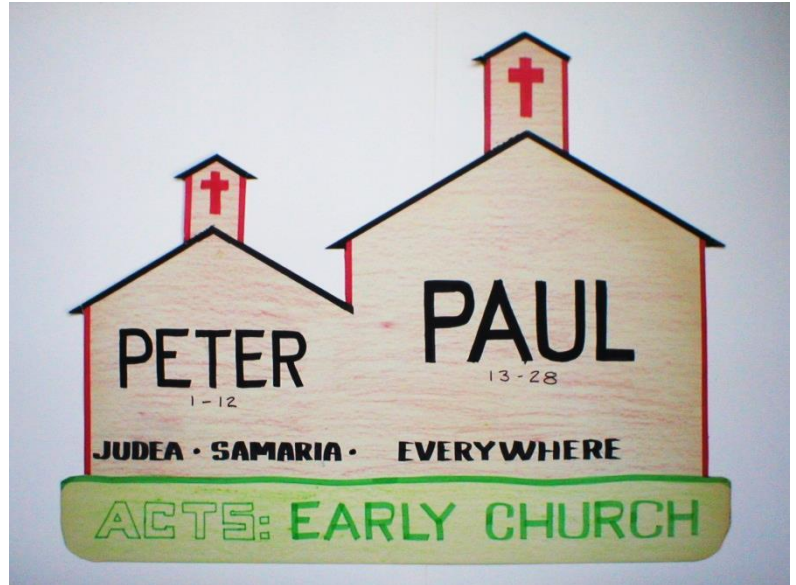
RECIPIENTS: Theophilus, then everyone

KEY VERSE: *"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."* (Acts 1:8)

KEY WORD: "Holy Spirit" (54 times); "name" (33 times), "witness" (12 times)

PURPOSE: The Gospels contain the facts of Jesus' earthly life. Acts continues the story about the start of the early church and sets the background for understanding the epistles.

THEME: To continue the record of the works ('acts') of the risen Lord.



The Old Testament shows our need of a Redeemer and God's promise to send One. The Gospels show how that was fulfilled in Jesus. The book of Acts picks up the story after Jesus' ascension back to heaven (1:1-26). It shows how a handful of believers, filled with the Holy Spirit, started the church and spread God's message to the world. The epistles are letters written to churches and individuals during the time of Acts. Revelation shows the final fulfillment of all the ages.

LUKE THE WRITER Luke wrote both Luke and Acts. While Paul wrote the most books in the New Testament, 13, and John was next with 5, Luke wrote the most pages. His book called Acts was a follow-up to his Gospel of Luke. It is an historical book, a transitional book. It is not a theology for us to apply in every detail, but it is an accurate historical record of the transition from Law to Grace, from Israel to Church, from Jew and Gentile to Bride of Christ. Any transition takes time and goes through various stages. This was true of the early church, too.

The book follows the outline laid down in 1:8: *"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."*

I. "JERUSALEM" (1-7) In the first section of Acts the focus is on Jerusalem. Peter leads the early church. The account is picked up with the ascension of Jesus to heaven (1). The start of the early church in Jerusalem is recorded – Pentecost (2). Events of the young church are then listed: a cripple cured (3), Peter and John arrested and released (4), Ananias and Sapphira killed for deception (5), 7 deacons chosen to help with the work load (6) and the death of Stephen (7).

II. "JUDEA & SAMARIA" (8-12) God used this first wave of persecution against the Christians in Jerusalem to cause them to scatter with the gospel. They should have done this before but didn't, now they must. Philip's preaching in Samaria and to the Ethiopian eunuch, (8), Paul's conversion (9), and Peter's evangelism of the Gentile Cornelius and his household (10-11) comprise the historical elements. The church has gone from Jews in Jerusalem to Jews and Gentiles throughout Palestine.

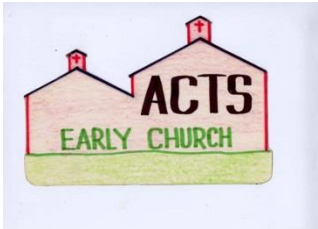
III. “ENDS OF THE EARTH” (13-28) In this third section the focus shifts to Paul and his missionary journeys - 3 of them (13 - 20). Paul was the one to take the gospel to Gentiles and start churches in Asia Minor and even into Europe itself. The book ends with Paul’s arrest and trip to Rome for trial (21-28). After his release he continued to travel, then was martyred in Rome. Now it’s our turn to take the gospel and spread it. Like in a relay race, each one has his turn to do his part. Now is your turn as part of this generation. Don’t drop the baton!

chapter	1-7	8-12	13-28							
area	JERUSALEM	JUDEA - SAMARIA	ENDS OF THE EARTH							
people	JEWS	SAMARITANS	GENTILES							
men	PETER	PHILIP (Peter/Paul)	PAUL							
church	ESTABLISHMENT	EXTENSION	EXPANSION							
time	2 YRS (AD 33-35)	13 YRS (AD 35-48)	14 YRS (AD 48-62)							
	1. <u>A</u> scension of Jesus 2. <u>B</u> aptism of the Holy Spirit 3. <u>C</u> ure of the Cripple 4. <u>D</u> ischarge of Peter and John 5. <u>E</u> mbezzlement by Ananias & Sapphira 6. <u>F</u> ellows, 7 Deacons 7. <u>G</u> rave of Stephen	Missionary Journey Chapters Years 8. Philip Preaching 9. Paul Perceiving 10-11. Peter Pioneering 12. People Praying	1MJ	J e r u s a l e m C o u n c i l 1 5	2MJ	3MJ	Rom e1	Trip	Rom e	...
			13-14		16-18	19-20	21-28			
			1 ½		2 ½	4	5	5	1	...
			Gal		1 Thes 2 Thes	1 Cor 2 Cor Rom	Eph Col Phil e Phil	1 Tim Titus	2 Tim	
Books		James	Mark				Acts	Mt Lk 1 Pt 2 Pt	Heb Jud	Jn 1 Jn 2 Jn 3 Jn Rev

OUTLINE OF ACTS

I. ESTABLISHMENT (Peter to Jews in Jerusalem) AD 33-35 1-7

- A. Ascension of Jesus 1
- B. Baptism of the Holy Spirit 2
- C. Cure of the Cripple 3
- D. Discharge of Peter and John 4
- E. Embezzlement by Ananias and Sapphira 5
- F. Fellows, 7 Deacons 6
- G. Grave of Stephen 7



II. EXTENSION (Philip to Samaritans in Samaria) AD 35-48 8-12

- A. Philip Preaching 8
- B. Paul Perceiving 9
- C. Peter Pioneering 10-11
- D. People Praying 12

III. EXPANSION (Paul to Gentiles Everywhere) AD 48-62 13-28

- A. First Missionary Journey 13-14
- B. Jerusalem Council 15
- C. Second Missionary Journey 16-18
- D. Third Missionary Journey 19-20
- E. Trip to Rome 21-28

JAMES: TRUE FAITH

TITLE: Named for the author

AUTHOR: James, half-brother of Jesus

DATE of WRITING: 45 AD (1st NT book)

PLACE of WRITING: Jerusalem

TIME COVERED: 45 AD

RECIPIENTS: Jewish Believers everywhere

KEY VERSE: *"You foolish man, do you want evidence that faith without deeds is useless?"* 2:20

KEY WORD: "faith" (16 times); :works: (15 times)

PURPOSE: For James to communicate with Jewish believers wherever they were. Since salvation wasn't by works, then what role did good works have in the Christian life?

THEME: True faith produces true works.



Suppose someone in your church fell over and didn't move. How would you know if they were dead? You'd check for signs of life: a pulse and breathing. When there is breathing there is physical life, when there is no breathing there is no life. James says the same thing is true spiritually. How is one to know if a body has spiritual life? If there are good works there is life, if there are no good works there is no spiritual life. It's that simple. "Faith without works is dead" is James' theme.

FAITH AND WORKS James is the first New Testament book written. Four hundred years of silence are broken. Nothing has been inspired since Malachi. Now God's Spirit again moves man to write. Their first problem is the relationship of grace and works. The second book written, Galatians, is about this same theme. Each seeks to avoid an extreme.

Now that Jews could become Christians without having to keep all the Jewish laws, what is the place of holy living? If it doesn't gain salvation, why live a godly life? If salvation is free, what does it matter how we live? Good works don't earn our salvation, but they do show that we already have salvation. They are a sign of faith. If faith is true, it will be manifest in how one lives. Salvation by faith will result in changed priorities, godly motives, humility, love, a desire to witness, and a life like Jesus.

JAMES THE MAN was the brother of Jesus. He became the leader of the early church in Jerusalem, along with John, when John's brother James was killed. This James grew up with Jesus but didn't believe until he saw His half-brother after the resurrection.

I. TRUE FAITH AND TRIALS (1 - 2) James starts by talking about faith in times of trials and testing. It's one thing to say we believe in God and trust Him, it's another to show it when life is painful and unfair. It's interesting that James should start the New Testament by dealing with the problem of pain. The first book in the Old Test., Job, is about the same subject! True faith will triumph over obstacles.

II. TRUE FAITH AND TALK (3) A second way true faith is shown is by our words. Since they show what is in our hearts, when our hearts change so will our talk. When we seek God's wisdom then we will become more like Jesus and our life will show it in all areas. In order for our life to show this,

though, we must seek God's wisdom, not the world's wisdom. God's ways are different than man's ways. God's priorities and values differ from the world's.

III. TRUE FAITH AND TESTING (4) Another evidence of spiritual life is how one faces temptation. All will be tempted, and temptation is not sin, but continual progress over sin in life will be seen when one lives by faith. There doesn't have to be total victory immediately, but there must be progress in that direction. Faith results in one turning from worldliness.

IV. TRUE FAITH AND TRUST (5) Staying on the theme of materialism, true faith sees things as temporary and not the main thing in life. True faith will result in patience, godly speech and prayer.

Now, can you prove that YOU are alive? OK, physically you are breathing, so you have physical life. What about spiritually? Do you have spiritual life? Are there good works in your life, fruit of the Spirit, Christlikeness being reproduced in you? If not, what needs to happen in your life now to bring about the good works God requires?

OUTLINE OF JAMES

Greetings 1:1

I. TRUE FAITH AND TRIALS (Works) 1-2

- A. True Faith is Tested 1:2-18
 - 1. The Purpose of Trials 1:2-12
 - 2. The Pedigree of Trials 1:13-16
 - 3. The Purpose of God 1:17-18
- B. True Faith will Triumph 1:19-2:26
 - 1. By the Word 1:19-27
 - 2. With the Brethren 2:1-13
 - 3. In His Beliefs 2:14-26

II. TRUE FAITH AND TALK (Words) 3

- A. True Faith Controls the Tongue 3:1-12
 - 1. The Tongues Bridling 3:1-4
 - 2. The Tongues Boasting 3:5-12
- B. True Faith Needs True Teaching 3:13-18

III. TRUE FAITH AND TESTING (Worldliness) 4

- A. True Faith Rebukes Temptation 4:1-13
 - 1. Cause of Testing 4:1-2
 - 2. Consequences of Worldliness 4:3-6
 - 3. Submit to God 4:7-10
 - 4. Correct Speech 4:11-13
- B. True Faith Ignores the Temporal 4:14-17

IV. TRUE FAITH AND TRUST (Warning) 5

- A. True Faith Seeks Not Treasure 5:1-6
- B. True Faith Produces Godliness 5:7-20
 - 1. Patience 5:7-11
 - 2. Godly Speech 5:12
 - 3. Prayer 5:13-18
 - 4. Repentance 5:19-20



1 PETER: SUFFERING

TITLE: Named for the author

AUTHOR: Peter

DATE of WRITING: 63 AD

PLACE of WRITING: 'Babylon'
(Rome?)

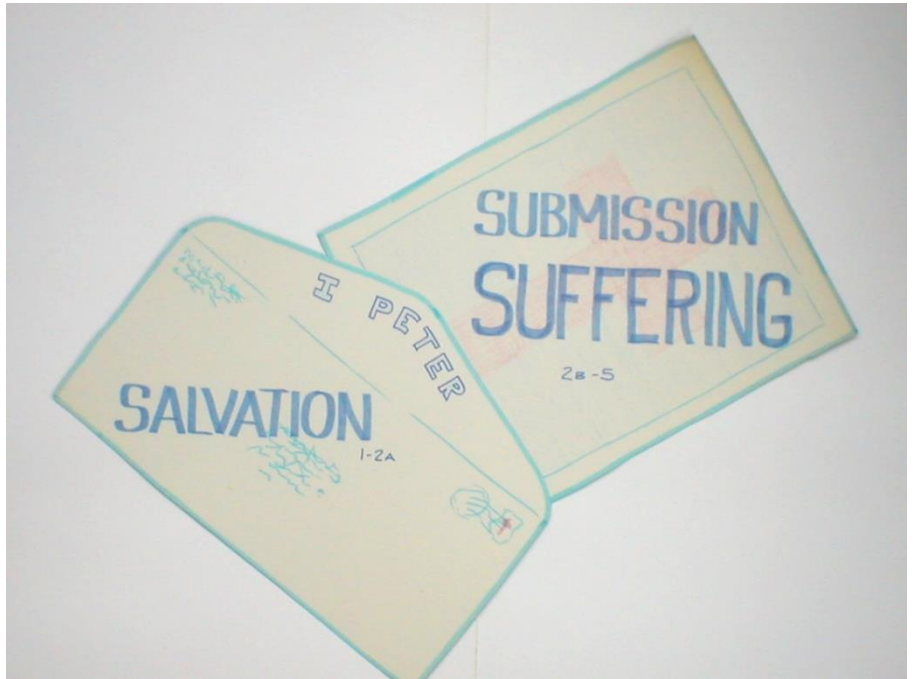
RECIPIENTS: Jewish believers
scattered everywhere

KEY VERSE: *Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you. 13 But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed. 4:12-14*

KEY WORDS: "Suffer" (16 times, implied 6 more); "glory" (16 times); "grace" (10 times)

PURPOSE: Peter wants to console persecuted Jewish believers who are scattered everywhere. He also wants to prepare them for the trials that are still ahead. He does this by showing them the wonderful hope that lies ahead (1:13) and by Christ's example to us (2:21-23).

THEME: Encouragement to persecuted and suffering Christians



When you suffer for doing something wrong, like breaking the speeding limit and getting a ticket, its relatively easy to bear the consequence,s for you know you are getting what you deserve. But when you suffer for doing something right, like getting fired from your job for telling the truth, that is much harder to bear. We have two options in how to respond: like the world (revenge, retaliation, bitterness) or like Jesus.

Many early Christians suffered unjust persecution for their beliefs. Jewish believers had it especially hard for they also were persecuted by Judaism and lost their family, friends and income. Peter writes to all, but especially to Jewish Christians, to help them stay faithful despite this persecution.

I. SALVATION (1:1 – 2:10) First Peter goes back and reminds them of their salvation and all they have in Christ. When you suffer always remember what you get FAR outweighs what you lose!

II. SUBMISSION (2:11 – 3:12) Throughout 2:11 – 3:12 two themes run side by side: submission and suffering. Peter encourages them to submit to their government, wives to husbands, other believers, church leaders and even to unbelievers to have a good testimony to them. Because we have salvation we are to submit no matter what happens.

III. SUFFERING (2:11 – 3:12) Suffering is a natural result of submitting instead of being hard and revengeful. We suffer even when we don't submit, but when we do, we often suffer all the more. Jesus is our example. Peter says that suffering for Christ brings God glory and that we must trust in and depend on God to get us through it. Every Christian must come to grips with the Christian world view of suffering. It is to make us more like Jesus and to bring God glory as we trust Him through it. Is that true of you? It certainly should be!

OUTLINE OF 1 PETER

Opening 1:1

I. SALVATION (Belief) 1:2-2:10

- A. To Elect and Scattered Pilgrims 1:1-2
- B. Inheritance 1:3-5
- C. Joy in Testing 1:6-9
- D. Revelation of Salvation 1:10-12
- E. Live the Christian Life 1:13-16
- F. Trust God 1:17-21
- G. Supremacy of Salvation 1:22-25
- H. Obey the Bible 2:1-3
- I. Christ Our Rock 2:4-8
- J. Priestly Privileges 2:9-10

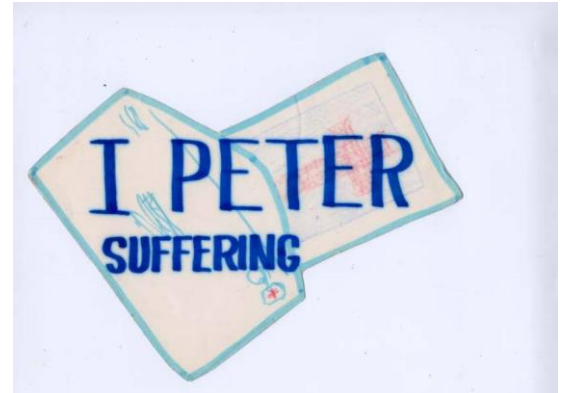
II. SUBMISSION (Behavior) 2:11-3:12

- A. Submit to Governments 2:11-17
- B. Submit to Unjust Suffering 2:18
- C. Wife Submit to Husband 3:1-6
- D. Husband Love Wife 3:7
- E. Harmony with Other Believers 3:8-12
- F. Give Witness to Others 3:15
- G. Christ Our Example 3:22
- H. Live In Awareness of Coming Judgment 4:7
- I. Service and Fellowship in Love 4:8-12
- J. Church Leaders 5:1-4
- K. Submit to Other Believers 5:5
- L. Be Humble to be Blessed 5:6-7

III. SUFFERING (Buffeting) 3:13-5:11

- A. Suffering Unjustly 2:18-20
- B. Jesus Suffered for Us 2:21-25
- C. Suffer for Good, Not Evil 3:13-14, 16-17
- D. Jesus Our Example of Suffering in Death 3:18-22
- E. Jesus Our Example of Suffering in Life 4:1-6
- F. Suffering For Christ Brings Glory 4:12-16
- G. Trust in God 4:17-19
- H. Resist Satan by Faith 5:8
- I. Example of Other Believers 5:9
- J. Suffering Brings God's Blessings 5:10

Closing 5:12



2 PETER:

KEEP THE FAITH

TITLE: Named for the author

AUTHOR: Peter

DATE of WRITING: 64 AD

PLACE of WRITING: Unknown (Rome?)

RECIPIENTS: Jewish believers scattered everywhere

KEY VERSE: *But there were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the sovereign Lord who bought them—bringing swift destruction on themselves.* 2:1

KEY WORDS: “Knowledge” (16 times); “judgment” (4 times)

PURPOSE:

THEME: To strengthen and confirm believers against attack by false teachers.



Peter was the first leader of the early church, Paul the second. The first half of the book of Acts is about Peter, the second about Paul. Sanguine Peter nursed the newborn church along so it could get established and start to grow. Choleric Paul whipped the adolescent church into shape and protected it against false teachers and those who would mislead it. Peter was with Jesus when He lived on earth, Paul was not. Peter was a common fisherman, Paul a well-trained upper class religious leader. Peter ministered mainly to Jews, Paul mainly to Gentiles. Yet despite these differences they served the same Lord at the same time. Both were martyred in Rome during the first great persecution. Peter was crucified upside down, Paul beheaded (an easier death because he was a Roman citizen). Each of them wrote their final book shortly before their deaths. Paul's was 2 Timothy, Peter's was 2 Peter. Both of them knew they would soon die when they wrote and gave encouragement to their followers to stay faithful no matter what happened. Both expressed deep faith and confidence in God. Both warned against apostasy in those 'last days.' The theme of 2 Timothy is 'Faithful Service.' The theme of 2 Peter is 'Keep the Faith.'

Peter wrote 1 & 2 Peter to the same audience – Jewish believers wherever they may be. In 1 Peter he talked about suffering from without the church: persecution, etc. In 2 Peter he talks about suffering from within the church: false teachers and apostates. This 'poison in the pew' is the worst kind. The only defense is to 'keep the faith.' Stay faithful to true Bible doctrine. The best defense is a strong offense. That's true against false teachers, too.

I. CONVICTIONS OF THE FAITH (1:3-21) Peter pleads with his readers to continue to walk with God no matter what. He says this is the only way to be for now, and it will bring rewards for all eternity. He uses his own testimony as well as the authority of Scripture to back this up. When believers are healthy and sound in their beliefs, false teachings won't be able to get a foothold among them.

II. CONFLICT OVER THE FAITH (2:1-22) Peter reminds them that there always have been and always will be false teachers. They counterfeit the truth, making what they teach seem like the truth. They secretly undermine the truth and subtly replace it with error, ever so slightly here and there until it finally takes hold. Peter says they will be judged and condemned, like the angels which fell with Lucifer, like the people in Noah's generation, like those in Sodom and Gomorrah. He exposes their conduct, their claims and their converts. However in all these cases God spares the godly.

III. CONSUMMATION OF THE EARTH (3:1-18) One of the major heresies of the false teachers was the denial of the second coming of Jesus. If Jesus doesn't return it means He lied, He isn't God, unbelievers won't be punished and believers won't be rewarded. Peter goes into detail telling what that Day of the Lord will be like. He reassures his readers that those who are believers will be spared, but others will be judged. He tells them that the only reason it hasn't happened yet is God's mercy, waiting for more to repent. Peter concludes by using this as motivation to stay faithful. Be ready, he says – Jesus will return at any minute! Are you ready? Are you living in light of Jesus' soon return? What if He came today? Are you ready?

OUTLINE OF 2 PETER

Opening 1:1-2

I. CONVICTION OF THE FAITH (Growing in Grace) 1

- A. Charge to Walk With God 1:3-11
 - 1. The Secret of Commencing Well 1:1-4
 - 2. The Secret of Continuing Well 1:5-9
 - 3. The Secret of Completing Well 1:10-11
- B. Challenge by Word of God 1:12-21
 - 1. The Testimony of an Apostle 1:12-18
 - 2. the Authority of Scripture 1:19-21

II. CONFLICT OVER THE FAITH (Growing in Knowledge) 2

- A. Doings of the False Teachers 2:1-3a
- B. Doom of the False Teachers 2:3b-9
 - 1. the Nearness of That Doom 2:3b
 - 2. The Nature of That Doom 2:4-9
- C. Deeds of the False Teachers 2:10-22
 - 1. Their Conduct is Exposed 2:10-14
 - 2. Their Claims Are Exposed 2:15-19
 - 3. Their Converts Are Exposed 2:20-22

III. CONSUMMATION OF THE FAITH (Growing in Expectation) 3

- A. Denial of the Day of the Lord 3:1-9
 - 1. Denial of Supernatural Intervention in the Past 3:1-7
 - 2. Denial of Supernatural Intervention in the Present 3:8-9
- B. Deliverance by the Day of the Lord 3:10-13
 - 1. Deliverance of Nature 3:10
 - 2. Deliverance of Believers 3:11-12
- C. Delay of the Day of the Lord 3:14-15a
 - 1. Delay in Diligence – Believer 3:14
 - 2. Delay of Doom – Unbelievers 3:15a, 9b
- D. Doctrine of the Day of the Lord 3:15b-18
 - 1. Declaration of Paul 3:15b-16a
 - 2. Distortion by Ignorant 3:16b
 - 3. Defense in the Word 3:17
 - 4. Dependence on Christ 3:18



BIBLE OVERVIEW

24 . PAUL

MAIN EVENTS: Growth of the early church

MAIN PEOPLE: Paul and his helpers

BOOKS OF THE BIBLE: Acts 13-26, James, Epistles of Paul

BIBLE VERSE: *2 Tim 4:7-8 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. 8 Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day — and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.*

TIME: AD 34-96

WORLD EVENTS AT THIS TIME:

Thomas arrives in India and starts a church there

Rome finishes the conquest of Wales

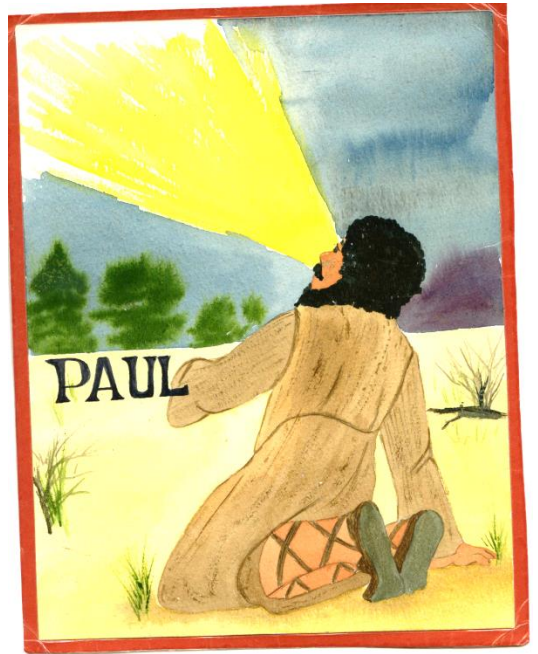
Claudius poisons her husband and makes her son Nero the emperor (later he kills her)

Rome burns

Judea rebels against Rome, Jerusalem destroyed by Titus in 70 AD

Mt Vesuvius explodes, 20,000 killed

GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION: Mediterranean area, Palestine to Spain



As the early church grew and spread, it faced opposition from within and without. A strong person was needed to keep the church along the right path. Peter's gentle personality protected the first coals until they burst into flame and started to spread. Then someone like Paul was needed to control the fire and to get it to grow in the right direction. Paul was just the man, by education and by personality. God used Paul to form the early church, but He also used the church to form Paul and make him more like Jesus.

The time of miracles which started with Jesus continued during this time, but miracles done by the disciples soon faded and stopped. In about 38 AD, Peter was in Lydda ministering when God used him to heal a man named Aeneas (9:32-35). In nearby Joppa he brought a woman named Dorcas back to life (9:36-43). God used these things to get a hearing for the gospel. Note that these miracles were done with a word or touch. Healing was instantaneous and 100% total and forever. All were healed, not just some. Organic diseases were healed and the dead were brought back to life. As time went on, though, the testimony of a changed life lived among people became the proof that the gospel had power. In AD 35 all were healed (Acts 5:16). By 60 AD some were healed. Epaphroditus (Philippians 2:25-27) and Paul's own thorn in the flesh were not healed. In 67 AD few were healed. Trophimus (2 Timothy 4:20) and Timothy's stomach were not healed. Today God uses the testimony of a changed life as proof of His power to touch and changed lives. That's one reason it is so important for us to live a holy life for Jesus in this time.

24a. PAUL BACKGROUND

Paul was one of those people who does everything 100%, whether he was opposing or supporting the church. He never did anything half way.

ANCESTRY Paul was his Latin (Roman) name and Saul his Jewish name, which was used at home. His great-grandfather, from the tribe Benjamin, left Giscala in Galilee to move to Tarsus.

HOME TOWN Tarsus was a prosperous, self-governing city-state of ½ million people. It was a leading center of finances and education. It was a very worldly city for a Jew to grow up in.

PARENTS Paul's father was a wealthy Pharisee. He made tents from the long black wool of local sheep. He was also a burgess of Tarsus and a Roman citizen, which was a proud privilege for anyone. Not much is known about Paul's mother. Perhaps she was sickly, maybe having died when his sister was born. Somehow his sister ended up in Jerusalem, it could have been she was raised by relatives there when her mother died.

EDUCATION Paul was mainly home educated. In the synagogue he was taught Hebrew. By 13 he would have mastered Jewish history, poetry and prophets. He had an excellent mind and marvelous memory.

LANGUAGE Paul, as most everyone in his day, was multilingual. He knew Greek from infancy, it was the main language of the day. Aramaic was the common language Jews used in their homes. Hebrew was the scholarly language boys learned to study the Bible. He also had a good working knowledge of Latin.

CAREER Tent making was a humble occupation, but the Jews believed that all boys should learn a craft and know what it is to work. Tents were common and were used by caravans, nomads and armies. Paul would have spent many hours weaving cloth, pushing the shuttle back and forth. This would have left his mind free to think. His mind probably focused on God and Jewish beliefs.

FAITH While he lived in Tarsus, he didn't feel at home there. Baal worship, immorality, and persecution of those who worshipped God would have turned his heart to the land of his ancestors.

HOME LIFE Paul's home seemed to have been a haven of piety with obedience to God emphasized. Perhaps there was a stern over-emphasis on external conformity.

GROWING UP Paul went through bar mitzva at 13, which is probably when he took his first trip to Jerusalem. He would have gone with his father and other men who were making the trip for various spiritual and/or business reasons. This was not only a special time religiously, but Paul got to see his sister. Sometime later Paul returned for training and study with the famous Rabbi Gamaliel. Jesus had spent time with him when He went to the temple for His Bar Mitzvah several years earlier. Paul's training would have been long and hard. He would have to master not only the Hebrew Scriptures but also Jewish interpretations and commentaries on them: the Mishna, Gemerra and the Targum. He quickly outstripped his contemporaries with his intellectual giftedness. He had a very logical mind, and excellent memory, fertile imagination and analytical reasoning. Because he always expected much of himself and others, he didn't seem to have many close friends. Many others in training were only concerned about external conformity (hypocrisy) and impressing others. Paul was always concerned about doing the right thing for the right reason. Outside he seemed to attain perfection, but inside he struggled with pride, lust and materialism.

RETURN TO TARSUS In his early 30's, Paul returned to Tarsus and became a leader in the synagogue there, teaching the Scriptures while supporting himself by making tents. Perhaps it was in tent making that he met Barnabas.

PHYSICAL APPEARANCE Paul seems to have been athletic, strong and in good physical condition. Tradition says he was under 5 foot, broad shouldered, with closely knit eyebrows and a thick beard. He had a long, crooked nose. He became prematurely gray and then bald. From his conversion experience he had eye troubles. Friends said he was ugly, enemies preferred the term 'repulsive.' His great impact on the world didn't come from his physical appearance.

MARRIAGE While much in Paul's life is unknown, from information in his writings, knowledge of Jewish history, and traditions, we can piece together some things about him. It seems he was married at one time and probably had a son. Perhaps both died in an epidemic which was so common in those days. How that must have broken his heart and depressed him! It may have been that, along with the events of April 14, 33 AD, that caused him to return to Jerusalem. On that day it got dark everywhere at 12 noon. At 3 PM an earthquake shook the world and the light again shone. These things were obviously supernatural. When word from Jerusalem about the strange events surrounding the crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth came, Paul was intrigued. Being a strict Jew, Paul would have wanted to do anything he could to stamp out this new heresy. Perhaps all the hurt and pain, the depression and emptiness came out in anger and hate to those who saw this Jesus as the Messiah. Paul ended up in Jerusalem opposing this new movement with everything he had.

PAUL THE PERSECUTOR Throwing himself into this new venture would help him escape the memories of his lost family as well as give him a new challenge, something to fill the empty void inside. It was a reason to keep going. He lived and worked on the street of the tentmakers in Jerusalem but spent as much time as he could with the religious rulers. He became a leading Pharisee in Jerusalem. Men that he had admired and respected, such as Nicodemus, Joseph of Arimathea, and Stephen, now became his hated enemies. Paul was one of the youngest Sanhedrin members, and thus one of the most influential men in Israel. His whole future was before him.

SPIRITUAL YEARNINGS Yet obviously Paul was empty, searching for real meaning and purpose in life. The harder he worked at being a perfect Jew the more he felt empty. Eventually he stopped striving after that elusive peace that evaded him. He felt crushed under the burden of the law and tradition, but knew of no other way to seek God. All these frustrations and fears he took out on those he saw as the enemies of Judaism. When they claimed to have the answers and the peace he was looking for, he overreacted all the more against them, making it a personal battle against them.

ONLY JESUS SATISFIES Paul had everything the world could offer, everything one could want. He had a well-to-do, important, supportive and loving family. He had the finest education one could have in both Judaism (Hebrew) and secular (Greek) knowledge. He had a successful career as a tentmaker and also as a rabbi. He was in the Sanhedrin (the top 70 men in Israel world-wide with the power to govern in all areas of Jewish life). He was on the rise, for he was still quite young. He was near perfect in his religion, exhibiting outward sinlessness. He seemed to have it all. But he was empty and searching inside. He missed the one thing that alone can satisfy – Jesus. He had heard plenty about Jesus being the answer to his needs. His good friend Stephen told him often. At least they had been good friends from the same synagogue when Paul had been in Jerusalem before to study. Stephen was as mellow as Paul was abrasive. Stephen had the peace, and the answers that Paul sought. Paul couldn't counter Stephen's arguments proving Jesus as the Messiah. Paul grasped the full implication of it all, what it would mean to him personally and to Judaism as a whole if Jesus of Nazareth really had been the promised Messiah. It would take away the one thing Paul built his life on – Jewish law and practices. Finally, since he couldn't silence Stephen's words any other way, he used his authority as a member of the Sanhedrin to have Stephen stoned to death.

FULL-BLOWN PERSECUTION That didn't settle the matter for Paul, though. In fact, things got worse. He attacked Christianity like a mad man. His personality and his zeal for the things of God, the pain from the loss of his wife and son, the emptiness he felt spiritually, and the jealousy he experienced towards Christians who seemed to have everything he sought, all seemed to drive him to destroy and kill. He would burst into homes and synagogues. He imprisoned or killed old men and women as well as children. Others were beaten and crippled. During all this, though, Paul was coming in deeper and deeper contact with the gospel. As he unfiltered their services and heard their defense at their 'trials,' he learned more and more about this Jesus. He heard from those who were eye witnesses of Jesus miracles and who had memorized whole speeches Jesus had given. He saw that the great pain he inflicted on them didn't take away their joy. Nothing did. They had something he lacked and he hated them all the more because of it.

CHRISTIANITY SPREADS Finally the Christians in Jerusalem were driven out of town or so deeply underground that they couldn't be easily found. Jerusalem seemed safe from this new cult, but instead of putting it out, Paul discovered he had just spread it around. Like kicking a fire apart to put it out, only to realize that each spark caught on and started a new fire where it landed, Paul realized that those who left Jerusalem were taking their message elsewhere. Not content to just purify Jerusalem, Paul wanted the belief totally eradicated everywhere. He knew that if he didn't stop it soon it would spread beyond his ability to destroy it. It was already getting a strong footing in Damascus to the north. If that was allowed to take root and grow, there was no telling where this heresy would spread and what damage it would do!

ON TO DAMASCUS Damascus had a large Jewish population, which made it ripe for the spread of this new message. Paul got the official papers he needed, gathered Jewish soldiers (Levites) and other officials, and set out to move his headquarters to Damascus. There he would end, once and for all, this blasphemy. Damascus was a 4-day donkey trip to the north, 150 miles away. They traveled through Galilee, past the Golan Heights, then by Mt Hermon. These brought to mind the adventures of God with His people at these places. Why couldn't Paul find this victory and satisfaction in God that his ancestors seemed to find? He was filled with guilt, emptiness and no peace. He even had doubts about the eventual success of his mission, although he kept shoving them to the back of his mind every time they surfaced. He was grieved by the pain his persecution was causing so many people, but he justified it as necessary to rid Judaism of its enemies. Still, there was something about these Christians ...

CONVERSION! Suddenly a light greater than the sun, the Shekinah Glory itself, shown on Paul and the whole group he was traveling with. They all fell down before it. All heard a sound, but only Paul the words: "Why are you persecuting Me?" They were spoken by a Man about Paul's own age, and instantly Paul knew Who it was, even though he had never seen the Man before. To confirm his suspicions Paul asked, "Who are you?" The answer was what he expected, "I am Jesus." In a second that seemed like an eternity, Paul knew that He loved those whom he was persecuting, and He loved Paul. Immediately Paul broke in surrender. All his old theological arguments melted away. It no longer mattered what his Jewish contemporaries would think or what future in Judaism he was giving up. Stephen was right, Paul was wrong – it was that simple. Accepting that brought what Paul had been seeking his whole life, for instantly sweet peace flooded over his soul. He surrendered his life 100% to the authority of Jesus of Nazareth, the Jewish Messiah, God Himself come to earth as man. Paul had a new Master Whom he served with unswerving dedication the rest of his life.

THE FIRST FEW DAYS OF NEW LIFE Paul was blind for the next 3 days. In fact, his eyesight was affected for the rest of his life. It was a constant reminder of when God broke him, as Jacob's limp reminded him of a similar event in his life. Those three days were spent without food or water, for he had no desire to eat. He was so focused, so overwhelmed with the newness of this it was all he could think about. Proud, independent, self-sufficient Paul had to be led by the hand into Damascus

and cared for by others. He was no conquering hero, but a conquered prodigal. He had plenty of time to think. Stephen was a time bomb that detonated in his mind. He recalled point after point that Stephen made, word for word, and each one hit home like a sharp sword. How could he have been so blind? How could he have missed it? It was so clear, so very clear to him now. Guilt and remorse washed over him in waves, followed by grace and peace. The words of Stephen would stay with him forever. They would become the framework, the basic structure for the words Paul himself would speak. Now Paul would be speaking Stephen's words. It was as if Stephen still lived – certainly his message lived on. Then God sent a man named Ananias to Paul. That was quite an act of faith for Ananias who had been praying Paul wouldn't come, and if he did wouldn't find him! Through Ananias, Paul received his sight and publicly showed his new faith by adult baptism (immersion). Paul spent the next few days in Damascus and at once preached that Jesus was the Messiah in the synagogues. What a time that must have been! Some probably thought, though, that he was using this as a trick to sneak into the church and find out who was a Christian so he could have them killed. Because of this uproar, he wasn't able to stay in Damascus long, though.

BASIC TRAINING Paul spent the next two years in the Arabian desert, from the summer of 35 to the summer of 37 AD. He fled partly to protect his life but also to learn more about his new faith. He learned to depend on God during these years. God taught him spiritual truths and how to apply the information he already knew about the Old Testament to Christianity. He learned more, perhaps meeting with Jesus directly for instruction. He had time to think, reflect, digest and integrate this new world view into his life. He witnessed to and taught others he happened upon, learning to share his new faith. He had time to grow spiritually. Something similar happened to Moses in the same desert. God used this time for Paul to grow spiritually.

APPRENTICESHIP From the summer to the fall of 37 AD, Paul spent back in Damascus for a while, then in Jerusalem and finally in Tarsus. He started to apply his new knowledge in practical situations, gaining experience teaching and preaching about Jesus. Jerusalem was especially hard on Paul, for his conversion account wasn't believed by the Jews, who didn't trust him. Only his old friend Barnabas stood by him and encouraged the others to accept him as a brother in the faith. With the persecution now over and Paul helping spread the word, a period of peace and growth came to the church. It seems Paul went home to Tarsus during this time, too. I wonder how his father and others there responded to this change in Paul's life? He must have really desired to see them put their faith in Jesus, but we don't know if any did or not. It seems he was scourged 5 times by the synagogue leaders, so he wasn't any quicker to quit than they were to believe. Some say this is what undermined his health and that he was bowlegged the rest of his life. A complete break from family and Judaism occurred here and now.

BEGINNING MINISTRY Then Paul went to Syria and Cilicia from the fall of 37 to spring of 43 AD – 5 ½ years. He ministered, but he learned as well. He traveled on his own as God was preparing him for the upcoming missionary journeys he would lead. He preached, planted and strengthened churches, and learned patience through suffering. He may have even experienced death and come back to life during this time (2 Corinthians 12:1-10). There was a complete, total change in his life and heart. Now he had the satisfaction and peace which had eluded him for so long. His life totally turned around. Outwardly he went from the top to the bottom (a leader in Judaism to a disciple of Jesus). Inwardly, though, things went from the bottom (turmoil and guilt) to the top (peace and satisfaction). Eventually Paul ended up in Antioch where a very strong Christian church had begun, and where believers were first called 'Christians.' It was at this place that the story 'Ben Hur' takes place. Paul became a leader in the church there – not one of the top men but a leader in training. God was preparing him for the upcoming missionary outreach to Gentiles which Paul would soon spearhead.

24B. 1ST MISSIONARY

TRIP

The church at Antioch found itself as the center of the new movement of believers in Jesus the Christ. Persecution had moved the central focus from Jerusalem, and it ended up in Antioch, where believers were first called 'Christians'.

God had assembled a leadership cadre from various nations and ethnic backgrounds to lead the fledgling church there. One of the lesser men in that group was a man named Saul. He had been brought there by Barnabas, perhaps the main leader, to help with the teaching (Acts 12:1).

APRIL, 48 God was obviously already working in the hearts of some of them to take the Gospel to those who haven't heard. Perhaps Barnabas and Saul, who were friends from way back, had talked about going to Cyprus with the plan of salvation. Mountain ranges rimmed the north, desert the east, and Jerusalem was to the south. The natural direction to go was to the west.

When the church there was seeking God's guidance and worshipping His greatness, the Spirit showed them that they should send Barnabas and Saul on this journey (v. 2). The church prayed and fasted about this, committed them to the work, and committed themselves to pray for them and support them (v 3).

APRIL - JUNE, 48 Barnabas and Saul went to **Seleucia, Cyprus** and **Salamis** (4-5). Wherever they went they preached, first in the synagogues, then wherever people could gather (5).

JUNE 48 While in **Paphos** they had a run-in with a Jewish sorcerer who worked by Satan's power, named Elymas (6-12). God blinded him in such a way that He was glorified and many came to faith (12). A change in leadership took place here, though. Verse 7 says "Barnabas and Saul" went there, then Saul was used by God to defeat Satan's forces (9-11). From here on we see Saul as the leader. "Paul and his companions" (13).

Saul (Hebrew name) is now called Paul (Roman name) because the focus of his ministry switches to Gentiles here. Naturally they would call him 'Paul.'

Paul's natural leadership skills came to the forefront and he took over leadership. Notice, though, that he waited patiently until the time was right for this transition. He didn't push himself to the front. Notice, too, that Barnabas wasn't competing with him and let the change naturally come. He didn't care if he was first or second, just so God's work was done and Jesus glorified. We certainly need more people like Paul and Barnabas today!

Not everyone then was like them, either. In fact, Mark, who came along to help, returned home shortly after that. Didn't he like Paul taking over leadership from his uncle Barnabas? Was the trip too long and hard for him? Was he homesick? Lovesick? Was he discouraged about the response? Did he not want to see Gentiles saved? Was he concerned about illness? It seems Paul may have contracted malaria at this time and was nursed back to health in Galatia. Did Mark fear this? Whatever the cause, his defection really hurt Paul who wouldn't let him come along on the second missionary journey. Barnabas took him and they went on their own trip. Later, however, Paul and Mark were reunited and again worked together for the cause of Christ.

EARLY TO MID JULY, 48 Paul and Barnabas then sailed to **Perga** in **Pamphylia**, then to **Pisidian Antioch** (13-14). Paul gave a long message about Jesus to those in the synagogue here (14-41). It was typical of his messages to Jews that were living in Gentile cities. First he shows that a Savior is

promised (16-25). He quotes Old Testament scriptures and uses historical examples to show a Savior is needed. Then he talks about a savior being provided (36-37). He explains about Jesus' life, crucifixion and resurrection. He concludes with an invitation to accept Jesus as their Messiah and Lord (38-41). He also warns them about what will happen if they don't turn to Jesus.

MID JULY TO MID SEPT, 48 The response to this message was so positive that the people wanted to hear more, so Paul and Barnabas stayed in **Pisidian Antioch** for two months, teaching and preaching. The Jews rejected their message, but the Gentiles welcomed it (42-52). The word spread throughout the whole geographical area, including Galatia. Paul did some traveling there during this time, forming a close report with the people there. His malaria got so bad they had to nurse him back to health (Galatians 4:13-15). These people were rough, independent and in many ways uncivilized. After Paul returned to Antioch at the end of this missionary journey, he wrote back to the people. It was his first letter that is recorded in the Bible, the book of Galatians. Eventually those who rejected the message had Paul and Barnabas sent out of town, so they went to **Iconium**.

OCTOBER 48 TO END OF FEB., 49 AD At **Iconium** Paul and Barnabas went to the synagogue first, as was their pattern (Acts 14:1-5). Some Jews believed, but many rejected and stirred up the Gentiles against them. To avoid physical harm they fled.

MARCH TO MID JUNE 49 Paul and Barnabas went to the **Lycoanian** cities of **Lystra** and **Derbe**. These were small, rural villages. The whole area was rough and primitive. Timothy, Lois and Eunice lived in Lystra. God used Paul and Barnabas to heal a crippled man in Lystra (8). The people believed that they were gods and wanted to offer sacrifices to them (9-13). Local tradition said that in the past Zeus and Hermes, the gods, came to Lystra, but were rejected, so they destroyed the town. Folklore said they would one day return. Paul and Barnabas looked like them, and the miraculous sign seemed to prove it to the people.

They denied being deity, though (14-18), and tried to point the people to Jesus. Still, the local people wanted to deify them. Then some Jews who had traveled 100 miles just to oppose Paul, Barnabas and the Gospel arrived and turned the crowd against Paul and Barnabas. They stoned Paul and drug him outside the city, leaving him for dead (20). It seems he really did die and God brought him back to life. Paul tells about this time in 2 Corinthians 12:1-5. What an encouraging, motivating experience that must have been for Paul!

END OF JUNE 49 The next day, Paul and Barnabas went to **Derbe**. The response there was great and positive (21). They could have taken a short cut home through the Cilician Gates to Paul's home town of Tarsus, but retraced their steps so they could revisit, encourage and strengthen the churches they had just started (22-23).

JULY - SEPTEMBER 49 They traveled through Lystra, Iconium and Antioch on the way (21), then Pisidia, Pamphylia, Perga and Attalia. They were glad to see that the churches they started were growing.

SEPT 49 - APRIL 50 Back in Antioch they told of how God had worked in Jews and Gentiles alike. They spent several months there. Paul wrote the Letter to the Galatians during this time. The time had been successfully spent, for many Gentiles had responded to the Gospel. Soon God would put it on Paul's heart to revisit those churches and travel even further until the Word spread to us now.

24c. JERUSALEM COUNCIL

We all know the words “salvation by grace,” but still we often add ‘conditions’ to salvation or the Christian life. When I was a new believer, I was disciplined by some fine Christians who unfortunately exposed me to some very subtle but strong legalism. What I came away believing was that if I did (or didn’t do) certain things I would be more spiritual. I could instantly be among the older, more mature believers if I talked and acted certain ways. I really didn’t have many decisions to make, for it seemed everything had already been decided about Christian behavior. Dress, hair length and styles, activities, entertainment, use of time and money – all was clearly set down. I had only to follow.

God led me out of that, and I don’t want to be judgmental or critical. I do appreciate the grace I now have in Jesus. It’s funny, but my Christian life even now is outwardly very similar to the way it was then. It’s my inner motive for what I do that has drastically changed. I am acutely aware of the danger in doing things to impress others, to impress God or to impress myself. All I do must be done out of love and a response of faithfulness to Jesus. That must be my first and only motive for all I do. For me, any other motive is legalism. It includes me trying to earn or deserve something from God. There is absolutely NOTHING I can do to impress God. All I have or ever will have is by His grace. The only thing that ever impressed Him was the work of Jesus on the cross. Satan, in his pride, would feed into ours and have us think we can do something for God but we can’t. Satan will do whatever he can to keep the focus off of God’s grace and on man’s works instead.

I thank God for His amazing grace. I want to always live in it. I want to make sure I don’t in any way influence others to jump through hoops of legalism and externals. I can’t imagine what it would be like if we did have to do (or not do) certain things for salvation or the Christian life. God could have made it that way, but praise His name He didn’t.

FALL, AD 49 -- CHURCH PROBLEM All this is nothing new. Early Christians were Jews who grew up keeping the law, then accepting Jesus as Savior. Then, as the kingdom spread, many Gentiles started believing in Jesus, accepting His free gift of salvation. Some early church leaders, though, taught these Gentiles that they also had to keep the Jewish law (Acts 15:1). This means circumcision, dietary regulations, sacrifices and offerings, dress codes, festivals, tithes, Sabbath observances and every area of life. Paul and Barnabas greatly opposed this (v. 2a) for they had seen how God worked in Gentiles on their first missionary journey. The whole issue of if a Christian had to observe the Jewish law or not became such a big thing that they realized they would have to go to Jerusalem and consult the apostles and leaders there (2a). Going to those in spiritual authority over you is always important. Let those who are more experienced and mature spiritually decide.

MEETING #1 When they arrived in Jerusalem (v. 3) they were warmly welcomed (v. 4a). They told the apostles everything that happened on their missionary journey (v. 4b). This was a private meeting between Paul, Barnabas and the leaders. It seems Titus was with them as well (Galatians 2:1-2). He was a Gentile who came to salvation in Jesus without the law.

MEETING #2 Next was held a general, open meeting to discuss the problem. Those who said it was necessary to keep the law along with salvation spoke first (v. 5; Galatians 2:3-5). Paul and Barnabas told of their experiences as well.

MEETING #3 Then the apostles and leaders met alone to discuss and consider the question (v. 6). Peter shared his testimony about Cornelius and what God had showed him (v. 7-11). Barnabas and Paul shared what God had done through them as well (v. 12).

Then it was James' turn to speak. He was head of the early church, so the final decision fell to him. He based his decision on the Bible, not personal experience (v. 15-18). Too often today we are influenced by the person who has had this or that experience, when our final determining authority is the Word of God. James went back to the Word and based his decision on it.

He quoted Amos 9:11-12, stating that Gentiles can also find God. They don't have to become Jews to do so. James uses this for his decision. Note they didn't have everyone vote. Democracy is fine, but God's system of government has always been a godly sovereign, not rule by the majority of the people.

Anyway, James' decision was that Gentiles didn't have to keep the law for salvation or Christian living (v. 19). What a difference that makes for us today! If the decision would have been different, we'd be living, eating, dressing, talking and acting like the Pharisees in Jesus' day! Can you imagine witnessing for that!

Still, they warned the Gentiles to now use their new freedom to set a stumbling block before their Jewish brethren. The Jews couldn't put a stumbling block (the law) before them, and they can't do that to their Jewish brethren. They had to be considerate (v. 20-21). They could not take advantage of their freedom, nor do anything that would offend the conscience of the Jews. We, too, must be considerate of other believer's consciences and not exert our freedom in a way that might cause them to stumble in their Christian life.

MEETING #4 The word was spread, and men were chosen to take it to other churches (v. 22). Especially important was Antioch, for that was becoming the new center of Christianity and rapidly replacing Jerusalem.

To make sure everyone knew who was behind this decision, and people didn't just say Paul was making this up, they wrote a letter to send along (v. 23-29).

WINTER, AD 49-50 Antioch was glad for the decision, and the church went through a new growth spurt (v. 30-35). It seems after every challenge they successfully faced, there was a growth spurt. That's how God works.

It was during this time that Paul had to publicly reprimand Peter for compromising with those who were legalistic in their view (Galatians 2:11-14).

APRIL, AD 50 With this issue settled, Paul wanted to go back and visit the churches he had started, to encourage and strengthen them (v. 36). They sharply disagreed about taking Mark, so ended up splitting up (v. 37-40). Barnabas took Mark, but Paul took Silas instead. The story in Acts follows Paul and Silas through Syria and Cilicia (v. 41).

While this 'sharp disagreement' obviously hurt these two friends, it just shows how human God's servants are. Later Paul was reconciled with Mark and did recognize his contribution to the ministry, but Mark had done a lot of growing by then, too. At least God was glorified and all things did work for the good, because now there were two missionary teams going out.

Be careful in your life, to make sure you don't put faith or pride in anything you do. All we have and are is by grace alone. Don't ever judge others by outer appearances. We can evaluate fruit, but never judge motives. Show others as much grace as you want God to show you!

GALATIANS: CHRISTIAN LIBERTY

TITLE: Named for the recipients

AUTHOR: Paul

DATE of WRITING: 49 AD

PLACE of WRITING: Antioch

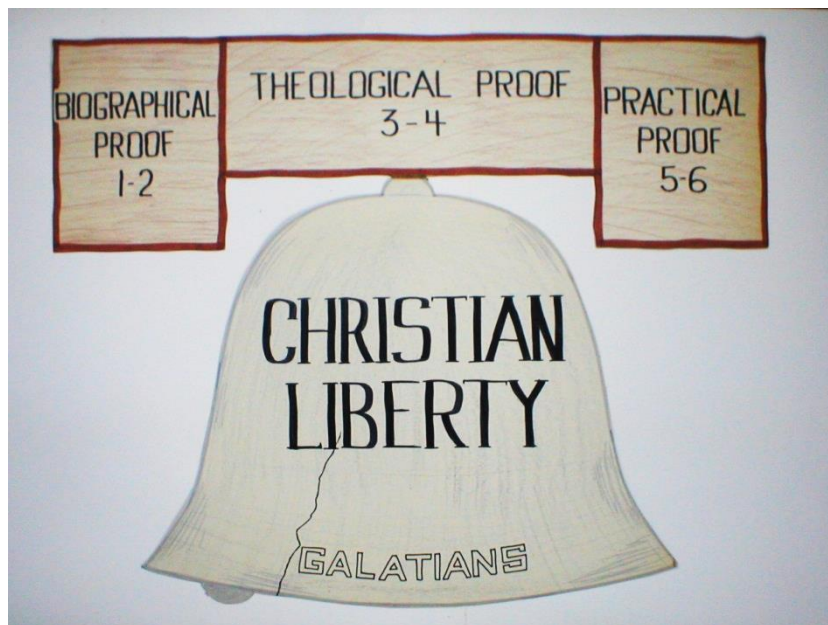
RECIPIENTS: Churches in Galatia (Asia Minor)

KEY VERSE: *"It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery."* 5:1

KEY WORDS: "Christ" (43 times); "law" (32); "Flesh" (18); "Faith" (22); "spirit" (15)

PURPOSE: To show the readers that the purpose of the law is to lead us to Christ (3:24) and the purpose of Christ is to free us (5:1), bring Christian liberty.

THEME: To show that the believer is free from the law and legalism.



When I was a new Christian I was invited to join the Mormon church as well as Herbert W. Armstrong's Radio Church of God. As I checked into these groups I found they each had at their core a set of practices that one must adhere to. The big things, even the little things in life, were regulated and specific responses were set for most any event. That didn't seem too unusual, though, because the Baptist church I was a member of was pretty much the same way. New members took their cue from the older ones about how to dress, act, talk and think in most any situation. If one didn't know, they had only to ask and the answer was given. Everything was black and white. At first that was nice because I didn't have to make decisions on my own. They were all made. As a new Christian, I could act and look just like those who had been Christians their whole lives. Instant spirituality was available to any who would just follow the 'rules.' However, before long, I realized that my Christian life was being lived by and for other Christians, not Christ. Fear of what others would think motivated all I did. It was empty. Oh, it appealed to my pride, but where was the 'personal relationship' I so longed for?

Then in Bible College, the first book of the Bible I studied in depth was the book of Galatians – just what I needed! Paul was writing to people who were facing the same dilemma I was. He had just completed his First Missionary Journey, going through Asia Minor into the area of Galatia in the middle of it. Several churches were started there, but after Paul left, Jewish Christians who said one had to keep all the Jewish law in order to have salvation came in and misled the people. So when Paul got back to Antioch, he wrote them to straighten them, and me, out about the relationship of law and grace. What he did was give three proofs why we are free from any form of law. These are as follows:

I. BIOGRAPHICAL PROOF (1:10-2:21) - An Independent Revelation First Paul talks in detail about himself, something he does in no other book. However, in no other book is he writing to people who distrust him and his motives. He must prove that God is speaking through him or no one will listen to anything he has to say. Thus he gives his credentials first.

Paul points out that he got his message directly from Jesus, not Jewish rabbis, for they were opposed to him (1:10-14), nor from the apostles for they kept away from him (1:15-17). Neither did

he get his message from the churches in Judea for he didn't learn from them (1:18-24) nor from anyone else (2:1-18). He himself had kept the law better than any of them ever could, yet he knew from experience that that was empty (2:19-21).

II. THEOLOGICAL PROOF (3:1 - 4:31) - Failure of Legalism Having shown that his readers could trust the source of the message (Paul), he now focuses on the message itself. He reminds them that if grace is how they were saved, that should be how they live the Christian life (3:1-5). Any system that focus on impressing or pleasing man or God fails because the focus is on outer actions, not inner attitude. Paul even uses Abraham as an example of salvation and Christian living by faith, before God gave him any laws (3:6-22). Actually the law makes us slaves, not free (4:8-31).

III. PRACTICAL PROOF (5:1 - 6:10) - THE Effect of Liberty After showing that trying to keep the law is an inferior way to live, Paul shows the superior way of following Jesus. Legalism is under God's judgment, for it seeks to add to the finished work of Jesus. It elevates our work of the flesh and feeds our pride. God wants us to obey and serve Him out of love. When we obey and serve out of love the results will be evident in our lives: the fruit of the Holy Spirit, humility and meekness, faithfulness, perseverance, to name a few (5:25-6:10).

A woman worked for a man whose wife had died. Every day he gave her a list of chores and jobs to do and she did them because he paid her at the end of the week. Eventually they got to love each other and married. She found she was doing the very things he had paid her to do and more, but there was no list and no pay. She now did them out of love. Her motive had changed. What is your motive in serving God? If it isn't love, it isn't right.

OUTLINE OF GALATIANS

Opening 1:1-9

I. BIBLICAL PROOF OF CHRISTIAN LIBERTY (An Independent Revelation) 1-2

- A. Independent of Human Teaching 1:10-17
- B. Independent of Judean Churches 1:18-24
- C. Independent of Judaizing Brethren 2:1-10
- D. Independent of Apostolic Pressure 2:11-18
- E. Independent of Selfish Interest 2:19-21

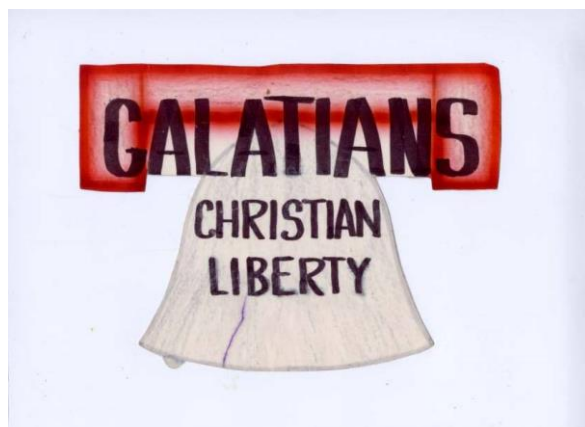
II. THEOLOGICAL PROOF OF CHRISTIAN LIBERTY (The Failure of Legalism) 3-4

- A. Shown by Personal Experience 3:1-5
- B. Shown by Old Testament Teaching 3:6-14
- C. Shown by Priority of Promise 3:15-22
- D. Shown by Superiority of Mature Faith 3:23-4:7
- E. Shown by Danger of Reaction 4:8-11
- F. Shown by Contrasting Motives 4:12-20
- G. Shown by Example of Hagar 4:21-31

III. PRACTICAL PROOF OF CHRISTIAN LIBERTY (The Effect of Liberty) 5-6

- A. Consequences of Legalism 5:1-12
- B. Definition of Freedom 5:13-15
- C. Individual Practice 5:16-24
- D. Social Practice 5:25-6:10

Closing 6:11-18



24d. 2nd MISSIONARY

TRIP

Paul wasn't good at staying put. He always wanted to move ahead for God: spreading the good news, starting churches and encouraging believers. Six months after the return from the first missionary journey he was on the road again. During those 6 months he went to the Jerusalem council (Acts 15) and wrote to the Galatians. Now he wants to visit them again.

MAY 50 Paul headed overland into Asia Minor this time, stopping at Derbe and Lystra (Acts 16:1) where Timothy joined them.

LATE MAY TO MID JUNE 50 Paul, Silas and Timothy then went to Iconium (v. 2-3) and ministered there. He had Timothy, who was half Jew, circumcised so he wouldn't be a stumbling block to sincere, seeking Jews who might think they were flaunting their freedom from the law. They spent the next 6 weeks visiting churches in the area and telling them about the decision of the Jerusalem Council (v. 4). This brought another growth spurt in the church (v. 5).

JULY 50 They traveled through Phrygia and Galatia (v. 6), stopping in places like Colossae, Laodicea, Hierapolis, Philadelphia, Sardis, Thyatira, Pergamum and Smyrna. They wanted to push on into northern Asia Minor but God's Spirit showed them that that wasn't His will (v. 6b-7). Instead they went to Troas (v. 8). There Paul had his well-known vision of a man calling them over to Macedonia (v. 9-10) so that is where they went.

AUGUST 50 The first place they stopped in Macedonia was Philippi (v. 11-12). When they went to the place where the Jews gathered they found only women (v. 13). Here was the well-trained and highly motivated Paul, clearly directed by God to enter the continent of Europe to spread the gospel there (although others had brought the gospel to Europe with them already). What kind of a reception does he get for all his labor and work? A handful of women are all that show up! We tend to notice such things too clearly. Paul didn't seem disappointed at all. He met the leader, Lydia, who listened to Paul's message, accepted Jesus and was baptized along with her whole household (v. 14). The men even stayed at her home (v. 15).

Others joined the new church there: a slave girl who was delivered from demons by Paul (v. 16-24) and the jailer who was life was spared when Paul and the others didn't escape prison after an earthquake (v. 25-34). Others became part of the church such as Clement, Euodia, Sytche and more. Paul left soon after the earthquake event, though (v. 35-40). It was time to take the gospel and plant it in other locations.

NOVEMBER 50 In Thessalonica (Acts 17:1) Paul, as was his custom, went into the synagogue first (v. 2-3). Some Jews, many Gentiles who had been won to Judaism and a number of prominent women believed and followed Paul (v. 4). The Jewish leaders were so jealous they started a riot to have Paul and the others with him harmed (v. 5-9).

FEBRUARY 51 Paul, Silas and Timothy slipped away at night to protect themselves (v. 10). They planned on returning as soon as things settled down but other events prevented that, so Paul later sent Timothy back to help them (2 Thessalonians 3:2). Meanwhile they went to Berea, where there

was a much more mature, open response to the gospel among the Jews. Many believed and became fine students of the Word (Acts 17:11-12). Soon, however, Jews came from Thessalonica and stirred people up against Paul, so he again had to flee for his life while Silas and Timothy stayed to continue the work in Berea ((v. 13-15).

LATE FEBRUARY 51 Meanwhile Paul went to Athens where their idolatry so distressed him that he spoke to them about Jesus being their 'unknown god' (v. 16-34). The response was small there, as often is the case in urban areas of higher education and 'enlightenment.'

MARCH 51 Being very disappointed with the attitude of the Athenians, Paul moved on to Corinth (Acts 18:1). There he stayed and worked with fellow tent-makers Aquilla and Priscilla (v. 2-3). Every Sabbath he preached in the synagogue (v. 4). These were hard days for Paul. He was lonely, drained physically and emotionally, financially broke, sorrowful about so many rejecting salvation and upset about the immorality and idolatry in Athens and Corinth. Then Silas and Timothy rejoined him (v. 5) and the ministry improved. A new church began (v. 6-7) and many came to salvation.

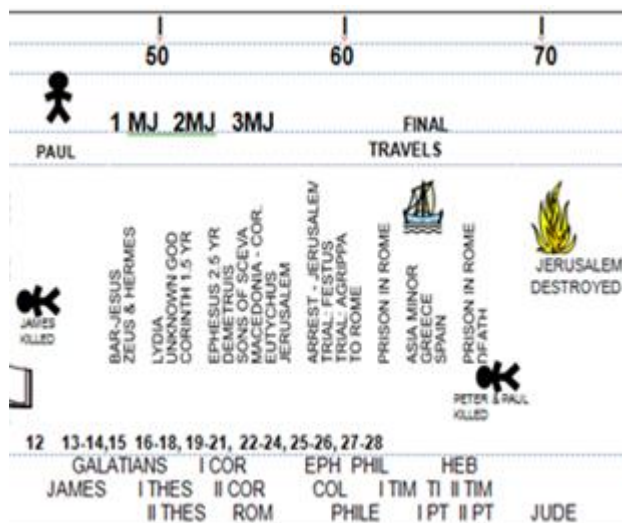
Then God appeared to Paul in a night vision and encouraged him to keep on preaching in Corinth despite how bad things were (v. 9-10). Paul stayed there for 1 ½ years (v. 11). During that time he planted churches in Corinth, Cenchrea (Romans 16:21) and Achaia (2 Corinthians 1:1). He wrote letters to Thessalonica. The first was in the early summer of 51. Timothy took the letter to them and stayed awhile. Paul wrote to them again later the same summer.

When the year and half were almost up, Paul was brought to court but the judge kicked the case out (v. 12-17). Soon after that he left to head back home (v. 18).

SEPTEMBER TO NOV 52 Paul had his hair cut off at Cenchrea because of a vow he had taken (v. 18b), then went to Ephesus (v. 19) where he left Priscilla and Aquilla to work. They wanted Paul to stay, and he wanted to spend more time in Ephesus, but told them he would return (v. 20-21).

Then he sailed to Caserea and greeted the church, then returned to Antioch (v. 22), where he stayed until the spring of 53.

SPRING TO SUMMER 53 Paul just couldn't sit still! He continued to travel throughout Galatia and Phrygia (v. 23). Meanwhile Apollos, a gifted speaker of John the Baptizer's message, came to Ephesus. Aquilla and Priscilla updated him on the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus (v. 24-26). He became an outstanding evangelist for the early church (v. 27-28).



1 THESSALONIANS: JESUS IS COMING AGAIN

TITLE: Named for the recipients

AUTHOR: Paul

DATE of WRITING: 51 AD

PLACE of WRITING: Corinth

RECIPIENTS: Church at Thessalonica

KEY VERSE: *for they themselves report what kind of reception you gave us. They tell how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead-Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath. (1:9-10)*

KEY WORDS: "comfort" (6 times); "coming (of the Lord)" (4)

PURPOSE: To commend the Thessalonian believers for their faith and to defend himself against criticism. He also instructs them in areas of difficulty: sexual purity, love & especially the Second Coming of Christ.

THEME: The Second Coming of Christ



When Gideon's 10,000 potential soldiers went to drink, only 300 of them were chosen. These were the ones who drank looking up. For us to defeat our enemies today we must be found 'looking up' as well. That's Paul's message to the Thessalonians.

Paul started a church in Thessalonica on his Second Missionary Journey. It was only the second church established on European soil. It had much opportunity but faced a lot of persecution. Paul wrote to them from Corinth to encourage them in their times of suffering.

LOOK AWAY FROM: Trials (chapter 1) Paul starts off praying for them, encouraging them in faithfulness. He commends them for their fruit: receiving the gospel and passing it on. Their godly reputation had been spreading quickly. Paul wants them to look to God and what He has done for them, not to focus on their suffering and persecution.

LOOK AWAY FROM: Temporal (chapter 2) Then Paul defends himself against attacks and criticism some in Thessalonica have been spreading about him. He assures them that both his motives and methods were pure. His focus was on serving God, not on gaining money or a reputation for himself. He encouraged them, too, to not focus on this temporary world during the hard times they were facing.

LOOK AWAY FROM: Testing (chapter 3) Paul tells them he sent Timothy to help them faithfully endure their trials, and Timothy's good report about them really encouraged Paul as well. He concludes this section praying that he will be able to visit them in person very soon. After telling them what to look away from, he then tells them what to look towards:

LOOK UP TO: Trumpet (chapter 4) Paul challenges them to be pure in their lives, for some of them continued in their old pagan immorality. He emphasized that they are to love each other. He corrected those who said they didn't have to work because Jesus was coming back soon. Then he gave the most complete description on the Rapture in the Bible (4:13-18). The trumpet will one day

sound and those who have accepted Jesus as Savior will have their bodies instantly changed and taken to heaven. Those who have already died have temporary bodies in heaven and their earthly bodies will be raised at that time and taken to heaven, too. Thus we don't have to fear death nor grieve the loss of believers who die before us. Those killed in persecution just get to heaven first! Jesus could return any day, ending their earthly suffering. Thus they are to live looking up, awaiting the trumpet.

LOOK UP TO: Triumph (chapter 5) Immediately following the rapture will be the Tribulation. The persecution they were enduring was not the Tribulation. Believers are not under God's judgment ('wrath' v. 9; Romans 8:1). Until this time, they must live victorious Christian lives, growing and ministering to others. Paul concluded by praying for their total being. He prayed they would live a holy Christian life until Jesus returned for them. By knowing and remembering that Jesus was coming back for them, they could keep the sufferings of this life in proper perspective. He assured them that God would preserve them. Then he ended with his typical request for prayer on his behalf, a greeting, a charge and a benediction.

One day a business came to a school and promised the children that one day he would return and bring a special present for all who had their desks clean when he arrived. A certain girl in the class room really wanted to receive this prize so she committed herself to clean her desk every Monday morning. Knowing that it wouldn't stay clean long, for the girl wasn't normally a very neat person, the teacher asked her what happened if the man came on Friday. She decided to clean her desk Monday and Friday. Then when asked about if he would come on Wednesday, she decided she needed to clean her desk every morning. But what if he came at the end of the day? Finally she realized that what she needed to do was keep her desk clean at ALL times. Paul wants us, like the Thessalonians, to always be aware of and ready for Jesus' soon return. Don't focus on your problems or difficulties, but on His return!

OUTLINE OF 1 THESSALONIANS

Opening 1:1

I. LOOK AWAY FROM 1-3

- A. Trials 1
 - 1. Prayer of Thanksgiving 1:2-4
 - 2. Proofs of Election 1:5-10
- B. Temporal 2
 - 1. Paul 2:1-12
 - 2. Thessalonians 2:13-20
- C. Testing 3
 - 1. Concern of Paul 3:1-5
 - 2. Comfort of Timothy 3:6-10
 - 3. Concluding Prayer 3:11-13

II. LOOK UP TO 4-5

- A. Trumpet 4
 - 1. Conduct of the Believer 4:1-12
 - 2. Consolation of the Believer 4:13-18
- B. Triumph 5
 - 1. Day of the Lord 5:1-11
 - 2. Duties of the People 5:12-22
 - 3. Concluding Prayer 5:23-24

Close 5:23-28



triumph

2 THESSALONIANS: JESUS IS COMING SOON

TITLE: Named for the recipients

AUTHOR: Paul

DATE of WRITING: 51 AD, shortly after 1 Thessalonians

PLACE of WRITING: Corinth

RECIPIENTS: Church at Thessalonica

KEY VERSE: *This will happen when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels. He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of his power on the day he comes to be glorified in his holy people and to be marveled at among all those who have believed. This includes you, because you believed our testimony to you. (1:7b-10)*

KEY WORDS: "Day of the Lord"

PURPOSE:



<u>1 THESSALONIANS</u>	<u>2 THESSALONIANS</u>
Teaches the WHAT of the Rapture	Teaches the WHEN of the Rapture
Teach something NEW - Rapture	correct WRONG - time of Rapture
Mainly about the church	Mainly about Satan, Antichrist, world

THEME: to tell the Thessalonian believers Christ would return BEFORE the Tribulation, and to explain to them how they were to live until Christ came.

The truth of the Rapture is one of the most glorious of all Christian doctrines. It is wonderfully encouraging and uplifting. Knowing Jesus will return soon to take those who believe in Him to heaven to be with Him forever is comforting and motivating. Yet, despite its simple truth, much confusion and misunderstanding has arisen around this simple doctrine. It's easy to understand that Satan would do what he can to confuse and cloud this beautiful truth. He did the same thing in Paul's day, too.

Not long after Paul wrote to the church at Thessalonica, telling them about Jesus' coming back for them, wrong ideas started to develop which took away from the comfort of this truth. For instance, some false teachers in Thessalonica said the persecution they were then facing was the Tribulation which had already started. Yet Paul said the Rapture came before the tribulation. What was true? Who was right?

I. THE ANXIETY ABOUT THE RETURN OF CHRIST (chapter 1) Again Paul starts with thanksgiving for their faithfulness in times of suffering. He assured them that God was not unfair in permitting them to experience the trials they were going through. He reminded them about what the future held if they didn't die before Christ returned. If they had accepted Jesus as Savior they would be taken to

heaven immediately when Jesus returned. If they hadn't accepted Him they would live on into the Tribulation and find themselves under God's judgment.

Paul then prayed God would continue to work out His will in their submissive lives, and they would glorify Him. He assured them they were doing right and weren't under God's judgment, for the Tribulation had not started yet. Then he goes on to prove that they couldn't already be in the Tribulation.

II. THE ANSWER ABOUT THE REVELATION OF ANTICHRIST (chapter 2) No, Paul says, you haven't missed the Rapture and entered into God's judgment. His proof is that the Antichrist has not yet been revealed, and when the Tribulation really begins the Antichrist will be right there. In fact, he can't be revealed until after the Rapture, when the Church and the Holy Spirit are gone. The Antichrist couldn't possibly be revealed yet, for the Rapture must come first. The fact that they were still here proved the Rapture hadn't come.

Paul then builds on the many details given by Daniel and Ezekiel about the Antichrist and his actions on earth. Paul then gives thanks for their spiritual standing as seen in contrast to the deceived world around them. He encouraged them to stand fast in what he had taught them while there and in his first letter.

III. THE APPLICATION ABOUT THEIR RETURN TO WORK (chapter 3) Paul then tackled the final problem that had arisen about the Rapture. Some refused to work because the Rapture could come at any time, so why bother? Paul got very strong with them, telling them that if someone wouldn't do his share to support himself, no one should do anything to help him! That's how important it is for God's people to live a holy Christian life.

We can't and won't know exactly when it is time for the Rapture, but we can tell when the season gets closer (Matthew 24:36-39). Contractions can be felt earlier, but labor doesn't begin until the pains ('signs') come close and hard.

Paul then closed with prayer. He asked that they would be conscious of God's presence, peace and grace. After a final benediction and greeting, the book closes.

OUTLINE OF 2 THESSALONIANS

Opening 1:1-2

I. THE ANXIETY ABOUT THE RETURN OF CHRIST (Encouragement) 1

- A. Thanksgiving 1:3-10
- B. Intercession 1:11-12

II. THE ANSWER ABOUT THE REVELATION OF THE ANTI-CHRIST (Education) 2

- A. Correction of a Misconception 2:1-2
- B. Revelation of the Man of Sin 2:3-
 - 1. His Character 2:3-5
 - 2. His Restrainer 2:6-7
 - 3. His Ministry 2:8-10
- C. Judgment of Unbelievers 2:11-12
- D. Thanksgiving and Prayer 2:13-17

III. THE APPLICATION ABOUT THEIR RETURN TO WORK (Exhortation) 3

- A. Call to Prayer 3:1-5
- B. Call to Discipline 3:6-15

Close 3:16-18



24e. 3rd MISSIONARY

TRIP

When Paul returned from his Second Missionary Journey, he continued to travel in Galatia (Acts 18:23), but 6 months after getting back Paul again left for another missionary journey.

SEPTEMBER 53 As he had promised, Paul went back to Ephesus to spend time with friends there. It was the largest, most important and influential city in Asia Minor and an important location for the church. In fact, the center of Christianity, which shifted from Jerusalem to Antioch, will soon move to Ephesus, and then finally to Rome. John and Mary, the mother of Jesus, will stay here, too.

After hearing Paul, who had only heard of John's baptism, believed in Jesus and received the Holy Spirit, uniting them with all Jews and Gentiles who also had accepted Jesus as Savior (Acts 19:1-7). Speaking in foreign languages they didn't know was the sign that they were included, just as the others who had received this sign: Jews (Acts 2), half Jews (Acts 8), Gentiles living in Palestine (Acts 10-11) and Gentiles living elsewhere (Acts 19). It was the last time this gift would be given, for no other mention is made of it except Paul's correcting of the Corinthians excesses.

SEPTEMBER - NOVEMBER 53 Paul spoke boldly in the synagogue for 3 months, until the Jews hardened their hearts against him, and then he left (Acts 19:8-9).

DECEMBER 53 - DECEMBER 55 For 2 years Paul taught daily in a local lecture hall (v. 10). Everyone in Ephesus and its surrounding area was exposed to the gospel during that time. Miraculous things happened, showing that God's power is greater than the demonic power behind the idols they worshipped there (11-20). Tradition says Paul taught 5 hours a day in addition training the disciples Apollos, Aquilla, Priscilla and others and witnessing in town (Acts 20:20f). He probably worked some at making tents for an income. He was instrumental in starting churches in Colossae, Laodicea, Hieroppolis, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and other places. He was jailed at least once (2 Corinthians 11:23-27). This is his longest recorded stay in one place.

Paul was no super-hero. He faced all the same problems and frustrations we do. He was plagued with the carnal Corinthians and wrote 2 letters to them, one lost and the other is our 1 Corinthians. He wanted to take the money he had gathered to Jerusalem but wasn't able to do that (v. 21-22). He had terrible trials and sufferings there, things he referred to as "fighting with beasts" (Acts 20:17-19; 1 Corinthians 15:30-32; 2 Corinthians 1:8-11). There was much opposition without and stress within (Acts 20:19). Still, he persevered one day at a time on God's strength.

SPRING 56 When a great disturbance arose against him from those who made idols of Diana, Paul realized it was time to leave and minister elsewhere (Acts 19:23-41). God often used riots and rejection to cause him to move on to a new group. Too often we quit all together when God just wants us to move on to work with someone else.

SUMMER 56 Paul went to Troas where he wrote a third (lost) letter to the Corinthians. He was distracted by Titus' failure to return from Corinth so he went to find him (2 Corinthians 12:13).

LATE SUMMER 56 Paul landed at Neapolis, then went to Philippi. The church there was the most fault-free, supportive church of all the ones he started, so it must have been encouraging and helpful to spend time with them. Even though they couldn't afford it, they kept sending money for his support. They were going through much persecution and many were being killed.

EARLY FALL 56 Paul then moved on to Thessalonica and Berea (Acts 20:1-2). Timothy rejoined Paul, who was suffering much from his thorn in the flesh. He was depressed and distracted by the problems the Corinthian believers were causing. Then Titus arrived from Corinth with good news of the repentance of many in sin in Corinth. Still, many there were bitterly opposed to Paul.

Paul then went to Nicopolis, a better climate for his health, and wrote his forth letter to the Corinthians (2 Corinthians). He also visited Illyricum, which was a vast province which was out of his way and contained aggressive, warlike people with old pagan religions (Yugoslavia and Albania today).

NOVEMBER 56 Paul returned to Corinth to spend the winter (Acts 20:2b). He encouraged the believers to be faithful and reach out to other churches in the area in Athens, Cenchrea, etc. His plan was to go on to Spain and Rome, but that had to be put off because he had to take the money collected for the poor, suffering believers to Jerusalem first. Therefore, he wrote a letter to the Romans saying he would come a little later and containing a summary of the messages he wanted to give them. His disappointment is our blessing, for now we have the Book of Romans written down.

MARCH - MAY 57 Even those plans changed because of a plot against his life (Acts 20:3) so he went back through Macedonia instead, which must have tried his patience. His interruptions are even interrupted. His change in plans have to be changed again and again. No one is immune from that. He did have friends come along for fellowship and protection (v. 4-5). **April 6** they set sail from Neapolis, the seaport for Philippi. It took 5 days to sail to Troas and they waited there **April 15-19** for others to join them. Then they ministered there **April 20-25**. This is when Eutychus fell asleep and fell out the window and died, but God brought him back to life. Paul, Luke and others went by boat to Assos, Mitylene, Kios, Samos, Miletus and Ephesus **Monday, April 25 to Sat, April 30**. He stayed in Ephesus until **Monday, May 2**. During this time he had a long talk with the leaders. Leaving Ephesus was a hard, tearful event for all concerned. Paul took a ship to Tyre, arriving **Tuesday, May 10**. During his 7 days there he was urged to not go to Jerusalem because God was showing that troubles awaited him there. He traveled by foot to Caesarea (**May 20**) and stayed at Philip's home. Agabus again warned him about being arrested, but Paul followed God's leading and arrived in Jerusalem on **Tuesday, May 27**. Paul's last major missionary trip was over. God had an entirely new type of assignment awaiting him.

1 CORINTHIANS: WORLDLY WISDOM

TITLE: Named for recipients

AUTHOR: Paul

DATE of WRITING: 55 AD

PLACE of WRITING: Ephesus

RECIPIENTS: Church at Corinth

KEY VERSE:: *For God is not a God of disorder but of peace.*

... But everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way.

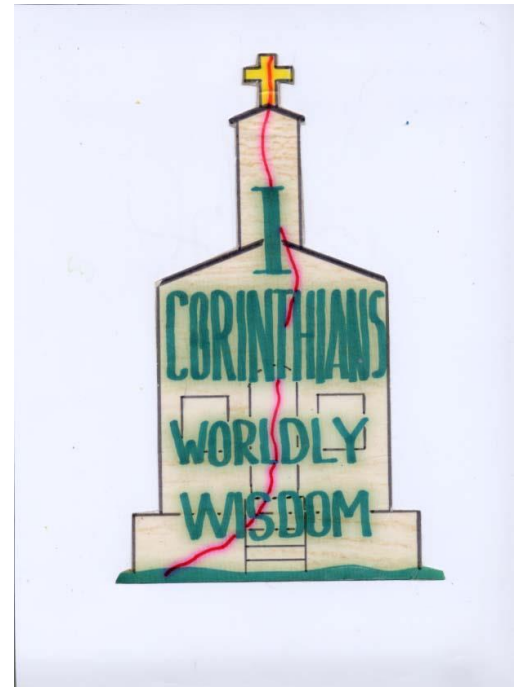
... But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our

Lord Jesus Christ. 14:33; 14:40; 15:57

KEY WORDS: "Wisdom, love, resurrection, cross, Spirit, body, gifts, corruption"

PURPOSE: Address certain situations of worldliness that were defeating the Corinthian church.

THEME: To correct errors in Christian conduct by going by God's wisdom instead of man's worldly wisdom.



We generally think that the greatest danger to the church today comes from without: persecution, oppression, etc. The real danger, however, comes not from without but from within. We are often our own greatest enemy! That is especially true of the church in Corinth. They were believers, but they lived like unbelievers. The church wasn't influencing society. Society was influencing the church.

CORINTH The city of Corinth was in present-day Greece. It was Greek, but very 'Roman' since it was the capital of the whole area. It was large (1/4 million people) and full of pride and pleasure. It had a reputation for being very immoral. To call someone a 'Corinthian' was a great insult. Paul was there on his Second Missionary Journey, 50-52 AD. When he was kicked out of the synagogue, he started a church and stayed 1 ½ years. He actually wrote 4 letters to the church there. We have the second (called 1 Corinthians) and fourth (called 2 Corinthians) in our Bible. Paul then visited them again for 3 months. It was a very worldly, carnal church. The people were believers, but their world view, their motives, their priorities and their thought processes were the same as they were before salvation. They were living by the world's ways and wisdom, not God's. That is why Paul writes to them.

I. DIVISIONS (1 – 4) Because of their ungodly viewpoints and values, they were having the same problems after salvation that they had before. They were comparing themselves with each other and putting down those who were different. They had groups based on who they followed: Paul, Apollos, Peter or Christ (the 'super-spiritual' ones claimed this). They also divided over social status and material means. They even made some spiritual gifts superior to others and had divisions over that. This undermined their unity and brought other problems.

II. DISORDERS (5 – 6) In taking the world's outlook on things, they opened themselves to sins. Incest, lawsuits against fellow believers, and immorality in general were tolerated and accepted. Paul has to warn them and show them how they are wrong in these things.

III. DIFFICULTIES (7 – 14) While only some were involved in the immorality and lawsuits, it seems everyone was affected in other ways. By still following their beliefs and views from before salvation,

they were experiencing troubles in other areas. What about marrying someone who wasn't a believer? If one became a Christian and their mate didn't, could they leave that mate? Why not divorce when things got tough like the rest of the culture? What was wrong with sex before marriage or sex outside marriage? Was it OK to eat cheaper meat which had been offered to idols? Why should a woman have to submit to her husband? Why did a man have to take the lead in his family? What was wrong with observing the pagan love feasts and adding the Lord's Supper to them? Why wasn't one who had an impressive spiritual gift like tongues superior spiritually to one who didn't have that gift? What was wrong with showing off one's gift during the church service? On and on the list went.

IV. DISBELIEF (15) The culmination of these worldly thoughts and attitudes was that the resurrection was questioned. It didn't make sense to think of one coming back from death. But without the resurrection, what was left of their faith? If Jesus never raised from the dead there is no power, no hope, no forgiveness – nothing but another belief system which is no better nor any worse than the others. That's where their thinking was going, and that's why Paul was so committed to write to them as quickly and directly as possible.

What about you? What about your world view, your value and belief system? Does it line up more with the world or the Bible? I don't mean just what you profess to believe, I mean what you practice in daily life. How different are you from the unbelievers around you in values and goals, in priorities and motives? There are many modern Corinthian believers today – make sure you aren't one of them!

OUTLINE OF 1 CORINTHIANS

Opening 1:1-9

I. DIVISIONS (“Wisdom”) 1-4

- A. Physical Divisions 1:10-4:21
- B. Material Divisions 11:22-23, 33-34
- C. Spiritual Divisions 12:16-17, 21-25

II. DISORDERS (“Righteousness”) 5-6

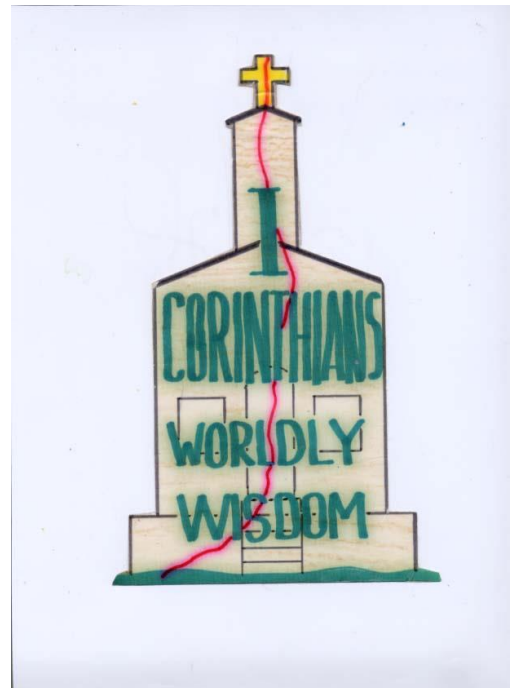
- A. Incest 5:1-13
- B. Lawsuits 6:1-8
- C. Immorality 6:9-20

III. DIFFICULTIES (“Sanctification”) 7-14

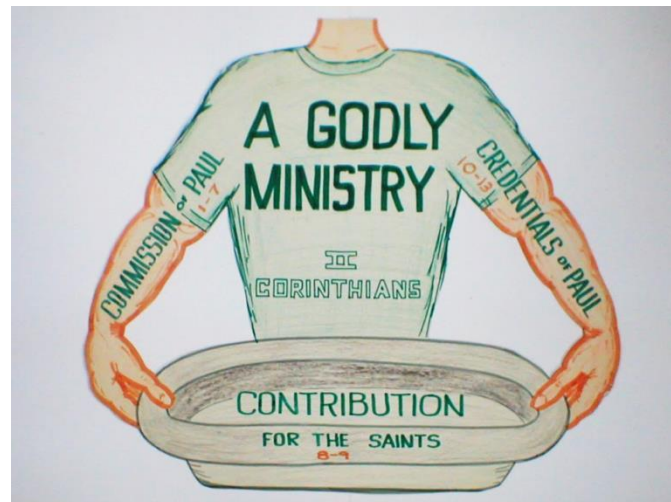
- A. Marriage 7:1-40
- B. Personal Liberty 8:1-11:1
- C. Subjection 11:2-16
- D. Fellowship 11:17-34
- E. Conduct 12:1-14:40

IV. DISBELIEF (“Redemption”) 15

Close 16:1-24



2 CORINTHIANS: A GODLY MINISTRY



TITLE: Named for recipients

AUTHOR: Paul

DATE of WRITING: Late 55 AD

PLACE of WRITING: Ephesus

RECIPIENTS: Church at Corinth

KEY VERSE: *For we do not preach ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. ... We are therefore Christ's*

ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. 4:5; 5:20-21

KEY WORDS: "Ministry" (18 times), "glory, boast" (20 times)

PURPOSE:

1 CORINTHIANS	2 CORINTHIANS
Objective & Practical	Subjective & Personal
Insight into the character of an early church	Insight into the character of Paul
Deliberate Instruction	Impassioned Testimony
Warning against pagan influences	Warning against Judaistic influences

THEME: Paul defends himself as a true minister of the Gospel and reestablishes a good relationship with the Corinthians.

BACKGROUND Paul spent 1 ½ years at Corinth on his Second Missionary Journey. He left for Ephesus and Apollos stayed at Corinth awhile. Then Paul wrote a letter to the Corinthians condemning immorality and asking them to start a collection for the poor. We don't have a copy of this letter. As reports came to Paul in Ephesus about the problems arising in Corinth, he wrote to them the letter we call 1 Corinthians. Timothy went to Corinth to help get things settled, but more difficulties arose. To counter Paul's recent letter, his apostolic authority was being questioned. Timothy personally went to Paul with this matter and Paul stopped by Corinth for a short visit during which he was grossly insulted by someone in the church. After he left, Paul sent a letter about the money they were collecting for Jerusalem, a letter we don't have. Titus delivered this letter and then was to bring a report back to Paul. Paul was so anxious to find out the news that he started out to meet Titus. They ran into each other half way, and Paul rejoiced in Titus' good report of their godly response to Paul's words. This made Paul so glad he immediately wrote another letter to them, which we call 2 Corinthians. Later Paul went there and stayed for 3 months, during which time he wrote the letter to the Romans. 2 Corinthians is the most autobiographical of Paul's Epistles. It provides insight into his personal life and ministry not seen elsewhere. Because of the false charges against him, Paul reveals things about himself and his ministry he would never have written down. If it sounds like bragging, it's really just self-defense. Paul knows they won't believe God's truth unless they see him as God's true messenger. Thus we get rare insight into the warm, human side of Paul. This letter comes from his heart, unlike Romans which comes from his head.

I. CALLING OF PAUL (1:12 – 7:16) False teachers caused Paul a lot of trouble. They often carried fake letters of commendation so they could minister in churches and be paid by those churches.

While doing so they viciously criticized Paul's appearance and poor speaking ability. They said he didn't have apostolic authority since he wasn't one of Jesus' 12 disciples. Paul answer their charges and talks about what he had been doing and why. He shows that his words are from God, and that therefore they are correct in believing and accepting them. He shares from his heart about what he has been through and why.

II. CONTRIBUTION FOR THE SAINTS (8:1 – 9:15) Wherever he went, Paul encouraged the Gentile churches to collect money to send to Jerusalem to help their poor brothers there. The gospel came through the Jews to the Gentiles, and now they can help them back. Jews in Jerusalem who became believers lost their families, jobs, everything. Paul talked to the Corinthians about this, too, showing it is all of our responsibility to help believers in need.

III. CREDENTIALS OF PAUL (10:1 – 13:10) Paul answered charges about his being too easy on some in the church. He refers to Jesus' example of forgiveness and mercy. He is accused of not accepting support for his ministry, and he explains why he chose to not exercise that right. He even told them of a time he died and went to heaven before coming back to life. What a wonderful experience that was!

In conclusion, Paul tells them to repent and turn 100% from false teachings and teachers to God, so things would be fine when Paul got there. He said he wanted to come in love and joy, not with scoldings or disciplining. He promised he would come soon and prove beyond doubt that God supported him and his teachings.

OUTLINE OF 2 CORINTHIANS

I. CALLING OF PAUL (Explanation) 1-7

- A. Certainty of the Ministry 1:1-2:11
- B. Character of the Ministry 2:12-6:10
 - 1. Triumph in the Ministry 2:12-16
 - 2. Qualifications for the Ministry 2:17-3:6
 - 3. Basis for the Ministry 3:6-4:6
 - 4. Trials in the Ministry 4:7-12
 - 5. Prospects in the Ministry 4:13-5:10
 - 6. Program of the Ministry 5:11-21
 - 7. Description of the Ministry 6:1-10
- C. Commitment to the Ministry 6:11-7:16

II. CONTRIBUTION FOR THE SAINTS (Exhortation) 8-9

- A. Collection from Macedonia 8:1-9
- B. Collection in Corinth 8:10-9:15

III. CREDENTIALS OF PAUL (Vindication) 10-13

- A. Commendation of the Ministry 10:1-18
- B. Conduct in the Ministry 11:1-12:18
 - 1. Paul's Actions 11:1-15
 - 2. Paul's Sufferings 11:16-33
 - 3. Paul's Vision 12:1-10
 - 4. Paul's Unselfishness 12:11-18
- C. Concern for the Ministry 12:19-13:14



ROMANS: SALVATION

TITLE: Named for the recipients

AUTHOR: Paul

DATE of WRITING: 56 AD

PLACE of WRITING: Corinth

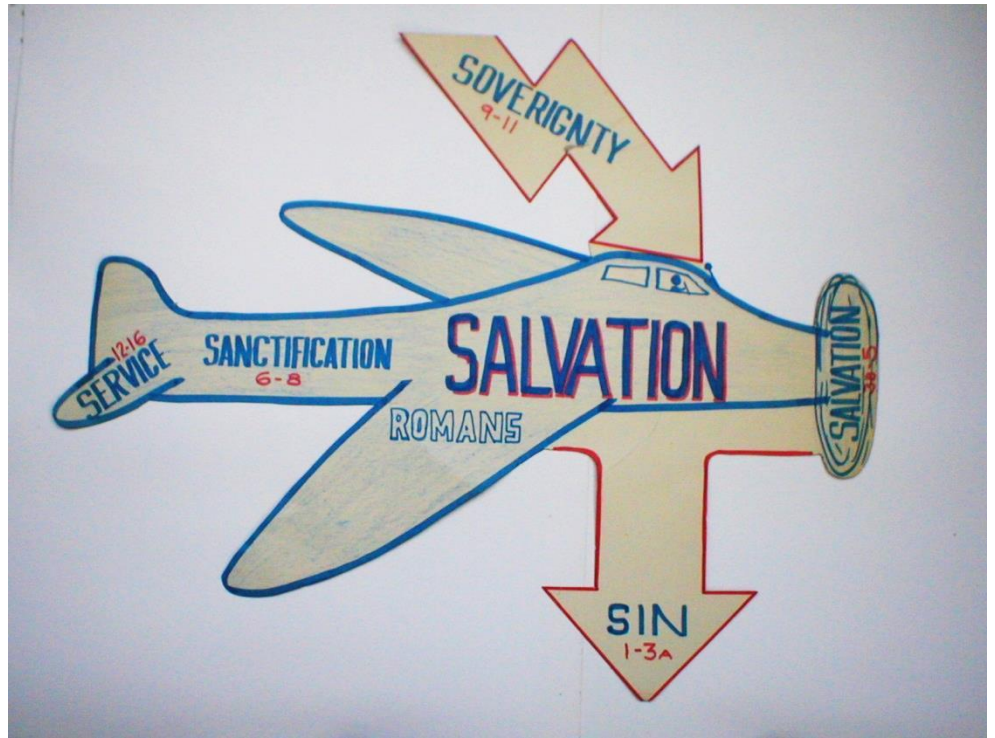
RECIPIENTS: Church at Rome

KEY VERSE:: *I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith."* 1:16-17

KEY WORDS: "Christ" (39 times), "faith" (37 times), "justify" 17 times

PURPOSE: To teach the basic truths of the Christian faith to a place he has long wanted to visit but hasn't been able to visit.

THEME: All about salvation and living the Christian life.



Every preacher's dream is to have one time in his life when he can say whatever he wants with no time limit and no interruptions. Perhaps that's why so many of us dream of writing a book. Most of us will have to wait until heaven, though, for the chance to preach and teach without a time limit. Few of us get that chance on earth. Paul is one of the fortunate ones. He was known to preach all night long, but he still had time constraints. He started in Athens giving his total overall teaching of salvation and the Christian life, but he didn't get to finish. Finally, in writing to the Romans, he was able to say it all!

THE GREATNESS OF ROMANS Romans is perhaps the finest book in the New Testament. Many would say that if they had to pick just one book of the Bible to keep and use it would be the book of Romans. It has led to more great revivals than any other book and, because of its breadth and scope, stands head and shoulders above other books. Paul's other writings were to address specific problems or doctrinal issues. In Romans he is free to choose his topic, and he chose salvation and its results in our life. There is no greater topic to be had.

LIVING BY FAITH Paul starts off stating his theme in 1:16-17: "The righteous shall live by faith." This is actually quoted from Habakkuk and led to Martin Luther's conversion and the Reformation. It is actually a play on words in the Aramaic by Paul. First he says that those who become justified shall have eternal life by faith, accepting God's free gift of salvation. That is expanded in Romans 1-4. Then he also says that those who have become justified by faith shall live their daily lives by that same faith. This is expanded in Romans 5-15. This not only summarizes the book but our own lives.

I. SIN – guilt of all (1:18 – 3:20) Before showing the solution, Paul shows the problem – sin. Those without God’s revelation (Gentiles) are guilty of sin. Those with God’s revelation (Jews) are also guilty of sin. In fact, ALL are guilty and condemned.

II. SALVATION – provision for all (3:21 – 5:21) God provided for our sins in the person of Jesus Christ (3:21-31). It is up to us to freely accept this gift of salvation by faith (4:1-25). When we do, we have all the blessings and benefits of salvation (5:1-11). This is all freely given in Jesus (5:12-21). However the book doesn’t end here. Salvation is just the start, then comes the command to live for Jesus.

III. SANCTIFICATION – provision for all believers (6:1 – 8:39) After salvation we must live a holy life unto God. Our sin has been paid for and removed, so in actual practice we are to not live in sin (6:1-23). We are freed from the power of sin to control us. Grace is not an excuse to sin. We’ll never have victory over sin by trying to keep the law, for that isn’t its purpose (7:1-25). We have freedom only in Jesus (8:1-39). If Romans is the crown jewel of the Bible, then Romans 8 is the focal point of most beauty in this whole jewel. It is certainly a chapter well worth memorizing. It shows the victory we have in Jesus.

IV. SOVEREIGNTY – provision for Jews & Gentiles (9:1 – 11:36) With Gentiles now accepted by faith, what about Jews? God sovereignly chose them through Abraham. Even though they disobeyed and failed Him, He won’t reject them. He may temporarily set them aside so Gentiles can come to salvation, but they will one day turn to Jesus for salvation and be restored as God’s chosen people.

V. SERVICE – provision for daily life (12:1 – 15:13) Paul concludes, as he always does, by applying the doctrine he has just taught to daily life. He changes from teacher to preacher. He talks about our daily life (12:1-21), daily conduct (13:1-14), and daily relationships (14:1 – 15:13).

Spend time in this most special book. It’s a treasure mine of special promises and blessings.

OUTLINE OF ROMANS

Opening message 1:1-17

I. SIN (The Need of Salvation) 1:18-3:20

- A. Those Without the Bible are Guilty 1:18-32
- B. Those With the Bible are Guilty 2:1-3:8
- C. All Mankind is Guilty 3:9-30

II. SALVATION (The Way of Salvation) 3:21-5:21

- A. God’s Provision – Christ 3:21-31
- B. God’s Condition – Faith 4:1-25
- C. Man’s Free Benefit 5:1-11
 - 1. Justification 5:1a, 9a
 - 2. Peace with God 5:1b
 - 3. Access Into God’s Grace 5:2a
 - 4. Exult in Hope 5:2b-4
 - 5. Love of God 5:5a, 6-8
 - 6. The Holy Spirit 5:5b
 - 7. Saved from God’s Wrath 5:9b, 10b
 - 8. Reconciled to God 5:10-11
- D. Christ’s Free Provision 5:13-21

III. SANCTIFICATION (The Life of Salvation) 6:1-8:39

- A. Free from Sin 6:1-23
- B. Free from Law 7:1-21
- C. Free from Flesh 8:1-39
 - 1. New Freedom 8:1
 - 2. New Law of Life 8:2
 - 3. New Power 8:3-4
 - 4. New Desires 8:5
 - 5. New Results 8:6
 - 6. New Attitude 8:7
 - 7. New Sphere of Life 8:8-10
 - 8. New Guarantee 8:11
 - 9. New Allegiance 8:12
 - 10. New Duty 8:13
 - 11. New Guidance 8:14
 - 12. New Intimacy with God 8:15
 - 13. New Relationships 8:16-17
 - 14. New Privilege 8:17-18, 20-22
 - 15. New Hope 8:23-25
 - 16. New Prospect 8:17b, 18b, 19
 - 17. New Assistance 8:26-27
 - 18. New Confidence 8:28-30
 - 19. New Assurance 8:31-39



IV. SOVEREIGNTY (The Scope of Salvation) 9:1-11:36

- A. Israel's Past: Election 9:1-29
- B. Israel's Present: Rejection 9:30-10:21
- C. Israel's Future: Salvation 11:1-36

V. SERVICE (The Service of Salvation) 12:1-15:13

- A. Daily Life 12:1-21
 - 1. Service and Self 12:1-2
 - 2. Service and Gifts 12:3-8
 - 3. Service and Believers 12:9-16
 - 4. Service and Unbelievers 12:17-21
- B. Daily Conduct 13:1-14
 - 1. Service and Government 13:1-7
 - 2. Service and Love 13:8-10
 - 3. Service and Dedication 13:11-14
- C. Daily Relationships 14:1-15:13

Closing Message 15:14-16:27

24f. TRIP TO ROME

This time in Paul's life could be called the beginning of the end. While he will live and minister for almost a dozen more years, he will no longer be the foremost evangelist and church planter. He will no longer be in the vanguard of the church as it grows and spreads. He will still write many important books, thus having a key role in formulating doctrine, but he won't be the point man as the church moves forward. No one man will replace him, but instead God will raise up a group of men such as Timothy, Titus, Mark and many others to work in various areas. The church is too spread out for any one man to coordinate and lead it all anymore. Faithful Luke stays with Paul no matter what and records for us what Paul goes through (Acts 21-28) from 57 to 62 AD.

FRIDAY, MAY 27, 57 Despite being warned that he would be imprisoned, Paul continued to Jerusalem to finish his mission. He delivered the offering money to help the poor Jewish believers there and reported to James about what God was doing among Gentiles throughout the world. Jewish believers in Jerusalem were very strict about believers having to keep the law. They were reluctant to move quickly from law to grace. This caused problems between them and Gentile believers. The Jerusalem Council (Acts 15) was to resolve such an issue. Because of his great involvement with Gentiles, and because his main emphasis wasn't to force them to obey the Jewish law, Jewish believers in Jerusalem were accusing Paul of telling them to NOT keep the law. This was not true, but rumors can be a terrible things to stop.

None of the leaders wanted the church divided into a Jewish church and a Gentile church. With Paul's high visibility, some would gravitate to him and others gather in opposition to him. Paul thought he could avoid this by doing something to show that he wasn't opposed to the keeping of the law, if it was done for the right reason (to honor God, not to earn salvation). Thus it was decided that he would pay for the sacrifices for four Jews who wanted to offer them but couldn't afford them. This should show he wasn't against keeping the law.

SUNDAY, MAY 29 Saturday was the Sabbath so nothing was done, in honor of keeping it free from work, but on Sunday Paul paid for the sacrifices for these men for 7 days.

THURSDAY, JUNE 2 As was his habit, Paul went to the temple every day to study, teach, pray and worship. Some long-time enemies from Asia saw him in the temple. They had seen him in town earlier with an Ephesian Gentile and thus jumped to the conclusion that Paul still had the man with him in the temple. When this rumor spread a riot ensued, for the penalty of bringing a Gentile into the forbidden part of the temple was immediate death for the Gentile. No Gentile was found, but the mob of those who were opposed to Paul because he was a Christian grew and spread out, until they found him and tried to kill him. Roman soldiers from Antonia rescued Paul and carried him away because he was too wounded from his beating to walk. The Romans thought Paul was a trouble maker and were surprised to find he was an educated Roman citizen. He got permission to speak to the crowd that had followed along and gave a short summary of his life. When he got to the part about God providing salvation for Gentiles as well as Jews, the mob erupted again and tried to kill him, so the Romans put him in prison for safe keeping.

FRIDAY, JUNE 3 The Sanhedrin, the ruling body of Israel, sent some leading men to tell the Romans why they hated Paul. Paul, not realizing the speaker was the high priest, verbally insulted him and a Jewish guard slapped Paul for it. When Paul realized who the man was he apologized. Then he started talking about the resurrection, which started the Sadducees and Pharisees, the 2

main political parties in the Sanhedrin, to argue heatedly, for each believed differently. That night, while Paul slept, Jesus appeared to Paul and told him to take courage, for he would testify about Jesus in Jerusalem. That had been Paul's dream for many years. Little did he know how it would come about.

SATURDAY, JUNE 4 Meanwhile, a group of 40 Jews banded together and pledged to not eat until Paul was dead. They conspired as to how they could most easily end his life. Somehow Paul's nephew, who was in Jerusalem, found out about this plot and told Paul, who told the Roman authorities. To protect his life, the Romans decided to transfer Paul to Caesarea where security was stronger and Jewish opposition lest severe. Paul was moved by night, guarded by a large detachment of Roman soldiers. They made one stop on the way and arrived in Caesarea safely.

THURSDAY, JUNE 9 Felix was an ex-slave who stole his wife from her first husband. He was a fine military man but didn't make the transition to political leadership too well. Religious leaders and their fancy lawyers arrived from Jerusalem to press charges against Paul before Felix and his court. They accused Paul of treason and stirring up trouble. Paul gave his own defense. Felix said he would issue a decision later and placed Paul under house arrest so his friends could have access to him.

MID-JUNE Soon after that trial, Felix held another trial with his wife Drusilla, who was a wild woman with some Jewish background. They heard Paul's testimony again, didn't make a decision, and said they would listen more later. They were stalling for a bribe, after which they would release him.

JULY 59 Two years passed with Paul still under house arrest. Felix was replaced by Festus who was honorable, fair and good to the Jews, who were quite difficult to rule. The religious rulers in Jerusalem petition Festus to have Paul transferred to Jerusalem for trial as a favor to them, a show of good will. Paul refused, for he knew he would be ambushed and killed before reaching Jerusalem. When Festus wanted him to go to Jerusalem Paul appealed to Caesar, a special right that Roman citizens had, like appealing to our Supreme Court. Nero was the Caesar at that time.

LATER IN JULY 59 Agrippa heard Paul's case, along with his sister/wife Bernice. Agrippa was a shrewd politician. His father had beheaded James. Festus asked his advice on how to handle Paul's appeal to Caesar, for there really weren't any charges against Paul except some religious ones by the Jews. He couldn't be sent to Caesar on those charges, but to release him would bring down the wrath of the religious rulers. That would not be a wise political move at all.

THE NEXT DAY Paul spoke to them all, giving his testimony again and inviting them to believe. They stalled and put Paul off. Now they couldn't release him because he had appealed to Caesar.

MID AUGUST – OCT 4, 59 Paul sailed to Crete.

OCTOBER 5 They arrived in Fair Havens. It was too late to sail to Rome because the weather became dangerous, but the centurion didn't want to wait until spring so decided to chance it.

OCTOBER 10-24 Sure enough, they ran into a terrible storm which swept the ship onto a beach.

OCTOBER – FEB 60 Paul and others spent the winter on Malta. Paul spent the winter ministering.

EARLY MARCH 60 Paul arrived in Rome by the Appian Way. During his 2 years in prison there he wrote letters to Ephesus, Colossae, Philippi, and Philemon, letters in our Bible today.

EPHESIANS:

“IN CHRIST”

TITLE: Named for recipients

AUTHOR: Paul

DATE of WRITING: 60 AD

PLACE of WRITING: Rome (prison)

RECIPIENTS: Church at Ephesus

KEY VERSE: *Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. ... As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received.* 1:3; 4:1

KEY WORDS: “In” (93 times); “grace” (12 times); “walk” (8 times); “body” (8 times)

PURPOSE: “In Christ” key phrase

Romans: We are justified “in Christ” (3:24)

1 Corinthians: We are sanctified “in Christ” (1:2)

2 Corinthians: We are vindicated “in Christ” (11:19)

Galatians: We are liberated “in Christ” (2:4)

Ephesians: We are exalted “in Christ” (1:3)

Philippians: We are exultant “in Christ” (1:26)

Colossians: We are complete “in Christ” (2:9)

Philemon: We are graced out “in Christ” (15)

1 Thessalonians: We are hopeful “in Christ” (1:3)

2 Thessalonians: We are glorified “in Christ” (1:12)

1 Timothy: We are faithful “in Christ” (1:18)

2 Timothy: We are triumphant “in Christ” (14:6)

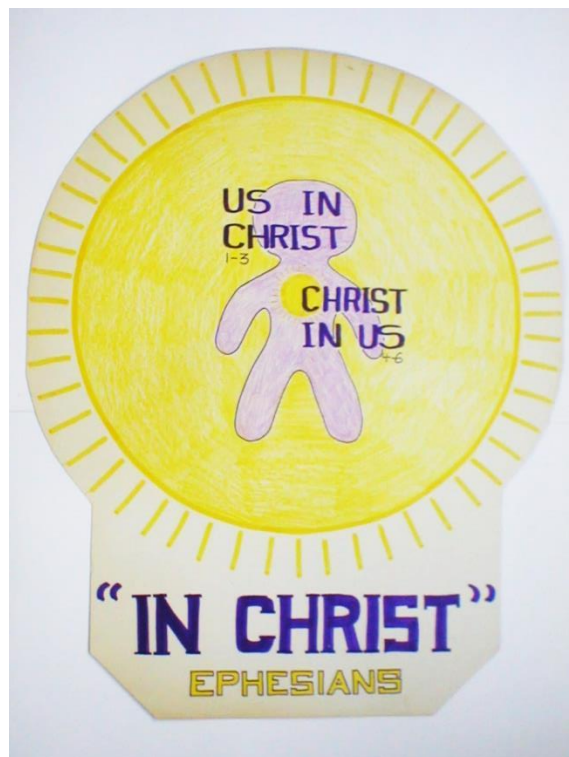
Titus: We are made examples “in Christ” (2:7)

THEME: The heavenly position of the believer and the daily life which corresponds to this position.

Suppose you had a long lost relative who died, leaving their whole estate to only you. The lawyers had tracked you down and are at this moment trying to contact you to tell you all these riches are now yours. It's already yours, you just don't realize it yet! It might seem impossible, but this is true. God is trying to contact you. Ephesians is the letter He is sending about all your inherited riches and blessings. It's not about material possessions which will decay and be left behind, it's about something yours eternally.

EPHESUS The city of Ephesus was one of the top 3 cities of its day, similar to New York City. Paul spent 3 years there. It was a very strategic location for a church.

US IN CHRIST (1 – 3) Paul starts talking about salvation, how God the Father planned it (election past, present & future – 1:4-6) He was the Architect who drew the blueprint. Then Paul writes about God the Son who provided it (redemption past, present and future – 1:7-12). He is the builder Who followed God's blueprint. Finally he writes of God the Holy Spirit Who applied our regeneration past, present and future – 1:13-14. He is the One Who delivers the title deed to that which Jesus built according to God's blueprint.



Of course, this is all by grace (2:8-9). God loves us. He knows everything about us and loves us anyway. There is nothing we have done or can do to earn His love. It is given freely and unconditionally. This is grace. There is nothing we can do to earn His love or lose His love. If we wish, we may reject His love, or even reject God Himself. But He will never stop loving us. When we decide to recognize and accept His love, we will feel a joy like we've never known before.

CHRIST IN US (4 – 6)

(1-3) LIVE what	you ARE (4-6)
POSITION of the believer	PRACTICE of the believer
Heavenly Standing	Earthly State
Our heritage in Christ	Our life in Christ
DOCTRINE	PRACTICE

As is his pattern, Paul applies in the second half of his writings what he teaches in the first half. Because of our position in Christ we should live like Him. We must live a holy life. WWJD. He applies this specifically to husbands, wives, parents, children, slaves and masters. He concludes with a most important section on spiritual warfare and our armor. Those who seek to live like Jesus and for Jesus better be prepared to fight for their spiritual growth, for the enemy will oppose any attempts to grow spiritually.

OUTLINE OF EPHESIANS

Opening 1:1-2

I. US IN CHRIST (Position of the Believer – Heavenly Standing) 1-3

- A. Chosen & Sealed 1:3-23
 - 1. Spiritual Blessings 1:3
 - 2. God the Father Planned It 1:4-6
 - 3. God the Son Provided It 1:7-12
 - 4. God the Holy Spirit Applied It 1:13-14
 - 5. Paul Prays 1:15-23
- B. Saved by Grace 2:1-10
 - 1. The Problem 2:1-3
 - 2. The Solution 2:4-8
 - 3. The Condition – Faith 2:8-10
- C. United in One Body 2:11-22
- D. Equal in the Body 3:1-21

II. CHRIST IN US (Practice of the Believer – Earthly State) 4-6

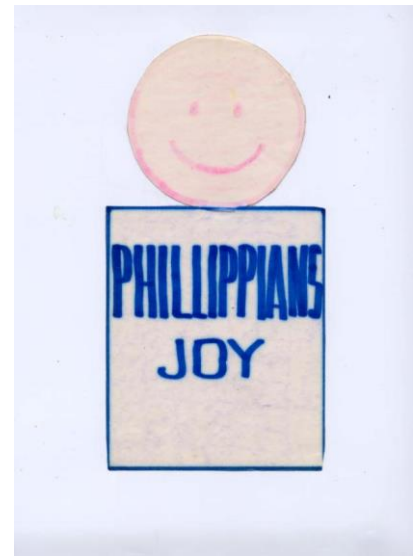
- A. Relation to Other Believers 4:1-6
- B. Relation to Spiritual Gifts 4:7-16
- C. Relation to Former Life 4:17-32
- D. Relation to Evil 5:1-17
- E. Relation to Holy Spirit 5:18-21
- F. Relation to Home Life 5:22-6:4
- G. Relation to Slaves & Masters 6:5-9
- H. Relation to Satan 6:10-20

Close 6:21-24



PHILIPPIANS:

JOY



TITLE: Named for recipients

AUTHOR: Paul

DATE of WRITING: 60-61 AD

PLACE of WRITING: Rome (in prison)

RECIPIENTS: Church in Philippi

KEY VERSE: *Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!* 4:4

KEY WORD: "Joy (rejoice)" 18 times; "Mind/think" 10 times

PURPOSE:

	GALATIANS	EPHESIANS	PHILIPPIANS
Style	Logical Arguments	Teaching & Application	Inform & Console
Main subject	Salvation (free from law)	Christ (possessions of believer 'in Christ')	Life of joy
Purpose	Correct	Instruct	Inspire
Tone	Sharp Rebuke	Calm, Victorious	Tender, Joyful

THEME: Rejoice in the Lord!

The famous German philosopher Nietzsche once said about Christians: "I would believe in their salvation if they looked a little more like people who have been saved!" The early church made a profound impression on their world because of their joy. Paul wrote to one of his favorite churches, the church at Philippi, to encourage them in their joy. There is no problem to correct, just joy to share – and Paul wrote it from prison!

PHILIPPI The city of Philippi was near Thessalonica. It was a Greek city which Paul had visited on his third missionary journey, about 6 or 7 years before writing to them. When the believers in Philippi heard that Paul was in prison, they sent Epaphroditus to Rome to see how Paul was doing and to deliver a gift of money. He needed money to pay for his quarters and food, for he was in house arrest and had to provide for these things himself. Epaphroditus realized Paul was needier than they thought, so he stayed and worked for money to give to Paul. During this time he got sick and almost died. When he recovered, Paul sent him back to Philippi with this letter. He wanted his friends there to rejoice that Epaphroditus was OK and that Paul was OK, too. Our book of Philippians is the letter Paul sent with him.

I. JOY IN SERVING (1:3-11) Paul begins by thanking them for their concern and support for him. He prays for them. Then he gets right to the heart of something he wanted to say.

II. JOY IN SUFFERING (1:12-30) They felt that prison had ended Paul's ministry, but Paul says NO! He pointed out clearly that his afflictions actually promoted the gospel, for he could witness to the guards and Caesar's household (many of whom became believers), and had lots more time to pray. Plus his being in prison had stimulated believers and churches everywhere to take up his work as well as to pray for him. Also, he used this time to write an important part of our New Testament: Philippians, Ephesians, Colossians and Philemon. Truly "all things work together for the good of those who love the Lord" (Rom 8:28).

In addition, Paul saw his sufferings as making him more Christ-like. He exhorted them to remain steadfast and fearless when they, too, faced suffering.

III. JOY IN SUBMISSION (2:1-30) Paul then calls on them to make his joy complete by putting Jesus first in everything. He calls them to unity, humility and self-sacrifice. He uses Christ, Timothy, Epaphroditus and himself as examples. No matter what life brings them, they are to submit to it as God's will for them. This will bring them great joy and peace.

IV. JOY IN SALVATION (3:1 – 4:3) Paul warns them against the false teachers that are so prevalent everywhere. They aren't submitting to anyone and they don't have God's joy. Paul challenges them to follow his example, not the false teachers.

V. JOY IN SUFFICIENCY (4:4-19) Paul prays they will continue to have peace and joy in all they do. He rejoices at God's power to provide for him in prison and rejoices over their concern and sacrifice. He knows they can't afford to send him money but did. Their concern means more to him than the amount of money. He assures them that God will bless and reward them for their sacrificial giving and assures them he is well provided for.

Paul then concludes in typical letter-writing style for his day. He sends greetings and short messages to some of those in Philippi and passes on greetings to them from some of the men with him. His love for them is evident, as is theirs for him. Thus they rejoice in each other. What about you? Do others notice your joy and give Jesus the credit? Are you full of a joy that draws others to the Savior? If not, ask God for this fruit of His Spirit now!

OUTLINE OF PHILIPPIANS

Opening 1:1-2

I. JOY IN SERVING 1:3-11

- A. Paul's Thanksgiving For Them 1:3-8
- B. Paul's Prayer For Them 1:9-11

II. JOY IN SUFFERING 1:12-30

- A. Afflictions Promote the Gospel 1:12-18
- B. Afflictions Exalt Christ 1:19-26
- C. Exhortation to the Sufferings 1:27-30

III. JOY IN SUBMISSION 2:1-30

- A. Exhortation 2:1-4
- B. Example 1: Christ 2:5-11
- C. Application 2:12-16
- D. Example 2: Paul 2:17-18
- E. Example 3: Timothy 2:19-24
- F. Example 4: Epaphroditus 2:25-30

IV. JOY IN SALVATION 3:1-4:3

- A. Admonition 3:1
- B. Danger of Judaizers 3:2-6
- C. Purpose of Paul 3:7-16
- D. Exhortation 3:17-4:3

V. JOY IN SUFFICIENCY 4:4-19

- A. God's Peace 4:4-9
- B. Paul's Rejoicing 4:10-13
- C. Philippians' Sharing 4:14-19

Close 4:20-23



COLOSSIANS: CHRIST IS SUPREME

TITLE: Named for the recipients

AUTHOR: Paul

DATE of WRITING: 60 AD

PLACE of WRITING: Rome (in prison)

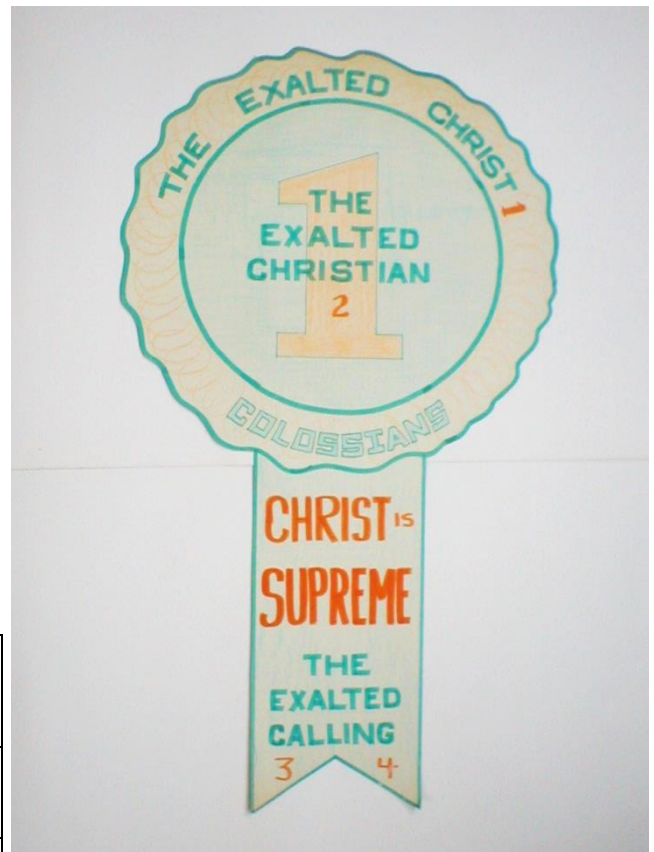
RECIPIENTS: Church in Colossae

KEY VERSE: *and who also told us of your love in the Spirit. ... and you have been given fullness in Christ, who is the head over every power and authority.* 1:8; 2:10

KEY WORD: "head" (3 times)

PURPOSE:

	TO GIVE TRUE TEACHING	TO CORRECT FALSE TEACHING
ABOUT SALVATION	Romans	Galatians
ABOUT CHRIST	Ephesians	Colossians



THEME: Show the preeminence of Christ – the head not only of the church but of the whole universe.

In my hometown is a gray concrete building just off the main street. It's not the largest, nor the smallest building in town. I first remember seeing it when a child and often went past it but never paid much attention to it. Oh, I'd been inside a time or two, but didn't have any special memory of it. Then one Sunday I went inside to worship with a church that met there and I found good fellowship, times of praise and worship, and a source of learning and growth. Now the building has an entirely different meaning to me when I pass it.

There's a book in the New Testament that is quite similar. It's not the biggest nor the smallest. We all know it's there and go by it often, even stopping in from time to time. However we often don't take the time to really to see what's inside. It's the book we call Colossians.

BACKGROUND Colossae was a small town near larger Laodicea. Although he was in the nearby region, we have no record of Paul's ever having gone to Colossae. The church there was started by some of the nearby churches which Paul had started. Paul wrote this letter to them while in prison in Rome. Because it is so similar in content to the book of Ephesians, it is often ignored and Ephesians chosen to be studied.

Paul wrote to encourage them to stay true to God and watch for the false teaching called "Gnosticism." Jude and 1 John also refute this heresy. Gnostics believed that an intellectually enlightened few were far above the masses of humanity. To them, 'god' was an impersonal force and they rejected salvation for sin. Many of their lies Satan is recycling today under the label of 'New Age.' Paul refutes this heresy, not by showing its inconsistencies and inaccuracies but by showing the truth of Jesus. That's a good lesson for us, too. Instead of attacking another's false teaching, lift Jesus up as the Truth. Paul shows that Christ is Supreme over everyone and everything.

I. THE EXALTED CHRIST (1:15-29) Christ is exalted as the head of all creation and the church. He is also extolled as the reconciler of all things, the only One who reunites God and man. He points out that He did it by His work on the cross as our substitute. Paul says that true wisdom only comes by knowing Jesus, not through any counterfeit system which claims to have all the answers themselves.

II. THE EXALTED CHRISTIAN (2:1-23) Paul says that Christ is exalted over philosophy and appeals to them to totally turn from all false teachings and teachers. He points out that any system of legalism fails, that we are free from all that through Christ's death, burial and resurrection. Paul also shows Christ is greater than any mystical teaching or any system of asceticism.

III. THE EXALTED CALLING (3:1 – 4:6) Soon Jesus will return for us, so Paul says even now we are to be like Him for then we will be totally like Him. He then applies this to various areas of our lives: everyday life, family relationships, work responsibilities, and our own individual spiritual lives as well.

It's been said that if Christ is not Lord OF all, He's not Lord AT all. Make sure He is first in your life, the Supreme One who is exalted above all else. If He is not all in your life, He's not in His proper, deserving place!

OUTLINE OF COLOSSIANS

Opening 1:1-4

I. THE EXALTED CHRIST (All-Sufficiency of Christ) 1

A. Christ's Character 1:15-23

1. The Head of All Creation 1:15-20

2. Reconciler of All Things 1:21-23

B. Christ's Commission 1:24-29

II. THE EXALTED CHRISTIAN (Heresy About Christ) 2

A. Exalted Over Philosophy 2:1-10

B. Exalted Over Legalism 2:11-17

C. Exalted Over Mystical Teaching 2:18-19

D. Exalted Over Asceticism 2:20-23

III. THE EXALTED CALLING (Resurrection Life From Christ) 3-4

A. Certainties of our Calling 3:1-4

B. Characteristics of our Calling 3:5-4:6

1. In Everyday Life 3:5-17

2. In the Home 3:18-21

3. In Servant-Master Relationships 3:22-4:1

4. In Prayer 4:2-4

5. In Witness and Speech 4:5-6

Closing 4:7-18



PHILEMON:

CHRISTIAN COURTESY

TITLE: Named for recipient

AUTHOR: Paul

DATE of WRITING: 60 AD

PLACE of WRITING: Rome (in prison)

RECIPIENT: Philemon, a rich and influential believer in Colossae

KEY VERSE: *So if you consider me a partner, welcome him as you would welcome me. 18 If he has done you any wrong or owes you anything, charge it to me. 19 I, Paul, am writing this with my own hand. I will pay it back-not to mention that you owe me your very self. 17-19*

KEY WORDS: "Love," "beseech," "profitable," "servant"

PURPOSE: Paul intercedes with Philemon to be gracious to his slave

Onesimus who ran away and is not returning to his service.

THEME: Christian courtesy and forgiveness



Several years ago Readers Digest printed the following. Talking with a friend recently, I remarked that status symbols are getting hard to come by. A great many people, if they want one badly enough, can have a new car, a fur coat, a Florida vacation, a boat, a cottage, a country-club membership, or even a college degree. "What's left," I asked, "to distinguish a man?" "Manners," he replied, "just good manners." The short letter of Philemon distinguishes Paul as a great man, a man of manners.

BACKGROUND Paul wrote to Philemon from prison just before his release. Onesimus, a slave of Philemon, ran away from Philemon after robbing him. He ended up in Rome meeting Paul, who led him to salvation. Onesimus stayed with Paul and helped him, becoming very useful to Paul while in house arrest. Philemon was a close friend of Paul. Paul had led him to salvation years before. He was one of the leaders in the church at Colossae. One of the house-churches that made up the church in Colossae met in his home. Now Paul is sending Onesimus back to his master with a letter asking for Philemon to forgive him. When the letter is closely studied one can see many ways in which Paul exercises Christian courtesy.

Paul begins by writing Philemon friend to friend. He doesn't 'pull rank' and use his apostolic authority. Courtesy is made up of petty sacrifices, putting others first. It must come from the heart, an attitude of true love for others.

I. PRAISE OF PHILEMON (4-7) Paul begins by praying for Philemon, asking God to bless him. He then praises him for all the good he has done for Paul and the Gospel. Complimenting people is very important and shows very good manners. Criticizing people is easy and does no one any good.

Remember that this letter was first read before the whole church. It wasn't delivered just to

Philemon, but was for the whole church. Having Paul praise him was good for Philemon, setting the groundwork for the request that was coming.

II. PLEA FOR ONESIMUS (8-17) Paul wants Philemon to have the same gracious forsaking of rights for Onesimus that Paul has for Philemon. He wants him, too, to be polite and kind, based on love. Paul is showing Philemon love by sending Onesimus back to him and not using force to make Philemon forgive him. Paul wants Philemon to show love to him by forgiving Onesimus and accepting him back. Paul even points out that Onesimus has been very useful to him in prison, and that accepting him back without pressing charges would be like accepting Paul himself. He is using every argument he can to make sure Philemon comes to a godly, courteous decision in this matter. He isn't trying to force or manipulate him, or he wouldn't have sent Onesimus back. He sincerely wants to make it easier for Philemon to do the right thing. Paul is treating Philemon as he would want to be treated in similar circumstances – the Golden Rule in operation.

Paul says he is Philemon's friend, fellow-worker, brother and partner. To reject Onesimus would be to reject Paul and such a thing is unthinkable. Notice Paul never tries to sort out the reason Onesimus left. Whose fault was it? What went wrong? It's very hard to get to the bottom of things that way, often it just makes things worse. Christian courtesy means forgiving without having to prove guilt or innocence.

III. PROMISE OF PAUL (18-22) Paul says he will even pay Onesimus' debt so Philemon doesn't have to take the loss. Of course Philemon would never charge Paul for such a thing. Paul is very positive in what he expects of Philemon, saying he knows he will do the right thing. That is much more effective than being critical or condemning. Paul concludes by saying he will come for a visit when released from prison, and he probably soon did come. Thus we see valuable insights into Paul the man and his relationships with other believers. It's a fine example for us, too. Remember, you can't be too courteous!

OUTLINE OF PHILEMON

Preface of Paul 1-3

I. PRAISE OF PHILEMON 4-7

- A. Prayer for Philemon 4
- B. Praise for Philemon 5-6
- C. Pleasure in Philemon 7

II. PLEA FOR ONESIMUS 8-17

- A. Persuasion of Paul 8-10
- B. Profitableness of Onesimus 11-16
- C. Pardon of Onesimus 17

III. PROMISE OF PAUL 18-22

- A. Payment for Onesimus 18-20
- B. Promise of Paul 21
- C. Purpose of Paul 22

Opposition to Paul 23-25



24g. FINAL TRAVELS

PAUL'S FINAL TRAVELS

MARCH 60 – MARCH 62 Paul spent 2 years in prison in Rome before being released. Paul was able to teach some of the church leaders, for there already was a strong church established there. Many Jewish leaders came and listened with interest as he told his story to them, too. Timothy, Epaphras, Luke, Onesimus, Mark, Demas and others spent time with Paul there. He wrote letters which have become books in our Bible: Ephesians, Colossians, Philippians and Philemon. Eventually he was released. The Jews never opposed his release; they knew they couldn't stop him.

OTHER EVENTS During this time other events were happening in the early church. Both Matthew and Luke wrote their gospels around 60 AD. In 62 AD James, the brother of Jesus, was martyred. At about that same time Peter went to Rome.

MARCH 62 – FALL 67 Paul was free during these 5 ½ years. He traveled and ministered, but time and trials had broken his health. Others were carrying the church forward, but God still had a place and job for Paul. While it's hard to tell with any degree of certainty, we can put together a rough itinerary of Paul's travels during this time.

SPRING - FALL 62 Paul went to Ephesus with Timothy and left him there (1 Timothy. 1:3).

WINTER 62-63 Paul went to Philippi, his favorite Macedonian church (Philippians 1:26; 2:24). The only place he loved as much was Ephesus. He spent the winter here. During this time he wrote a letter to Timothy, who was struggling with the church in Ephesus. Strong-willed women and false teachers were causing his stomach to knot with stress, and he wanted permission to leave Ephesus, but Paul told him to get tough and deal with the situation. He also gave lots of practical advice. Paul had planned on joining Timothy but wasn't able to, so he wrote the letter instead.

SPRING 63 – SPRING 64 Paul spent this year in Asia Minor. First he went to Ephesus where he was able to assist struggling Timothy. Ephesus was the center for operations for all the churches in the area and a very key location. John and Mary were living in Ephesus, too. Nearby were other churches (the 7 churches in Revelation 2-3) and Paul visited them, too.

In Laodicea and Hierapolis, Epaphras was the leader. He was a close friend of Paul, having visited Paul in prison. False teachers were rampant in the area and Paul went there to help solidify the truth in the churches. These two towns were in the same valley, 6 miles apart, with a river flowing between them. Colossae was somewhat further upstream, about 10 miles. Epaphras had delivered the letter to them after Paul wrote it, the book we call Colossians.

During this time, Paul made his first-ever trip to Colossae, although he had already written to them. Epaphras founded the church there while Paul was in prison. Philemon lived there, and Paul said he'd come visit him when he could. Also Onesimus was there and Paul wanted to make sure he was OK and thank him for all his help during Paul's arrest in Rome. Apphia lived there as well, another close friend of Paul's. Archippus was one of the pastors there and he knew Paul as well. He was a son of Philemon.

OTHER EVENTS While Paul was in the Ephesus area important things were going on elsewhere. Luke wrote Acts to his friend Theophilus as a follow-up to the Gospel of Luke. On July 18, 64 AD fire broke out late at night at the northeast end of the Circus Maximus. This colonnade of shops was highly flammable and strong winds fanned the fire. For 5 days it raged, burning much of Rome.

Rumor had it that Nero started it himself so he could rebuild Rome just the way he wanted it. To counter this, he used the Christians as a scapegoat. A great persecution then began.

It was during this time, in 64 AD, that Peter wrote the letter we call 2 Peter shortly before he was martyred by Nero.

SPRING 64 – SPRING 66 To please Nero local officials everywhere started killing Christians. Leaders were especially sought, and Paul above all others. For this reason he went to Spain, a trip he had been wanting to take for some time anyway. It was God's time for Peter to die but not Paul. His work in Macedonia and Asia Minor was done. Other pastors were now in leadership and doing a fine job. The persecution put things underground for the time anyway. Thus Paul sailed from Asia Minor to Massilia (today Marseilles), Spain.

There were Jews and God-fearers there in all the main cities. Paul wanted a fresh start to a new work where there was none, he didn't want to build on someone else's foundation. He found that in Spain. There were some believers there, but no organized church with outreach.

OTHER EVENTS While Paul was in Spain the letter to the Hebrews was written, quite possibly by Paul's student Priscilla. The Jewish war or rebellion against Rome also started. It would end in 70 AD with the Jews defeated and their nation destroyed.

EARLY SUMMER 66 Paul then went to visit Titus on Crete and helped organize the weak churches there. Judaism was flourishing and heresy was strong. Paul couldn't stay long enough to really do all that needed doing, but got things started.

SUMMER 66 Next Paul went to Miletus to join with Trophimus, an Ephesian who left Greece with Paul for Judea. In Jerusalem he was the innocent cause of Paul's arrest, the one they said Paul brought into the inner court. He got sick while there and couldn't travel on with Paul.

Paul then went to Ephesus where Onesiphorus helped him. Once again he risked himself to help Paul, as he had when Paul was in prison. Timothy was there, too. False teachers named Hymenaeus and Philetus were there, too.

While there, Paul wrote back to Titus, encouraging and advising him in the problems Titus faced. That letter is the book of Titus in our Bible.

FALL 66 Paul visited Carpus while there and left his cloak, books and parchments there. Then he traveled to Corinth to see Erastus who was helping lead the struggling church there. The plan was to have Titus join Paul at Nicopolis where they would winter together.

WINTER 66 – 67 Nicopolis was a good place to reach out to the surrounding area during the winter. Paul worked with all the churches of Illyricum during that time. Artemas and Tychius were there with him helping him.

SPRING – FALL 67 Paul next went to Macedonia and Greece. It would be his final place of ministry. It was nice he got to see his beloved Philippi churches one more time.

It's obvious God was behind the growth of the early church. He chose, trained and placed the leaders. He decided who would live and who would die. It is His church. He is the Head. Paul was willing to play whatever role God chose for him, great or small. He had a servant's heart and was a faithful worker for the kingdom – a fine example to us today.

PAUL'S 2ND TRIP TO ROME

It is not part of God's plan to reveal to us the time or manner of our homecoming. That is hidden in the heart of God. It's just as good we don't know. Often, though, we can read the signs and see it coming. Such was the case with Paul. God allowed him to surmise his coming death from the circumstances he was in.

FALL 67 Christians weren't safe anywhere. They were no longer protected as a sect of Judaism. They were arrested and killed, or sent to Rome for entertainment in the coliseum. Leaders were especially sought after. Paul still had the largest reputation of any Christian alive, so his capture was a real prize.

While in Ephesus, a coopersmith named Alexander saw a chance to get revenge and riches both, so he betrayed Paul and then testified against him for a fee.

Because of his status Paul was sent directly to Rome. The short ship trip was difficult in winter, and Paul was old and worn out. He felt betrayed, deserted, alone and rejected. Demas forsook him for the love of this world. Crescens went to Galatia the same way. Titus had to go to Salmatia to minister. Faithful Luke, however, stayed with Paul.

PAUL IN ROME It was a different Rome Paul entered this time, and a different Paul who entered it. He knew the end was near and he was ready. The fire had changed Rome, physically and mentally. Nero had brought persecution, fear and terror everywhere (like Hitler in Germany). Much of Rome was still in ruins. Other parts had newer, bigger buildings and streets.

Prison was more severe, too. This was no house arrest but chains in a foul cell. A few friends courageously visited him, putting themselves and their families at great risk. No one dared stand by him at trial, though, or they would have died as well. All were needed alive to preach and teach.

Paul's mind was still strong, but he knew his body was used up. He was content with his life and how he had used it. There were some things he would have done differently, like not kill Christians, but once he saw the light he, followed it.

He knew his trial would not be fair, that the sentence of death had already been passed. It was just a matter of time. No one was looking for the truth, just for an excuse to kill Paul. Because his cell was cold, dark and boring, Paul asked to have his cloak, books and parchments brought to him. He wanted to spend his final days studying God's Word.

Because he was Public Enemy #1, Paul was kept in the Carcer (later called Mamertine) prison. It was at the foot of Capitoline Hill. Paul himself was in a subterranean chamber, accessible only by a hole in the roof. There were no lights except what a friend might bring. Food was dropped in through the hole in the roof.

Knowing it would mean their deaths as well, Paul didn't want others to visit him and die. Each one was needed to keep the church healthy and growing. Tychius who was with him in prison last time now was in Ephesus. Erastus was in Corinth. Trophimus was in Miletus, Titus in Dalmatia (Illyricum) and Crescens in Galatia. Demas had left God's word for the world. Phygellus and Hermogenes had become apostates and were working against Paul. Loyal Luke was the only one still with Paul. What a bonding they must have developed over the years and all they had been through together. What comfort they must have brought each other. I'm sure God blessed Luke equally with Paul for all he did to help and support Paul. Without Luke, Paul wouldn't have been able to do all he did. One role is as important as the other. If you are in leadership, realize those who support you are crucial to your success. If you are supportive, remember that your role and reward is as great as the one you support.

That's not to say Paul didn't miss the others, especially Timothy and Mark. Timothy was in Ephesus, doing his best to get to Paul in Rome before Paul died. He was imprisoned awhile himself

because of his association with Paul. Mark had reunited with Paul years ago after their parting on the first missionary journey. Both had matured and grown greatly since then.

PAUL'S TRIAL #1 Paul was acquitted of the charge of leading Christians to burn Rome for there was no evidence against him. Alexander the Cooper Smith came all the way to Rome to testify against Paul. He was paid for his false testimony. Paul said, though, that he felt Jesus' presence with him in a special way, as we all will if put in such difficult circumstances. He didn't have any opportunity to preach or defend himself at this trial, however.

It was about this time, the fall of 67, that Paul wrote his final letter – to Timothy of all people. It was very interesting and even more important because of their relationship and feeling it might be their final contact. What a blessing those words were preserved for us today! “For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time has come for my departure. 7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. 8 Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day-and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.” (2 Timothy 4:6-8)

PAUL'S TRIAL #2 Before Paul was tried by magistrates, now by Nero himself. Nero was at the end of his life, at his worst. He was stained with every crime: murderer of his mother, wives and best friends. Picture Paul in prisoner's clothes, bent, white-haired and bald, giving his life for the glory of God and man. How ironic that someone like Nero should be judging someone like Paul! That's how things go in this world, but not in the next! Paul had a godly attitude about it all, not one of self-pity or bitterness. “In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted” (2 Timothy 3:12). We don't know if Paul had one final chance to share his faith at this trial, but knowing how God works I wouldn't be surprised if God gave him this one final privilege.

SPRING 68 - PAUL'S DEATH “So do not be ashamed to testify about our Lord, or ashamed of me his prisoner. But join with me in suffering for the gospel, by the power of God, 9 who has saved us and called us to a holy life-not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time, 10 but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Savior, Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. 11 And of this gospel I was appointed a herald and an apostle and a teacher. 12 That is why I am suffering as I am. Yet I am not ashamed, because I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him for that day.” (2 Timothy 1:8-12) “Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, descended from David. This is my gospel, 9 for which I am suffering even to the point of being chained like a criminal. But God's word is not chained. 10 Therefore, I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they too may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory. 11 Here is a trustworthy saying: If we died with him, we will also live with him; 12 if we endure, we will also reign with him. If we disown him, he will also disown us; 13 if we are faithless, he will remain faithful, for he cannot disown himself.” (2 Timothy 2:8-13)

Because he was a Roman citizen he couldn't be tortured. Paul was decapitated by sword beyond the city walls. He was well protected to make sure Christians didn't attack to free him. Unbelieving onlookers saw it as his defeat, but in reality it was Paul's triumphant procession of victory. A note of interest is that Nero himself died a few months later. Two years after that Jerusalem fell (September 2, 70 AD) and with it the end of one era and the start of another. God's torch passed from the Jews to the Christians (temporarily).

1 TIMOTHY: CHURCH ORDER

TITLE: Named for recipient

AUTHOR: Paul

DATE of WRITING: 62 AD

PLACE of WRITING: Macedonia

RECIPIENT: Timothy, a young pastor friend

KEY VERSE: *if I am delayed, you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God's household, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth. ... But godliness with contentment is great gain. ... But you, man of God, flee from all this, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness. 12 Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses. ... Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to your care. Turn away from godless chatter and the opposing ideas of what is falsely called knowledge, 3:15; 6:6, 11-13, 20*

KEY WORDS: "Good" (22 times); "godliness" (8); "doctrine" (8); "teach/teacher" (7)

PURPOSE: Paul is providing guidance for his young trainee as a pastor. He warns him about false teachers and explains how he should operate a church.

THEME: Correct church order.



Before we even knew if our firstborn would be a boy or girl, God laid it on both of our hearts to name him 'Timothy' because he would be a young pastor. Timothy in the Bible is a fine example for anyone to follow. Born to a Greek father and Jewish mother, he was led to salvation in Jesus by Paul on his first missionary journey. Both his mother, Eunice, and grandmother, Lois, had had a fine godly influence on him. Because of his spiritual gifts and rapid maturity, and also because he naturally got along very well with him, Paul asked Timothy to come with him and help on his second missionary journey. He helped Paul establish churches at Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea and Corinth. Paul sent him anywhere and everywhere as his official 'trouble-shooter,' to straighten out tough situations in churches which Paul himself was unable to visit. This went on for years. Timothy and Paul were very close to the very end. He was probably with Paul in Rome the second time Paul was imprisoned there. This arrest ended in Paul's execution. Timothy himself died as a martyr, killed by the Roman government.

BACKGROUND 1 Timothy was written about 3 years before Paul died. Timothy had been sent to Ephesus to iron out problems there while Paul ministered elsewhere. Paul expected to join him in Ephesus but was delayed, so he wrote this letter to Timothy instructing him how to carry on until he got there. Thus we have Paul's insight into how a church should run. Not being able to get to Ephesus was frustrating to Paul and Timothy, but certainly to our benefit.

I. OCCUPATION OF TIMOTHY (1:3-20) Evidently things weren't going smoothly for easy-going Timothy. False teachers, domineering women, and church conflicts had him asking Paul if he could please leave Ephesus. It was so bad it was causing him stomach problems! Paul told him in no uncertain terms to stay and face up to the opposition. While that would not have been hard for Paul, Timothy was obviously natured quite differently. Thus Paul encourages and supports Timothy in this

difficult assignment. He gives him advice and guidance as well as reminding him of his obligation to stay and do the job. The church needed order and he was the one to bring it.

II. ORGANIZATION OF THE CHURCH (2:1 – 3:16) Paul then talks about the importance of prayer in the church and that it should be led by men. He exhorts that Christian women should be marked by the inner adornment of the soul, not by the outward dress of the body. Their lives should express modesty and good works. Men are to be the leaders, women the supporters. Evidently that wasn't happening in Ephesus.

Paul then told Timothy what the qualifications should be for elders and deacons. The male leadership needed straightening up there, too. Who to choose for church leadership is always a very important subject. Since Paul wasn't able to visit there as soon as he had hoped, he instructs Timothy about how to choose and use leaders.

III. OPERATION OF TIMOTHY (4:1 – 6:19) This last section of 1 Timothy relates to Timothy's own walk and work within the church. Paul warns him about false teachers and reminds him of his duty to be a godly teacher. Paul talks about the church as a family and encourages Timothy to treat the church people as he would treat family members: with respect and honor.

How does your church stack up against Paul's standards as listed in 1 Timothy? If it isn't meeting those principles something is wrong. If Paul were alive he'd come straighten things out. He isn't and he won't, but God is and He will. Be a Timothy and bring order to your church.

OUTLINE OF 1 TIMOTHY

Opening 1:1-2

I. OCCUPATION OF TIMOTHY (Charge to Timothy) 1

- A. Paul Warns Against False Teachers 1:3-11
- B. Paul Testifies to God's Grace 1:12-17
- C. Paul Charges Timothy to Minister 1:18-20

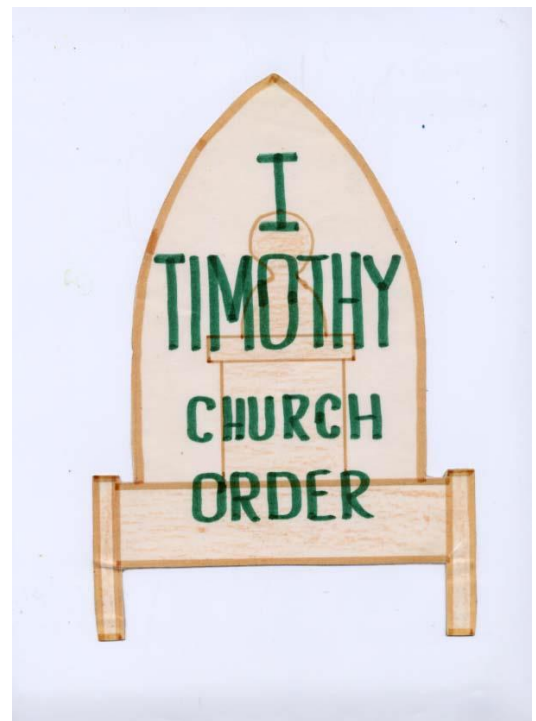
II. ORGANIZATION OF THE CHURCH (Challenges to the Church) 2-3

- A. Role of Prayer 2:1-8
- B. Role of Women 2:9-15
- C. Role of Leaders 3:1-16
 - 1. Elders 3:1-7
 - 2. Deacons 3:8-13
 - 3. Purpose of the Church 3:14-16

III. OPERATION OF TIMOTHY (Conduct of Timothy) 4-6

- A. Be Responsible 4:1-15
 - 1. The Enemy: False Teachers 4:1-5
 - 2. The Duty: Be a Godly Teacher 4:6-16
- B. Be Supportive 5:1-6:2
 - 1. To Those Younger or Older 5:1-2
 - 2. To Widows 5:3-16
 - 3. To Elders 5:17-25
 - 4. To Masters and Slaves 6:1-2
- C. Be Godliness 6:3-19
 - 1. Over False Teachers 6:3-5
 - 2. Over Materialism 6:6-19

Close 6:20-21



TITUS:

DAILY WALK

TITLE: Named for recipient

AUTHOR: Paul

DATE of WRITING: 62 AD

PLACE of WRITING: Corinth

RECIPIENT: Titus, a young pastor Paul is training for ministry

KEY VERSE: *For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. 12 It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly*

passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, 13 while we wait for the blessed hope-the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, 14 who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good. ... But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, 5 he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, 6 whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, 7 so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life. 8 This is a trustworthy saying. And I want you to stress these things, so that those who have trusted in God may be careful to devote themselves to doing what is good. These things are excellent and profitable for everyone. 2:11-14; 3:4-8

KEY WORDS: "Good" (11 times); "good works" (6 times); "sound" (5 times)

PURPOSE:

1 TIMOTHY	TITUS	2 TIMOTHY
Mostly pastoral	Less pastoral	Mostly pastoral
Guard the gospel 6:20	Practice the gospel 3:8	Preach the gospel 4:2

THEME: How to live a godly life

After his third missionary journey, Paul went to Jerusalem where he was falsely accused and arrested. For his safety he was taken to Caesarea where he spent 2 years in house arrest. Paul appealed to Caesar and was taken to Rome. On the way he was shipwrecked. Eventually he was released because the Jews couldn't prove any charges against him. Paul then went to Ephesus and left Timothy there to help churches in that whole area. Paul continued on to northern Greece and wrote back to Timothy, encouraging him in his work and explaining about church order and organization (1 Timothy). Next Paul went to Crete and left Titus there to supervise those churches. Soon Paul left Crete and went to Corinth. From there he wrote back to Titus encouraging him. Eventually he ended up in Ephesus again where he was arrested for the second time and taken back to Rome for the crime of being a Christian. From prison there he wrote to Timothy again (2 Timothy).

BACKGROUND Sandwiched between 1 and 2 Timothy is the book of Titus which is very similar to 1 Timothy. Titus was a Gentile whom Paul led to salvation. Paul took him to the Jerusalem council to show the leaders a Gentile could be saved without being circumcised. At the end of the third missionary journey Titus again is mentioned. Paul sent him to Corinth to deal with delicate problems there (much the same as Timothy was sent to Ephesus). Mainly, though, Titus worked with the churches on Crete, just as Timothy worked with the churches in Ephesus.



I. DAILY WALK OF THE LEADERS (1:5-16) Paul begins by reminding Titus how the church leaders were to live and act. Qualifications and requirements were given for deacons and elders. Paul also warns them about false teachers and their danger. Titus couldn't be everywhere on the island of Crete, so he needed dependable leaders to oversee the various house-churches there. This was the same set-up used in all the cities where there were churches.

II. DAILY WALK OF THE LAITY (2:1-10) Paul tells Titus how all believers are to live. Older men are to be self-controlled, women reverent and faithful, younger men are to be sensible. All are to set godly examples for others. Servants, too, are to live godly, submissive lives.

In all things they are to live by grace. They are to turn from ungodly lusts and desires. They are to live remembering that Jesus could come back for them at any time and they are to always be ready. Holiness must characterize God's people.

In relationship to the government they are to be good citizens. To all people they are to be ready to do what is good, honest in all they say and do, gracious and forgiving to all, and considerate and humble at all times. This will show others what a Christian really is. They are to avoid strife and contentions among themselves.

Any who don't follow these principles are to be disciplined so they repent or are removed. This will show the seriousness of sin and keep the church pure. Living the Christian life is mandatory, not optional. It is a requirement, not suggestion. How are you doing?

OUTLINE OF TITUS

Opening 1:1-4

I. DAILY WALK OF THE LEADERS (Requirements for Elders) 1

- A. As Applies to God, Self and Others 1:5-9
 - 1. Reason for Elders 1:5
 - 2. Requirements for Elders 1:6-9
- B. As Applies to False Teachers 1:10-16
 - 1. Description of False Teachers 1:10-12
 - 2. Duty of Elders 1:13-14
 - 3. Desertion by False Teachers 1:15-16

II. DAILY WALK OF THE LAITY (Regulations for the Church) 2-3

- A. As Applies to Their Own Age and Status 2:1-10
 - 1. Aged Men 2:1-2
 - 2. Aged Women 2:3-5
 - 3. Young Men 2:6
 - 4. Titus 2:7-8
 - 5. Servants 2:9-10
- B. As Applies to the World 2:11-15
 - 1. Live by Grace, Not World 2:11-12
 - 2. Life for Rapture, Not World 2:13
 - 3. Life for Christ, Not World 2:14-15
- C. As Applies to the Government 3:1
- D. As Applies to All People 3:1-7
- E. As Applies to Ungodly People 3:8-11
 - 1. Maintain Good Works 3:8
 - 2. Avoid Foolish Strife 3:9
 - 3. Discipline the Unruly 3:10-11

Closing 3:12-14



2 TIMOTHY: FAITHFUL SERVICE

TITLE: Named for recipient

AUTHOR: Paul

DATE of WRITING: 64 AD

PLACE of WRITING: Rome (prison #2)

RECIPIENT: Timothy, a young pastor

KEY VERSE: *Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage-with great patience and careful instruction. 3 For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. 4 They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths. 5 But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry. 4:1-5*

KEY WORD: "Good" (5 times)

PURPOSE: Paul is providing more guidance for the young man he is training in the pastorate. He tells him how to live as a true servant in a time of apostasy. He also asks Timothy to come to him quickly, as he was about to be executed.

THEME: Paul's final words are to faithfully serve God.

Paul has been serving God faithfully for over 30 years. It's been 20 years since his first missionary journey. He has suffered much, sacrificed much, and been near death often. His brilliant, gifted mind and strong personality has led the early church through its tough growing years when false teachers and jealous political leaders tried all they could to destroy it. Now he is in prison again. In the 5 years since his first imprisonment Paul has been able to travel to see churches he has started as well as go start new ones in places he had never been. Now the end is near and Paul knows it. God has raised up a new generation of local leaders to take over the guidance of the church. Paul is worn out physically. He writes one final letter, to the one person (other than faithful Luke who was with him to the end) he loves more than anyone, his son in the faith, Timothy. 2 Timothy contains Paul's dying words, his final communication as he faces death. If a news reporter had interviewed Paul at this time they would have asked him if he had any doubts about how he spent his life. "Paul, was it worth it?" "Yes!" Paul would affirm, "and much more." "What final parting words do you have for your followers out there?" the reporter would ask. Paul answered "Be faithful." That, in effect, is the message of 2 Timothy. "Be faithful!"

BACKGROUND Persecution is getting worse for believers. Thousands are being martyred. They are considered enemies of Rome with no rights to a fair trial. Then when Nero burned Rome and blamed it on the Christians, things got worse. Everyone started blaming them for everything. Peter is also in prison, soon to be crucified upside down. Paul is public enemy number one. He was betrayed and deceived while in Ephesus, and thus he now finds himself in prison in Rome. He is not under house arrest but in a dungeon awaiting execution. This strips away all pretense and gets right to the heart and core of what is in a person. When one faces death all façade is stripped away. That's what makes 2 Timothy such a revealing letter.

I. FAITHFUL TO THE SAVIOR (1:3-18) Paul begins by encouraging Timothy to stay faithful to God and use his spiritual gift of teaching for God's glory. With all the oppression going on, it seems Timothy was fighting depression and Paul does his best to encourage and motivate him to stay faithful to God and not be ashamed of the gospel. Paul doesn't want Timothy to feel badly because of his own sufferings. He says that it's a real privilege to suffer for the gospel. Many are defecting under pressure, but Paul tells Timothy to make sure he remains faithful to Jesus.



II. FAITHFUL TO SELF (2:1-26) Paul then uses seven illustrations of faithfulness as examples to Timothy: a teacher, soldier, athlete, farmer, workman, vessel and slave. Knowing that things will actually get much worse for Timothy, Paul wants to make sure he stays true.

III. FAITHFUL TO SERVE (3:1 – 4:15) Despite how bad the circumstances are, Paul tells Timothy to stay faithful to God and his ministry. He assures him that he is in God's will and tells him to live on so he will be glad of it when he dies. Keep things in eternal perspective is Paul's message. Paul concludes with compliments for those who have been faithful to him. He wants to see Timothy one more time before he dies if possible. We don't know if he got there in time or not. Some say he was arrested himself when he tried to see Paul. If so he was released and ministered in Ephesus for some time with John until being martyred for his faithfulness.

Paul would tell us the same thing today – be faithful. That was Jesus' request of His followers as well. What about you. Are you faithful? Are you passing the test? Make sure!

OUTLINE OF 2 TIMOTHY

Opening 1:1-2

I. FAITHFUL TO THE SAVIOR (Hold Fast to the Gospel) 1

- A. Responsibility to Be Faithful 1:3-18
 - 1. Use God's Gift 1:3-6
 - 2. Don't Be Ashamed 1:8
 - 3. Share the Afflictions of the Gospel 1:8
 - 4. Hold Fast the Truth 1:13
 - 5. Keep Your Ministry 1:14
- B. Reason to Be Faithful 1:3-18
 - 1. Nature of God's Spirit 1:7
 - 2. Purpose of Salvation 1:9
 - 3. Achievements of Jesus 1:10
 - 4. Purpose of Ministry 1:11-12
 - 5. Defections of Many 1:15-18

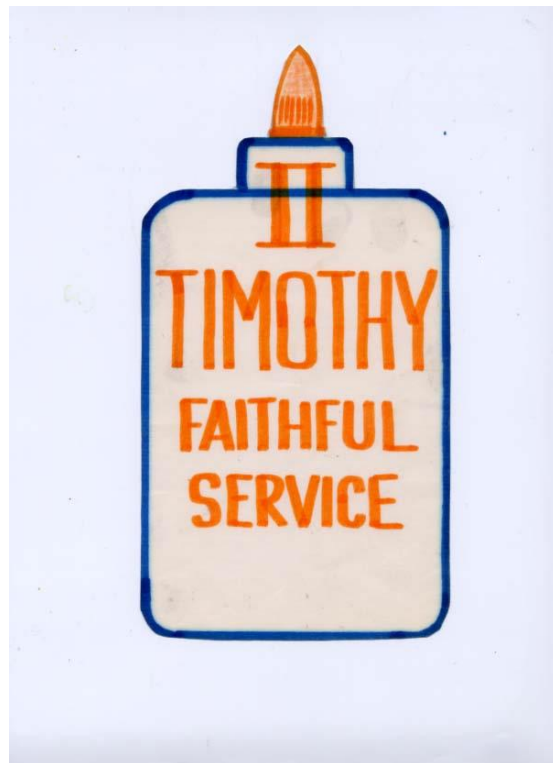
II. FAITHFUL TO SELF (Pass on the Gospel) 2

- Pictures of Faithfulness
 - 1. Teacher 2:2
 - 2. Soldier 2:3-4
 - 3. Athlete 2:5
 - 4. Farmer 2:6
 - 5. Workman 2:15-19
 - 6. Vessel 2:20-22
 - 7. Slave 2:23-26

III. FAITHFUL TO SERVE (Protect the Gospel) 3-4

- A. Challenges to Faithfulness 3:1-9
- B. Comfort From Faithfulness 3:10-4:15
 - 1. Peace Despite Persecution 3:10-16
 - 2. Assurance of Being in God's Will 4:1-5
 - 3. A Good Finish in Life 4:6-7
 - 4. A Good Future After Life 4:8
 - 5. Good Friends in This Life 4:9-18

Closing 4:19-22



24h . EARLY CHURCH

During the life of Paul, the disciples who had been with Jesus also traveled and spoke , ministering for Jesus. Several of them wrote books. Most were martyred.

PETER and **PAUL** were both martyred in Rome about 66 AD, during the persecution under Emperor Nero. Paul was beheaded. Peter was crucified, upside down at his request, since he did not feel he was worthy to die in the same manner as his Lord.

ANDREW went to the "land of the man-eaters," in what is now the Soviet Union. Christians there claim him as the first to bring the gospel to their land. He also preached in Asia Minor, modern-day Turkey, and in Greece, where he is said to have been crucified.

"Doubting" **THOMAS** was probably most active in the area east of Syria. Tradition has him preaching as far east as India, where the ancient Marthoma Christians revere him as their founder. They claim that he died there when pierced through with the spears of four soldiers.

PHILIP possibly had a powerful ministry in Carthage in North Africa and then in Asia Minor, where he converted the wife of a Roman proconsul. In retaliation, the proconsul had Philip arrested and cruelly put to death.

MATTHEW the tax collector and writer of a Gospel, ministered in Persia and Ethiopia. Some of the oldest reports say he was not martyred, while others say he was stabbed to death in Ethiopia.

BARTHOLOMEW had widespread missionary travels attributed to him by tradition: to India with Thomas, back to Armenia, and also to Ethiopia and Southern Arabia. There are various accounts of how he met his death as a martyr for the gospel.

JAMES the son of Alphaeus, is one of at least three James referred to in the New Testament. There is some confusion as to which is which, but this James is reckoned to have ministered in Syria. The Jewish historian Josephus reported that he was stoned and then clubbed to death.

SIMON THE ZEALOT, so the story goes, ministered in Persia and was killed after refusing to sacrifice to the sun god.

MATTHIAS was the apostle chosen to replace Judas. Tradition sends him to Syria with Andrew and to death by burning.

JOHN is the only one of the company generally thought to have died a natural death from old age. He was the leader of the church in the Ephesus area and is said to have taken care of Mary the mother of Jesus in his home. During Domitian's persecution in the middle 90's, he was exiled to the island of Patmos. There he is credited with writing the last book of the New Testament--the Revelation. An early Latin tradition has him escaping unhurt after being cast into boiling oil at Rome.

HEBREWS:

CHRIST IS SUPERIOR

TITLE: Recipients are Hebrew Christians

AUTHOR: Unknown (Paul, Barnabas,

Timothy, Priscilla, etc.?)

DATE of WRITING: 65 AD

PLACE of WRITING: Unknown

RECIPIENTS: Jewish Believers

KEY VERSE: *For somewhere he has spoken about the seventh day in these words: "And on the seventh day God rested from all his work." 4:4*

KEY WORDS: "Eternal" (13 times); "heavens" (13); "better" (12); "perfection" (11); "partakers" (7); "faith" (31)

PURPOSE: Encourage Jewish believers to stay faithful to Jesus and not give in to persecution and go back to Judaism for salvation.

THEME: Christ is superior to all things (including the Old Testament, Judaism, angels, etc.)



Becoming a 1st Century convert to Christianity could definitely be "hazardous to your health." There was rejection, persecution and even cruel death. It was especially hard if you were a Jewish believer because your family and friends would turn on you. Your whole support system would put tremendous pressure on you to revert back to Judaism. You would lose your job, your family, your savings, your inheritance and your hope through Judaism. Because of this extra pressure, many Jewish believers who had put their faith in Jesus as the Messiah later recanted and went back to Judaism. This book was written to show them that Jesus is the ONLY way and that He is superior to everything in Judaism. It is essentially a commentary on Genesis through Deuteronomy showing how Jesus fulfilled and supersedes all the laws and practices written therein. The Old Testament is but a shadow, Jesus is the real thing.

I. SUPERIORITY OF THE PERSON OF CHRIST (1:1 – 4:16) In a majestically constructed opening paragraph the author introduces his readers to the surpassing greatness of Jesus. Without a standard opening the author jumps right into his subject. Jesus is greater than the **Old Testament Prophets (1:1-4)** because He is the creator and sustainer of all things, the express image of God and the One seated beside the Father in heaven.

Next the writer shows that Jesus is greater than the **angels (1:5 – 2:18)** as well. He is superior because He is God and because He alone provided salvation. Jesus died for human sin as a man and thus defeated the most powerful angel, Lucifer. By becoming lower than the angels, Christ lifted men up to a position spiritually superior to the angels.

Jesus is also superior to **Moses (3:1-6)**, the greatest Old Testament man to the Jews. Moses was a servant in God's house but Jesus was the builder of that house. In addition, Jesus is greater than **Joshua (3:7 – 4:16)**. Joshua may have led the Jews into the Promised Land, but even he didn't lead them into permanent victory or peace.

II. SUPERIORITY OF THE PRIESTHOOD OF CHRIST (4:14 – 9:39) First the writer shows that Jesus is superior to **Aaron's priesthood (4:14 – 6:20)**. The Jewish high priest was in God's presence only one day a year, Jesus is continually there. He has unlimited access. He has no sin of his own to contend with as the Jewish priests did. They offered sacrifices for themselves and others, Jesus offered Himself as the sinless sacrifice for all and that ended the need for any sacrifices by any Jewish priests.

Jesus is even superior to **the priesthood of Melchizedek (7:1 – 8:13)**. He was a priest as well as a king, Jewish priests were never kings. Jewish priests were only priests from the age of 30 until their death, Melchizedek's priesthood was eternal, no beginning and no end.

Thus Jesus is superior to **all priesthoods (9:1 – 10:39)**. His sacrifice is a one-time offering that totally removes all sin and guilt forever. His work is finished. He is seated in God's presence. Jewish priests can't compare to that at all.

III. SUPERIORITY OF THE POWER OF CHRIST (11:1 – 13:19) Jesus overcomes **faithlessness (11:1-40)**. Examples of those with faith are listed in chapter 11. It was their faith that brought God's approval, not their keeping of the Old Testament system. All were rewarded for their faith, and the writer wants his readers to be rewarded for theirs as well.

Following Jesus overcomes **hopelessness (12:1-29)**. Don't be like Esau he warns them, and sell their future spiritual blessing for a moment of physical relief from distress. When they see their error later it will be too late.

Finally he shows how Jesus overcomes **lovelessness (13:1-19)**. He says that Jesus motivates His followers to treat each other in love.

Interspersed throughout the book are 5 warnings to them to not go back. Some use these to show that salvation can be lost, but that's not the context they are written in. They are written to Jews who have realized that Jesus is the Messiah but, under pressure, have decided to go back to Judaism. Before they knew about Jesus, when they were in their ignorance, Judaism was all right and God didn't hold them accountable for what they didn't know. Now that they know, however, they are responsible to act on that and they can no longer go back to their ignorance. Jesus is superior. Is there anything in your life that you have above Him?

OUTLINE OF HEBREWS

I. SUPERIORITY OF THE PERSON OF CHRIST 1:1-4:13

A. Superior to the Prophets 1:1-4

B. Superior to Angels 1:5-2:18

1. In His Divine Person 1:5-14

2. In His Saving Proclamation 2:1-4

WARNING 1: Don't Drift From the Truth

3. In His Delivering Purpose 2:5-18

C. Superior to Moses 3:1-6

D. Superior to Joshua 3:7-4:13

WARNING 2: Don't Harden Your Heart

1. Ruin from Unbelief 3:7-19

2. Results of Unbelief 4:1-10

3. Remedy of Unbelief 4:11-13

II. SUPERIORITY OF THE PRIESTHOOD OF CHRIST 4:14-10:39

A. Superior to Aaron's Priesthood 4:14-6:20

WARNING 3: Don't Move Back from Christ

B. Superior to Melchizedek's Priesthood 7:1-8:13

1. Portrait of Melchizedek 7:1-3

2. Preeminence of Melchizedek 7:4-8:13

C. Superior to All Priesthoods 9:1-10:39

1. Earthly Priesthood 9:1-10

2. Christ's Priesthood 9:11-14

3. Christ's Fulfillment of the Prophecies 9:15-10:39

WARNING 4: Don't Despise Christ

III. SUPERIORITY OF THE POWER OF CHRIST 11:1-13:19

A. Superior to Faithfulness 11:1-40

1. Description of Faith 11:1

2. Examples of Faith 11:2-40

B. Superior to Hopelessness 12:1-29

1. The Debatable Things 12:1-2

2. The Disciplines of Life 12:3-22

3. The Direction of Life 12:12-17

4. The Drive of Life 12:18-24

5. The Duty of Life 12:25-29

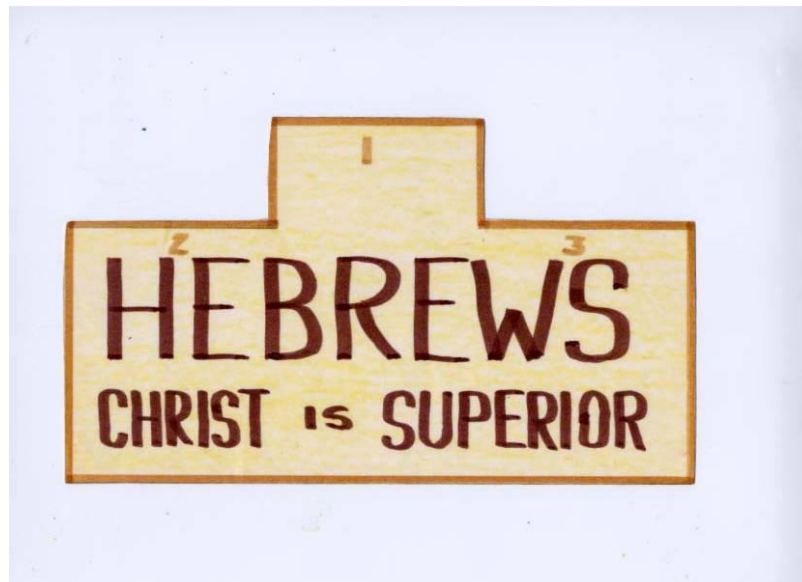
WARNING 5: Don't Reject Christ

C. Superior to Lovelessness 13:1-19

1. In Relation to Social Duties 13:1-5

2. In Relation to Spiritual Duties 13:6-19

Concluding Benediction 13:20-25



1 JOHN: FELLOWSHIP

TITLE: Named for author

AUTHOR: John

DATE of WRITING: about 90 AD

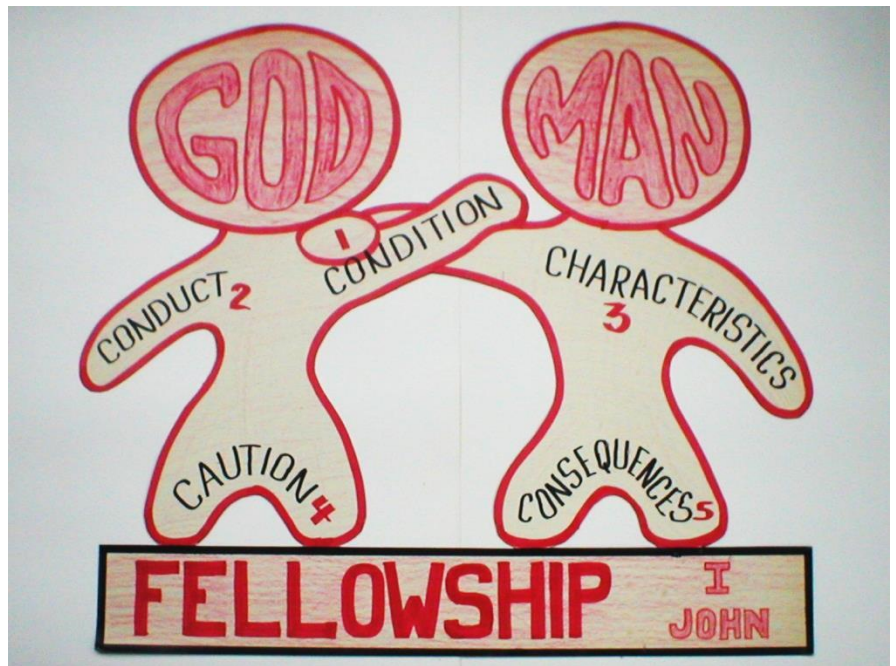
PLACE of WRITING: Ephesus

RECIPIENTS: Believers everywhere

KEY VERSE: *He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life. 5:12-13*

KEY WORDS: "Love" (45 times); "know" (35); "world" (23); "life" (15); "light" (6)

PURPOSE:



GOSPEL	I JOHN
Written to arouse faith (20:31)	Written to establish certainty regarding that faith (5:13)
The Good News Historically	The Good News Experientially

THEME: How to have fellowship with God and others, and to know you have assurance of salvation.

Its 25 years since the persecution that killed Peter, Paul, Timothy and thousands of others. It's 90 AD. John is the only disciple not martyred. He still lives in Ephesus where he took care of Mary for so many years, as Jesus had asked him to do. He writes a letter to no one particular place, just to believers in general. He had something he wanted to say to everyone, so he wrote a letter that would be copied and spread everywhere

The Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John) have been written to keep the record for future generations, after the eyewitnesses have died. They were circulated so all would know the truth and not be misled by false teachers. John wrote his gospel 2 or more years after the others. He wrote to show his readers how to have eternal life in Christ (20:31). Now he is writing again to tell them how they can know they have eternal life and enjoy it now. He tells them this takes belief in Christ, obedience and love. False teachers attacked these 3 so John defends and explains them. The key, John says, is fellowship with God and then with man. The false teachers were the Gnostics which Paul wrote against in Colossians. They made knowledge the greatest virtue, denied the Bible, said everything material is evil but we are spiritual, so our body can sin all we want and it won't affect our immaterial part which will be reincarnated one day anyway. Much of these false ideas have reemerged in 'New Age' belief.

I. CONDITIONS OF FELLOWSHIP (1:5 – 2:2) John starts by explaining the conditions of fellowship. We can't be close to God when we have sin in our lives (despite what the Gnostics say). Sin breaks relationships – man to man as well as man to God. The solution is not to be perfect and sinless, for that will never happen. The solution is to confess (admit, agree with God about the sin) the sin and accept His forgiveness.

II. CONDUCT IN FELLOWSHIP (2:3-27) John, the disciple of love whom Jesus loved so very much, said that they couldn't love God if they didn't love each other. If you truly love someone, you will love their children as well. If you aren't kind to their children, you really don't love them. The same is true

with God and His children. The love John is talking about is agape love – unconditional love, love in spite of. It's love that is the fruit of the Spirit, the love that comes only from God. It's not phileo love – conditional love, 'liking' someone because of what they do (or don't do). John also tells them they can't love God and love the world, for they are diametrically opposed world views with no common ground. It's one or the other. If you love God you will go against the world system. If you love the world system you will go against God. If you say you love God but live by the world's values and priorities, you don't really love God. Loving God will show itself in how you live. We can't have fellowship with God and the world; it's one or the other. When John says we can't love the world, he is not talking about nature, but about the Satan-inspired system of self-centered goals and motives, values and principles.

III. CHARACTERISTIC OF FELLOWSHIP (2:28 – 3:24) The condition for fellowship with God is no unconfessed sin in our life. The conduct of fellowship is to obey Him in love. The characteristic of that fellowship is living a holy, righteous life. That is what will happen when we obey Him in love. Our life will not be marked by continual habitual sin. We will reject the world's prideful, selfish, pleasure-first ways and the world will reject us. We will have a sincere love for God and fellow believers which will show itself in how we live and act.

IV. CAREFUL OF FELLOWSHIP (4:1-21) John warns his readers to watch out for false, lying, deceiving teachers. These people they are to have no fellowship with.

V. CONSEQUENCES OF FELLOWSHIP (5:1-21) John concludes reminding them to have love for each other and trust Jesus to give them victory over the world. He reminds them that Jesus is God and man in one, something the false teachers strongly deny (as they do today, too). He also assures them of eternal life, that their salvation is secure and certain.

There are many practical truths in 1 John for us today. It is a book to read and apply. If you have accepted Jesus as your Savior, make sure there is no sin in your life. Make sure you obey Him in love, and show that love for God by loving your fellow believers.

Purpose 1:1-4

I. CONDITION FOR FELLOWSHIP (Fellowship) 1:5-2:2

- A. Conformity to a Standard 1:5-7
- B. Confession of Sin 1:8-2:2

II. CONDUCT IN FELLOWSHIP (Obedience) 2:3-27

- A. Character of our Conduct – Imitation 2:3-11
- B. Commandment of our Conduct – Separation 2:12-17
- C. Creed for our Conduct – Affirmation 2:18-27

III. CHARACTERISTIC OF FELLOWSHIP (Righteousness) 2:28-3:28

- A. In Relation to Our Prospect: Purity 2:28-3:3
- B. In Relation to Our Position: Righteousness 3:4-18
- C. In Relation to Our Prayers: Answers 3:19-28

IV. CAREFUL OF FELLOWSHIP (Holy Spirit) 4:1-21

- A. Concerning False, Lying Spirits 4:1-6
- B. Concerning a True, Loving Spirit 4:7-21

V. CONSEQUENCES OF FELLOWSHIP (Faith) 5:1-21

- A. Love for Brethren 5:1-3
- B. Victory Over World 5:4-5
- C. Verification of Christ's Credentials 5:6-12
- D. Assurance of Eternal Life 5:13
- E. Guidance in prayer 5:14-17
- F. Freedom from Habitual Sin 5:18-21

2 JOHN: GO IN TRUTH

TITLE: Named for author

AUTHOR: John

DATE of WRITING: about 90 AD

PLACE of WRITING: Ephesus

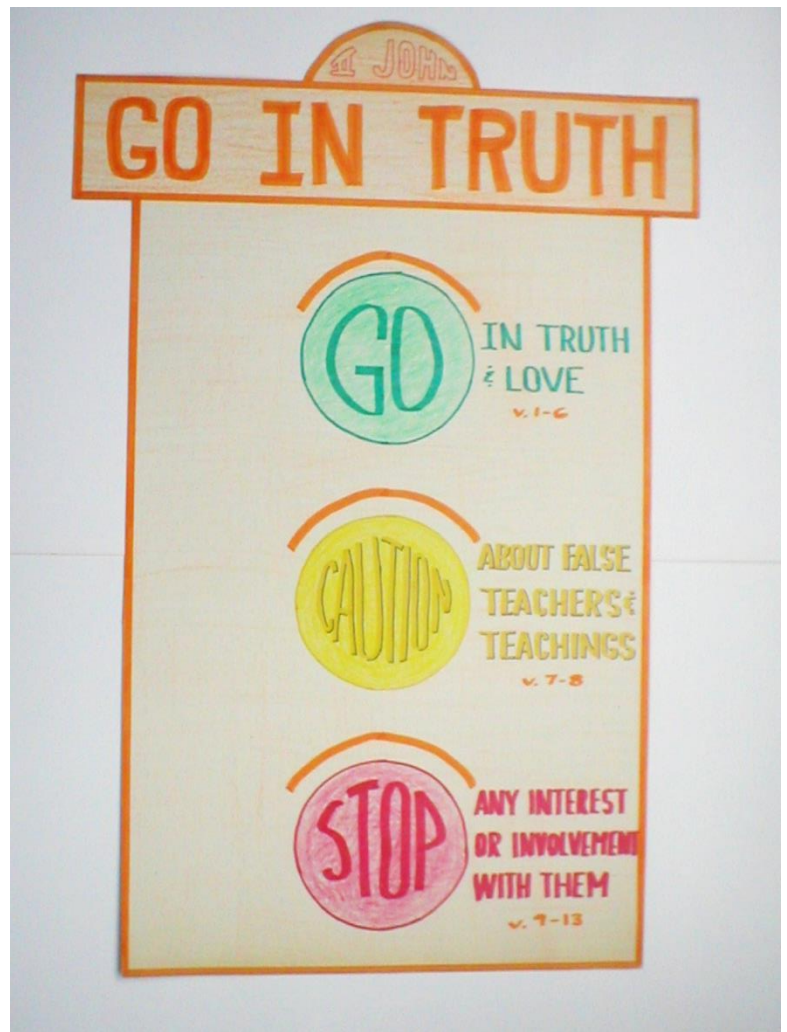
RECIPIENTS: Christian lady & her children

KEY VERSE: *Anyone who runs ahead and does not continue in the teaching of Christ does not have God; whoever continues in the teaching has both the Father and the Son. If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not take him into your house or welcome him.* 9-10

KEY WORDS: "Truth" (5 times); "walk" (3 times)

PURPOSE: 1. To give a Christian lady a good report about her children. 2. To warn and instruct her with regard to compromising with false teachers. She is told how to avoid being deceived (v. 9) and how to treat deceivers (v. 10-11).

THEME: Warning against receiving deceivers and false teachers.



2 John is similar to 1 John, only shorter. It was written just after 1 John. John addresses it to a Christian lady, probably a church. In those days of persecution he was protecting them from danger. Immediately he gets to the point: stay faithful to God and avoid false teachings and teachers.

I. GO (4-6) He tells them to go and grow in truth. Their testimony of obedience to God has spread to John and he is encouraged by it. John also commends them for their love, which is their motive in obedience. If we love God we will obey Him. Love alone is weak and undisciplined. Obedience alone is cold and mechanical. Together there is a real balance of beauty. Do you have love and obedience? Which are you strongest in?

II. CAUTION (7-11) John warns them to avoid anyone who isn't obeying God in love. He specifically warns against anyone who does not see Christ as 100% God and 100% man in One. He is the God-man Who came to die for our sins and rise again.

Notice how virtually all of the later New Testament books warn against false teachings? Why does God allow so many false teachers and teachings – then and now? For one thing, that motivated the disciples to write down the truth to keep it true and clear (so we have the New Testament). Another reason is to weed out the professors from the true possessors. It gave people a choice, and those who didn't want to accept Jesus as the God-man and live for Him had plenty of alternatives to turn to. God always gives man a free will choice. He never forces anyone. Another reason is that

God allows the false teachers time to discover the error of their beliefs and repent. He doesn't force their free will, either, but does give them time to turn to Him for mercy and forgiveness.

John warns his readers that if they turn from the truth in Jesus to false teachings they won't lose their salvation but will lose reward. They can't lose the rewards they already have laid ahead, but can fail to earn any more and thus not get their full potential of reward.

III. STOP (9-11) John in effect says the same thing here that he said years before in John 15 – abide/remain in Christ. The message has not changed. Abiding and obeying are inseparable. Abiding in Christ calls for a firm response against those who don't abide. If someone doesn't have that, John says we aren't to do anything to in any way encourage them, including letting them into our home (9-11).

In those days teachers and preachers traveled by foot and relied on local people for lodging and hospitality. There were no hotels or inns to stay in. It was the duty of believers to provide hospitality to these people (3 John is about this very thing). However if someone isn't totally committed in belief and actions to Jesus as God and man in One, the only way of salvation, John says to have NOTHING to do with them. Don't even invite them in to debate them. Why? That is enough to encourage them in their wrong ways. Others will see you invite them in and could take it for acceptance. It is bad stewardship of one's own time. Also, the chances of them planting seeds of doubt in you are much greater than the chances of you straightening them out. It's often our pride that says we are too strong to be swayed and we are smart enough to show them their wrongs. Today we are too tolerant of religious differences. As long as someone appears 'sincere' we back off. "Who are we to 'judge' someone else?" we think. Paul, Peter, John and Jesus Himself would be very stern with us. They'd call it compromise and sin!

Always find out clearly where someone stands on the deity of Jesus and salvation by the shed blood of Jesus only. If they dance around it or are vague, watch out! Also have them define their terms. Roman Catholics and Mormons alike talk about 'salvation through faith by grace' but define their terms differently than we do. Watch out!!!

OUTLINE OF 2 JOHN

Greetings 1-3

I. GO (Green) 4-6

- A. In Truth 4
- B. In Love 5

II. CAUTION (Yellow) 7-8

- A. About False Teachers 7
- B. About False Teaching 8

III. STOP (Red) 9-11

- A. Any Interest in Them 9
- B. Any Involvement With Them 10-11

Closing 12-13



3 JOHN: HOSPITALITY

TITLE: Named for author

AUTHOR: John

DATE of WRITING: about 90 AD

PLACE of WRITING: Ephesus

RECIPIENTS: Gaius, a faithful convert of John's

KEY VERSE: *We ought therefore to show hospitality to such men so that we may work together for the truth.* 8

KEY WORD: "Truth: (7 times)

PURPOSE: John had sent some faithful servants of God

to minister to his church. Diotrephes, a leader, refused to be hospitable to them and he threatened to cast out of the church anyone who showed them hospitality. John warns against this and says he will come straighten it out. In the meantime, Gaius is to show hospitality to Demetrius, a visiting minister.

THEME: The importance of showing hospitality to true believers.



1 JOHN	2 JOHN	3 JOHN
FELLOWSHIP	WALK IN TRUTH	HOSPITALITY
Jesus The LIFE	Jesus The TRUTH	Jesus The WAY
Fellowship with God (is crucial)	Fellowship with enemies (is forbidden)	Fellowship with Believers (is important)
FAITH	HERESY	HOSPITALITY
These "went out" (2:19)	These want to get in (10)	These want to cast out those who should be in (10)

Do you have a guest room in your house? If you do, then you have turned your home into a 'hospital'. 'Hospital' in Latin means 'guest room'. Every time you extend hospitality to someone, technically that person has been 'hospitalized.' Now the word is used of medical centers, but really it should be something all of us do. Often it is a lost art today. We send people to hotels or motels and we take them to restaurants instead.

To the Jews it was considered a sacred duty to receive, feed, lodge and protect any traveler who might stop at your door. Strangers were treated as honored guests. Men who thus ate together were bonded to each other by the strongest ties of friendship, which descended to their heirs. Hospitality was a religious duty, even commanded by the law of Moses (Leviticus 19:33-34). No one was to consider their house as theirs alone. It was always to be open to whomever may need a place to stay as they passed by.

THE CAST **Diotrephes** dominated the church but wasn't hospitable. He was a jealous, controlling person who threatened to excommunicate any in his church who were hospitable to traveling preachers or teachers. **Demetrius** carried this letter of 3 John. He was a traveling preacher in need of a place to stay. **Gaius** was a believer in Asia Minor and was urged to show hospitality to

Demetrius no matter what Diotrephes said or did. Thus 3 John is the only New Testament book that was private and personal. It was a letter addressed from John to Gaius, never intended for anyone else to read, much less be part of the Bible. The themes of love and truth again dominate, as they did in John's other letters, 1 and 2 John. 3 John is very short, more like a post card than a letter!

I. PROSPERITY SHOULDERS HOSPITALITY (GAIUS) 2-8 John, who probably enjoyed Gaius' hospitality himself, encouraged him to show the same consideration to Demetrius. He complements and encourages him in his spiritual growth. He says that all this love shown in hospitality brings honor and glory to God. Also, the one helping someone else do God's work shares in the reward that one gets. This is true if we give of our time, talents or treasure to help someone in God's work. It includes missionaries and pastors, but also anyone we help.

II. PRIDE SHUNS HOSPITALITY (DIOTREPHESES) 9-10 It seems John had already contacted Diotrephes about his control and self-centeredness, but there was no change. Pride and control can be a temptation for anyone in leadership. John says he will come and deal with the problem of Diotrephes personally when he can, but that now he wants to make sure Gaius is cared for.

III. PRAISE SHOWS HOSPITALITY (DEMETRIUS) 11-12 One's conduct clearly reflects one's relationship with God. Demetrius is a godly man that John can highly recommend. He assures him that Gaius isn't a false teacher – probably that is the excuse Diotrephes used in denying traveling pastors hospitality. John says that isn't so.

So why is this short private letter in the Bible with books like Romans and Revelation? Because God wants us to know that showing hospitality is still very important. Do you do it?

OUTLINE OF 3 JOHN

Opening 1

I. PROSPEROUS CAN AFFORD HOSPITALITY 2-8

A. Prosperity Declared 2-4

B. Prosperity Demonstrated 5-8

II. PRIDEFUL TURN FROM HOSPITALITY 9-10

A. Pride Revealed 9

B. Pride Rebuked 10

III. PRAISE FOR SHOWING HOSPITALITY 11-12

A. Explained 11

B. Exemplified 12

Closing 13-14



JUDE: APOSTASY

TITLE: Named for author

AUTHOR: Jude, half-brother of Jesus

DATE of WRITING: 70 AD

PLACE of WRITING: Unknown

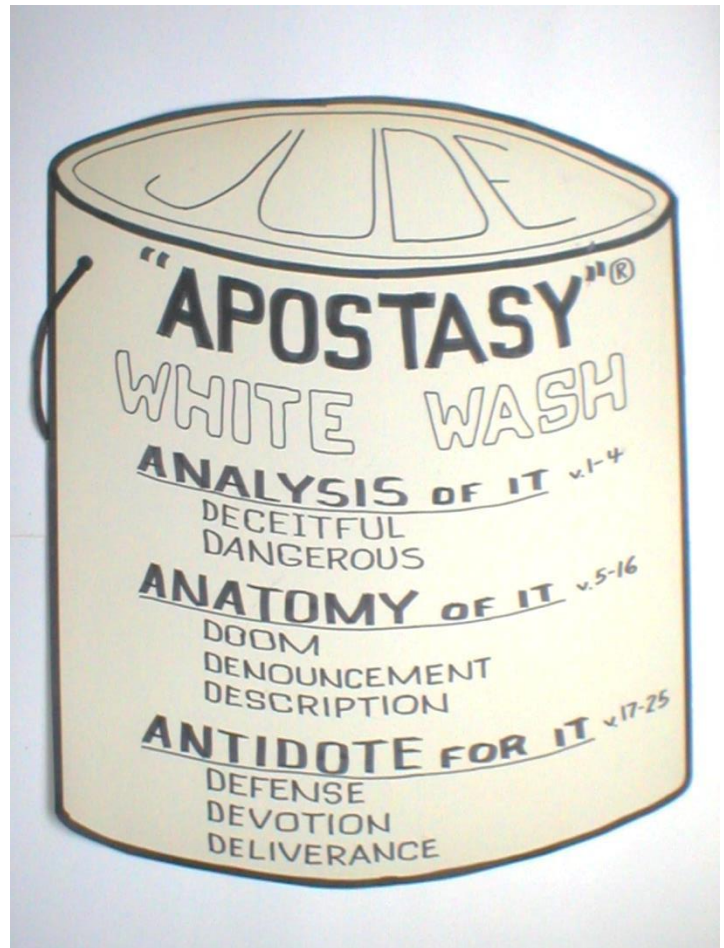
RECIPIENTS: All believers everywhere

KEY VERSE: *Dear friends, although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share, I felt I had to write and urge you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints.* 3

KEY WORD: "Ungodly" (6 times)

PURPOSE: Jude wanted to write about their "common salvation" but the Holy Spirit led him to write about the false teachers who were creeping in. They are clearly described, and so is their doom. Jude comforts and encourages the true believers

THEME: All about apostates and apostasy.



2 PETER	JUDE
Warning against false teachings & teachers	Warning against false teachings & teachers
False teachers WILL come	False teachers HAVE come
Dark picture painted of false teachers	Darker picture painted of false teachers

Attacks from without are obvious, clearly seen attempts to defeat us and turn us from faithfulness to Jesus. Attacks from within are not as black and white. They are more subtle and deceptive. Guess which are most effective? Guess which Satan uses more? Persecution makes the church stronger and it grows in quality and quantity. False teaching within weakens it bit by bit, until it is diluted and ineffective.

We are not immune from this effective tactic of Satan's today. Some forms include adding works of any kind to salvation. It can be legalism or anything based on fear. The other extreme is the teaching that God is love so everyone will go to heaven, no one will be condemned. Then there are those who say you can lose your salvation unless you do certain things, or that Satan has no influence on us today, or that man doesn't sin after salvation. Other false teachings make certain spiritual gifts more 'spiritual' than others, or base healing and prosperity on our having enough 'faith' to 'claim' it. The list goes on and on.

In the opening to his short book (v. 1-2), Jude assured the readers that their spiritual position was eternally secure and that God's abundant provision for daily living was available to them. Then he talks about apostasy (turning from the faith).

I. ANALYSIS OF APOSTASY (3-4) Jude encourages his readers to contend (literally “agonize”) for the true faith and avoid any and all counterfeits. He says they sneak in the back door, they don’t parade in with the label of false teachings on them. They sneak in, like a little arsenic in food or a little spark in a gas tank.

II. ANALYSIS OF APOSTASY (5-16) Jude refers to many Old Testament events. He talks about the Israelites (v. 5 – Numbers 13-14); fallen angels (v. 6 – 2 Peter 2:4); Sodom and Gomorrah (v. 7 – Genesis 18-19); Cain (v. 11 – Genesis 4); Balaam (v. 11 – Numbers 22-24); Korah (v. 11 – Numbers 16); Enoch (v. 14 – Genesis 5:18-24). He uses many of these as examples of past apostates whom God did judge. Let this be a warning! Jude says they are spiritually blind but speak about spiritual things as if they have the only and final answer to everything.

Jude also uses illustrations from nature to picture apostasy. He says it is like hidden reefs under the water’s surface which a ship doesn’t see but which sinks it. He says it is like clouds who look promising but don’t hold any water. Also it is like autumn trees that have leaves but no fruit. He equates them to wild waves of the sea which make lots of motion but don’t accomplish anything. Finally he says they are like wandering stars: brief, aimless and then darkness. Contrast this with Jesus who is the Rock of our Salvation instead of hidden rocks which shipwreck our faith. Jesus comes with clouds to refresh forever, He is the Tree of Life producing eternal fruit, He leads beside still waters, not wild seas. He is the Bright and Morning Star heralding the day.

III. ANTIDOTE FOR APOSTASY (17-23) Jude wants them to remember the warnings about apostasy being a sign of the last days and to watch out for it. He encourages them to keep their eyes on the truth and keep growing spiritually. That is the best antidote to false teaching. He says that they are to try to rescue those who fall into false teaching, but in such a way that they are very careful they don’t get hurt. It’s like treating a hamburger patty that falls into the coals. You rescue it quickly, gently and carefully so you don’t get burnt.

OUTLINE OF JUDE

Opening 1-2

I. ANNOUNCEMENT OF APOSTASY (Warning of Apostasy) 3-4

- A. Their Deceit 3
- B. Their Danger 4

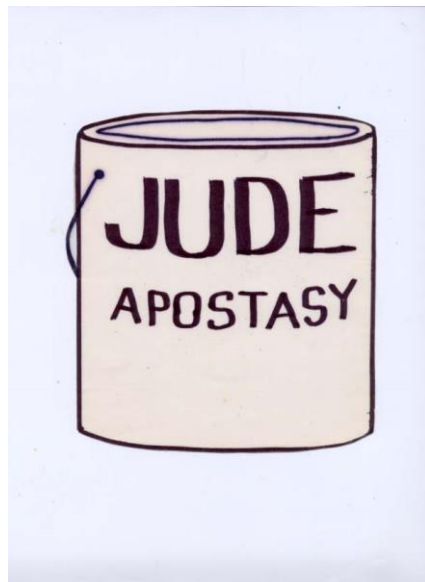
II. ANALYSIS OF APOSTASY (Description of Apostates) 5-16

- A. Their Doom 5-7
- B. Their Denouncement 8-10
- C. Their Description 11-16

III. ANTIDOTE FOR APOSTASY (Duties of Believers) 17-23

- A. Your Defense 17-19
- B. Your Devotion 20-21
- C. Your Deliverance 22-23

Close 24-25



REVELATION: PROPHECY

TITLE: Start of book, "revelation of Jesus Christ"

AUTHOR: John

DATE of WRITING: 96 AD

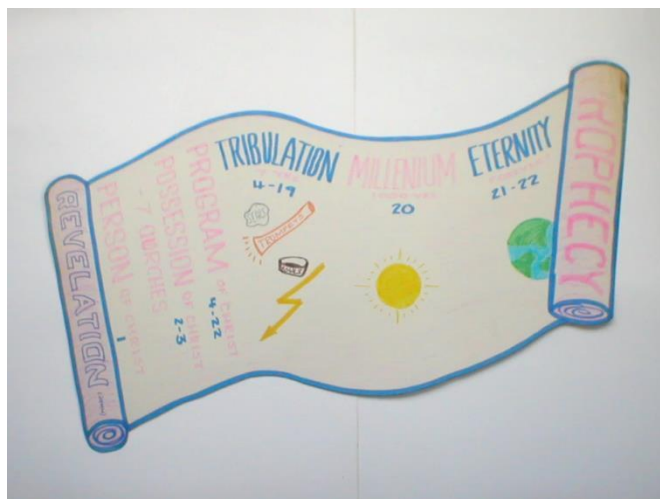
PLACE of WRITING: Isle of Patmos

RECIPIENTS: 7 churches in Asia Minor and all believers

KEY VERSE: *Write, therefore, what you have seen, what is now and what will take place later. 1:19*

KEY WORDS: "I saw" (49 times); "angel" (70); "seven" (59); "lamb" (29)

PURPOSE:



GOSPELS	ACTS & EPISTLES	REVELATION
PAST	PRESENT	FUTURE
Christ as PROPHET	Christ as PRIEST	Christ as KING
Setting: ISRAEL	Setting: CHURCH	Setting: UNIVERSE
Founder of Christianity	Fundamentals of Christianity	Fulfillment of Christianity
Introduction	Application	Realization

THEME: Reveal the future tribulation and related events to mankind.

GENESIS	REVELATION
Creation of heaven and earth	New heavens and earth
Paradise Lost	Paradise of God regained
Sorrow, pain enter	Sorrow, pain gone forever
First Adam and his wife	Last Adam and His Bride (church)

I. PERSON OF CHRIST (PAST) 1:3-20 John is imprisoned on Patmos. He is old, for its 60+ years since the crucifixion. An angel comes to reveal these things to him.

II. POSSESSION OF CHRIST (PRESENT) 2 – 3 God first reveals messages for seven churches in Asia Minor that John was familiar with. They are listed in the order they would receive the letter as it traveled the circular mail route in Asia Minor. The carrier would read the letter in one city then move on to the next. The cities were Ephesus (John's home town), Smyrna, Pergamus, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea. Only Smyrna and Philadelphia didn't receive any condemnation. All received some commendation from the Lord except Laodicea.

III. PROGRAM OF CHRIST (FUTURE) 4 – 22 The majority of the book of Revelation is about the coming 7-year tribulation. First the tribulation is seen from the view of heaven (judgment), chapters 4-11. Then it is gone through from beginning to end again from the earth's perspective (warfare), chapters 12-19.

First, 7 seal judgments are unleashed on the earth. These start with the Antichrist bringing peace, but soon turn to war, family, death to ¼ of the world population, and tremendous changes to nature. Many believers are martyred during this time. God sets aside 12,000 from each of the 12 tribes (144,000) as special witnesses and evangelists. They come to salvation at the start of the tribulation (for all true believers are raptured before the tribulation).

Following this are 7 trumpet judgments which affect the earth's vegetation, the sea and fresh water and the sun, moon and stars. Locust-like demons torture all who haven't turned to God for salvation. In the middle of this tribulation God raises up 2 special witnesses who will even do miracles and who cannot be killed. God always has His witness for man.

Satan will have his counterfeit trinity to oppose God and rule the world, as he has always wanted to do. Satan counterfeits God, the power behind it all. The Antichrist will counterfeit Christ. He'll bring peace and set himself up to be worshipped, then by Satan's power counterfeit his own death and resurrection and kill all the believers he possibly can. The False Prophet, Antichrist's assistant, while head up the apostate church until it is destroyed. He will kill any who do not wear the 666 in recognition of the Antichrist as God.

Seven bowl judgments complete God's judgment on man for rejecting Jesus. This culminates with the battle of Armageddon, when Jesus returns with the armies of heaven (us) and totally and instantly destroys all of feeble man's resistance to His authority. Following this tribulation comes a thousand-year period called the Millennium (Revelation 20). Jesus will rule on earth on David's throne as prophesied and all will return to Garden of Eden conditions. Following a final revolt by Satan, who is consigned to hell forever along with his demons and those who haven't accepted God's free gift of salvation, God will create a new heaven and new earth (Revelation 21-22). There we will dwell with Him for all eternity. Are you ready? I hope so!

OUTLINE OF REVELATION

Opening 1:1-3

I. PERSON OF CHRIST (Past) 1

- A. Circumstances of the Vision 1:4-11
- B. Content of the Vision 1:12-16
- C. Consequences of the Vision 1:17-20

II. POSSESSION OF CHRIST (Present) 2-3

- A. Letter to Ephesus 2:1-7
- B. Letter to Smyrna 2:8-11
- C. Letter to Pergamum 2:12-17
- D. Letter to Thyatira 2:18-19
- E. Letter to Sardis 3:1-6
- F. Letter to Philadelphia 3:7-13
- G. Letter to Laodicea 3:14-22

III. PROGRAM OF CHRIST (Future) 4-22

- A. Tribulation 4-19
 - 1. As Judgment (Heaven) 4-11
 - a. Scene in Heaven 4-5
 - b. Seal Judgments, 144,000 6-7
 - c. Trumpet Judgments, Two Witnesses 8-11
 - 2. As Warfare (Earth) 12-19
 - a. Personages Involved 12-14
 - b. Bowl Judgment 15-16
 - c. Babylon Falls 17-18
 - d. Armageddon
- B. Millennium 20
 - 1. Christ Reigns 20:1-10
 - 2. Christ Rules 20:11-15
- C. Eternity 21-22
 - 1. New Heavens and Earth 21:1
 - 2. New Jerusalem 21:2-22:5

Final Message 22:6-21



BIBLE OVERVIEW

25 . CHURCH AGE

MAIN EVENTS: Worldwide spread of the Church despite all efforts to destroy it

MAIN PEOPLE: Too many to name

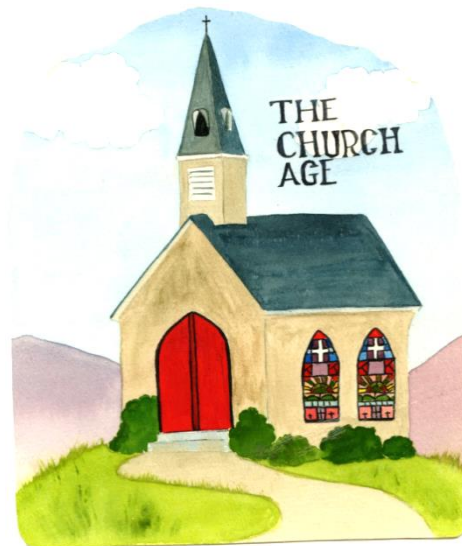
BOOKS OF THE BIBLE: none

BIBLE VERSE: *Matthew 16:18-19 I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.*

TIME: Resurrection to Today

WORLD EVENTS AT THIS TIME: All history in the last 2,000 years

GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION: Worldwide



Our present time period in the Bible overview is called the Church Age. It started with Jesus' resurrection ending the law and the coming of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost (Acts 2). It will end with the Rapture (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18). This time falls between the 69th and 70th weeks of Daniel (Daniel 9:24-27; Romans 11). It is the time when Jesus is building "His Church" as He promised (Matthew 16:18) and has been going on for almost 2,000 years.

THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH The Greek word translated 'church' (ekklesia) means "a called out group." It was used of a local assembly or gathering of people. In the New Testament it refers to those who have accepted Jesus as Savior during the time period starting with the resurrection and ending with the Rapture. The Church, as used in this way, includes all who have come to faith in Jesus as their Savior (John 1:12; Acts 9:31). It is also called the Body of Christ of which He is the head (Ephesians 1:22-23; 1 Corinthians 12:13-14). Another term is the Bride of Christ (Ephesians 5:25-26; Revelation 21:9; John 3:29) because of His love for and commitment to us for all eternity. This term speaks of our eternal love relationship with Jesus in heaven. All believers during this time, whatever their age, sex, nationality, culture or background are One in Jesus and equal to each other in Him (Galatians 3:28; Acts 15:14-18). Entrance is only by salvation in Jesus, there is no other way to heaven (John 14:6 Acts 4:12).

This time period is also called the Age of Grace because Jesus came to fulfill the law (Matthew 5:17) and replace it with grace (John 1:17; Ephesians 2:8-10). We are not under the law but grace. God permanently indwells every believer with His Holy Spirit during this time (John 14:16) whereas in the Old Testament the Holy Spirit only came upon some for a short time as needed (1 Samuel 16:14).

Jews who come to Jesus for salvation during the Church Age are also part of the Body of Christ (Galatians 3:28). There are three groups of people: Church Age believers, Gentiles and Jews. The nation Israel is different than the church, the Church has not replaced God's chosen people, Israel (1 Corinthians 10:32). God's promises to the nation Israel have not been fulfilled but one day will be (Ezekiel 34; 37; 45; Jeremiah 30; 33; Matthew 19:28; Revelation 19).

Jesus' relationship to us in the church is described in the Bible in the following ways: (1) the Shepherd and the Sheep (John 10); (2) the Vine and the Branches (John 15); (3) the Cornerstone and the Stones of the Building (1 Corinthians 3:9; Ephesians 2:19-22; 1 Peter 2:5); (4) High Priest and the Kingdom of Priests (Hebrews 5:1-10; 6:13-8:6; 1 Peter 2:5-9; Revelation 1:6); (5) the Head and the Many-Membered Body (1 Corinthians 12:12-13,27; Ephesians 4:4); (6) the Last Adam and the New Creation (1 Corinthians 15:22,45; 2 Corinthians 5:17); (7) the Bridegroom and the Bride (John 3:29; 2 Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 5:25-33; Revelation 19:7-8).

THE LOCAL CHURCH Still, the Bible does talk about the local church ("assembling, gathering") as well as the universal church. Local churches all are part of the universal church. While there seem to be many more factions and divisions among the church than is necessary, one can understand that a variety of local church groups is necessary to meet all the individual needs, backgrounds and commitments people bring with them.

What is the local church? Basically it is a group of believers, only secondarily is it a building or denomination. Someone has said the church is a hospital for sinners, not a display case for saints. The church is not an ark for the saving of just a select few or a ferryboat to take effortless passengers to the shores of heaven. It is not an eternal life insurance company, nor is it a social set which welcomes certain people and excludes all others. Rather, the church is a lifeboat for the rescue of sin-wrecked and perishing souls. It is a family, in which love and service are expected from each person to each person. It is the representative, the 'body,' of Jesus Christ on earth, reflecting His spirit and controlled by His will. The purpose of the local church is two-fold. It is to go to those without and share the plan of salvation with them. It is to take the good news of Jesus to a lost and dying world. It is one beggar telling another beggar where to find bread. During this time period Christians are to gather in local groups called "churches" for worship, teaching, fellowship, mutual support and evangelism (Acts 2:42; Galatians 6:2; Matthew 28:18-20).

The church also exists to meet the needs of its members. Any Body needs to meet the needs of its parts for each part to function in a healthy manner. This takes balance between teaching (God communicating to man), worship (man communicating to God) and fellowship (man communicating to man). They must all be present. Teaching & learning God's Word (hearing from God) must come first, though (Acts 2:42).

Following the analogy of the human body, each person in the church is gifted at the moment of salvation with a particular gift mix to be used for the sake of others in the Body (1 Corinthians 12). These gifts are to be used together for each other (1 Corinthians 12, 14), encouraging, helping and building each other up in Jesus. This is how the church is to function.

The Holy Spirit is the power source for the church, Whom Jesus sent after ascending to heaven. He gives the wisdom, power, strength, gifts, guidance, direction and grace needed to function for God.

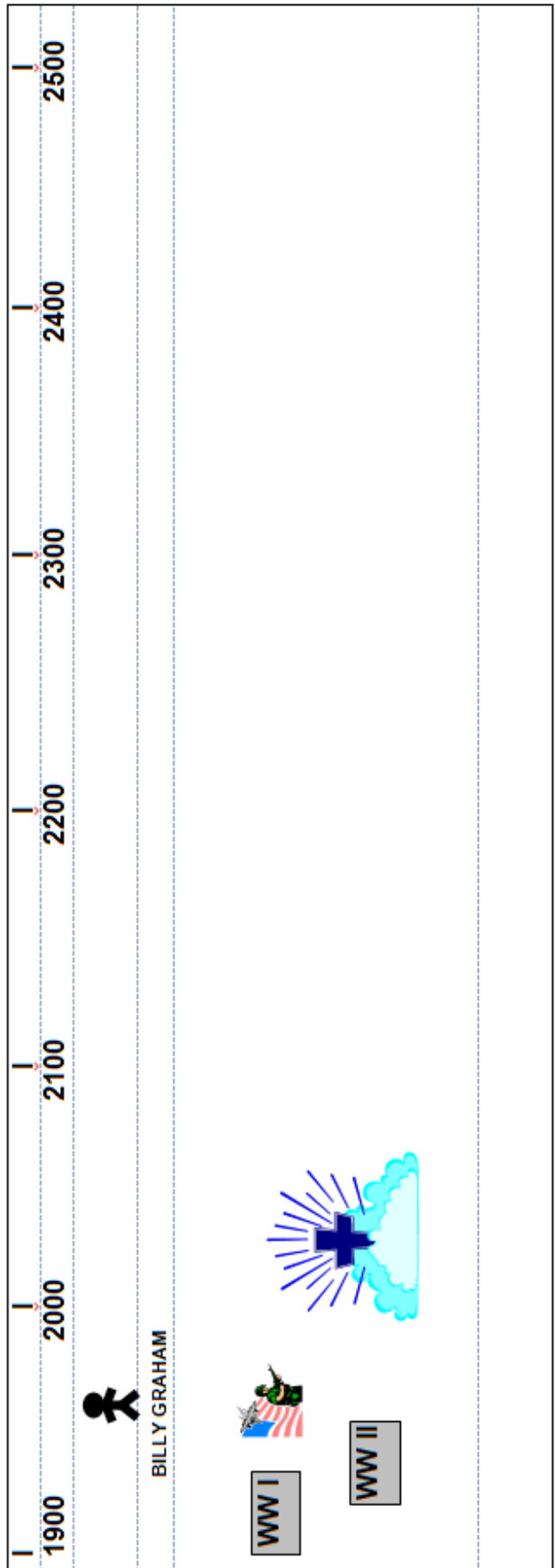
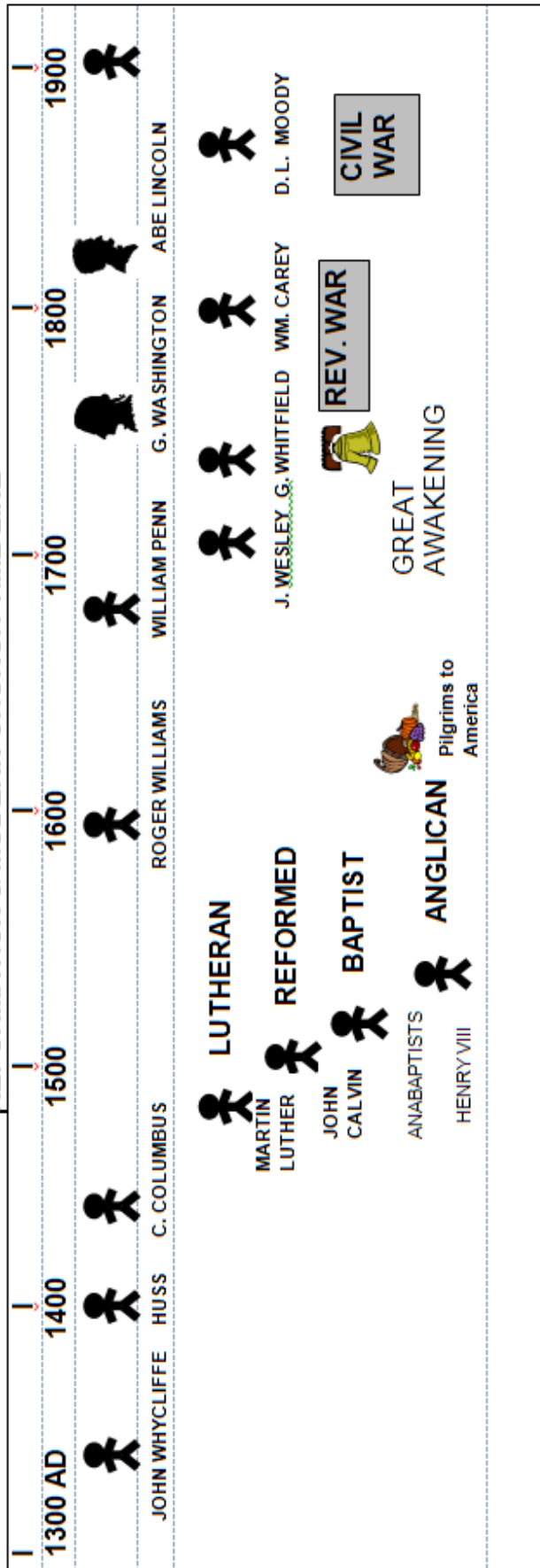
The Bible doesn't give any strict commands about church government. There were spiritual leaders (elder/pastor/bishop) and physical leaders (deacon) who divided the responsibility. As to more than that, if one bishop ruled many churches, each person in the local church had an equal say, or if it was somewhere in between, we don't know. History records all types of church governments. That isn't a Biblical absolute. Meeting spiritual and then physical needs is required, though.

Jesus is very active with His Church, which is His Body. As the Head He directs and guides all that happens (Ephesians 1:22-23; 1 Corinthians 12:13-14). He bestows spiritual gifts on believers so they can minister to each other in their local churches (1 Corinthians 12:4-11; Romans 12:3-8; Ephesians 4:8-11). In addition, He intercedes for us with the Father (John 17:1-26; Hebrews 7:25; Romans 8:34). He is also our Advocate, which means when we sin He is our defense attorney

stating that our sins have been paid for (1 John 2:1-2; Hebrews 9:24; Revelation 12:10). He is also occupied with building our heavenly home (John 14:1-3).

As a groom looks forward with expectation to receive his bride, so does Christ anticipate the coming day when He will return on the clouds to receive His bride (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18). Every foe will be defeated at this time (Psalm 2:7-9; Isaiah 63:1-6; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10; Revelation 19:15; Hebrews 10:13). This will end the Church Age or Age of Grace. God's people will be raptured out of the world and taken to be with the Lord in heaven (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; 1 Corinthians 15:51-57; 2 Thessalonians 2:1; Revelation 3:10). Until then God urges us to stay faithful in our love for and service to Him (1 Corinthians 15:58).

REFORMATION & MODERN CHURCH TIME LINE



BIBLE OVERVIEW

26. THE RAPTURE



MAIN EVENTS: All believers caught up to heaven to be with Jesus

MAIN PEOPLE: Believers

BIBLE VERSE: *1 Thessalonians 4:16-18 For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever.*

TIME: Sometime unknown in the future.

WORLD EVENTS AT THIS TIME: Unknown

GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION: Worldwide

The next event on God's prophetic program is the Rapture – the trumpet will sound, Jesus will appear in the sky, and every person from the cross to the present who has accepted Jesus as Savior will be taken to heaven. If they have already died, their bodies will be taken to heaven to join their soul/spirit which went there immediately at death (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18). The current Church Age, the parenthesis between the 69th and 70th weeks of Daniel 9, will end when Jesus returns to take His people to heaven with Him. This event is called the Rapture, and it is the next event in God's prophetic calendar. This event pertains only to those who are in the Church, the Body of Christ, which is composed of all believers (Jew or Gentile) from the time of Jesus until the Rapture occurs. Passages which foretell this are John 14:1-3; Acts 1:9-11; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 and 1 Corinthians 15:54.

THE TIME OF THE RAPTURE is BEFORE the Tribulation, not during it or after it! Christians will not have to go through the Tribulation because it is a time of judgment, and believers are not under God's judgment (Romans 8:1; Revelation 3:10; 1 Thessalonians 5:9). God kept Lot from judgment in Sodom and Gomorrah, Noah from judgment by the flood, Rahab from the destruction of Jericho and the Jews from plagues number four through ten in Egypt. We will be rescued from the coming wrath (1 Thessalonians 1:10).

Also, the Bible says the Rapture is "imminent" – there is nothing that needs to happen before it. It is the very next event in the future (2 Peter 3:10; James 5:8; Philippians 3:20). The Rapture is called the "blessed hope" (Titus 2:13). That's not true if we have to go through even part of the tribulation. In addition, the Holy Spirit will be gone when the Antichrist begins his work at the start of the Tribulation (2 Thessalonians 2:3, 5-9). The Holy Spirit indwells all God's people, so if He is gone, we will be gone as well. Finally, there is no mention of the Church on earth during the Tribulation.

The Church is referred to 17 times in Revelation 1-3, but from chapters 4-18 which speak of the Tribulation on earth, there is not one mention.

The question we always ask is when the Rapture will occur. Unfortunately, no one knows, but many signs let us know the general time. There were hundreds of prophecies about the first coming. Jesus rebuked Israel's rulers for not recognizing the signs of His first coming (Simeon and Anna knew - Luke 2). Just as many prophecies of the Second Coming are recorded. God wanted His people to know when Jesus came the first time, and He wants us to know when He is coming back (Matthew 16:3).

The exact date of Jesus' return is unknown (1 Thessalonians 5:1-3; Daniel 12:4) so we should always be ready (Matthew 24:42-44). We don't know the day or hour (Acts 1:7; Matthew 24:36) but do know 'season' – the general time. While there are no events that have to come to pass before the Rapture, if we look at conditions on earth at the start of the Tribulation, which follows the Rapture and compare them to conditions today, we can see that the time could be very near.

Jesus Himself gave several 'signs' of what would be happening when the Tribulation was near. These he likened to labor pains (Matthew 24:8). They start small and gradually grow until culminating in birth. In His analogy, the 'birth' is His return to earth at the end of the Tribulation. These prophecies are given by Jesus in the Olivet Discourse (Matthew 24 – 25). The general, starting signs He gives (Matthew 24:4-14) include deception, wars, famines, epidemics, earthquakes, martyrdom for believers, false prophets, lawlessness, loss of love and world evangelism.

The seven main sins of the tribulation show how close we are to them today (Revelation 9:20-21). These are rebellion against God, worship of demons, idolatry, murder, sorceries (including drug usage), sexual immorality and theft.

Paul's list of signs of the last days also shows how close we are (2 Timothy 3:1-7). He says people will be selfish ("lovers of themselves"), covetous and greedy ("lovers of money"), boasters, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, rebellious, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce breakers and false accusers, without self control, fierce, despisers, traitors, reckless, proud, lovers of pleasure and they will not have God's power.

Jesus describes the last days as being like "the days of Noah" when He returns (Luke 17:26-30; Genesis 6:1-9). People will be continuing in their daily life of sin not realizing the soon coming of judgment. There will be sexual perversion, their thoughts will be constantly turned to evil, and they will disregard the consequences of coming judgment.

Peter's sign of the last days is that men will scoff about Jesus coming back (1 Peter 3:3-7). They will also mock God as Creator. They will deny the fall of man, the flood in Noah's day, Jesus' life and His return.

If God had told us the exact time of His return, people would put off getting right with Him until the last minute, and Satan would do all he could to counterfeit it and bring confusion. So God keeps it a secret, but lets us know enough to realize it could be any time, and it could be very soon! So what are we to do until He comes? Live as if it could be today.

THE PATTERN FOR THE RAPTURE is the pattern of a groom coming for his bride in Israel during those times. The people in Jesus' day would have clearly understood the Rapture, for they lived it out whenever someone got married. The whole event started with the groom going to the bride's home, making a promise and commitment to the bride and paying the bride price so she could be his. That pictures Jesus leaving heaven to come to earth, promising to be our Savior and paying the price for our sins on the cross so we could be His. The father would accept the bride price if he thought it was sufficient, like God accepted the work of Jesus on the cross for us by bringing Him back to life.

Then it is up to the bride to show her acceptance of the groom's offer by taking and drinking a cup of wine he offered her. It is up to each one of us to accept Jesus' gift of salvation and partake of it personally. By doing so the Jewish marriage was sealed and legally binding. When we accept Jesus' gift of salvation, we are His, and our salvation cannot be lost. It, too, is legally binding in the heavens.

Even though the couple is legally married, the groom then returns home alone to work on building a home for his bride while the bride stays at her father's home and prepares herself for the groom's coming. Jesus ascended to heaven and left His Bride, the Church, here on earth where we are to prepare ourselves for His return. When the father knows the time right, he will tell his son to go get his bride. The son will gather his friends and, with trumpet blasts announcing their coming, proceed to the bride's house. Just the same way, one day God the Father will tell His Son Jesus the time is right for Him to get His Bride. Jesus and the angels will come for us with trumpets blasting. This is the Rapture.

The bride in Palestine was then taken to the groom's home where a seven-day marriage celebration occurred. They will then spend the rest of their lives together in the groom's home. So, too, we will have a seven-year celebration called the Marriage Supper of the Lamb right after Jesus comes for us. Then we, too, will spend eternity with Him in heaven as His Bride.

THE PROMISE OF THE RAPTURE is given in John 14:1-3. Jesus said these words the night before His arrest and crucifixion. He is comforting and encouraging His disciples. Instead of looking at present problems, they are to look to their glorious future.

In those days when a young man became legally married to his bride, he would leave her where she lived and go to His home to build the rooms where they would live. These would be part of his family's house. Each family would have their own room and all would share the common living space in the central courtyard. This place, called the New Jerusalem, will be a cube 1,500 miles or 2,500 kilometers on each side. It will be large enough to hold 100 billion people. We can only imagine how glorious it will be! It took Jesus six days to create this beautiful universe. Imagine what He will create with 2,000 years of preparation!

Jesus says He is now preparing a place for us to dwell with Him, and He promises to come back for us – He absolutely guarantees it (John 14:3). The angels who spoke to the disciples when Jesus ascended to heaven promised the same thing. *"This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen Him go into heaven"* (Acts 1:11). He will come back, and it will be the same as when He went. It will be visible, actual and physical. This is the Rapture, the next event in God's program.

The early Christians treasured these promises and looked forward to the day Jesus would return for them, but He didn't come right away. Time passed. Some believers died from persecution, age or illness. Those who were alive started wondering what would happen to them when Jesus returned. Paul answered that question.

THE PLAN OF THE RAPTURE is presented by Paul in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18. The word Rapture' is never mentioned in the Bible. It is a Latin word meaning 'to catch', or 'to snatch away.' This passage clearly describes that event. Paul says when Jesus returns to rapture us He will bring with Him those who have "fallen asleep." That refers to the sleep of the body, for the soul goes immediately to heaven at death (Luke 23:43; Philippians 1:23; 2 Corinthians 5:8). God gives believers who die a temporary body until He returns. Then their earthly body will be brought back to life and changed into an eternal body like Jesus' body after His resurrection. At this same time, believers who are still alive will be changed into their eternal bodies without dying, and both groups will be taken up to meet Jesus in the sky.

There will be three loud sounds during this event. There will be a loud military type command, like when Jesus called Lazarus out of the tomb (John 11:43). This will be the Groom calling for his Bride when the Father finally says He can go bring her to the home He has been preparing. Second, there will be trumpets announcing His coming, in such a way as the friends of the groom would sound to let the bride know they were on the way. Third, there will be the voice of Michael and the angels shouting in joy and victory as they bring us to heaven and begin the final great battle to destroy Satan and his demons.

THE SPEED OF THE RAPTURE is quicker than we can blink our eyes (1 Corinthians 15:51-53). These Rapture events will happen quicker than a blink. There will be no warning, no time after the trumpet sounds to get ready, to confess sin, to accept Jesus as Savior. It will be over before we even realize it is happening. Instantly our bodies, whether alive or dead, will be changed to be an eternal body like Jesus' resurrection body. This is similar to what happened to Elijah and Elisha (Genesis 5:24; Hebrews 11:5; 2 Kings 2:1, 11).

THE RAPTURE AND THE SECOND COMING are different events. This Rapture is NOT the same as Jesus' glorious Second Coming. The Rapture is the next event in God's program that we should be looking for. Jesus will appear in the air to take all true believers to heaven to be with Him. The Second Coming will happen seven years after the Rapture when Jesus returns to earth to end sin and establish His Kingdom. (For more information about this see "Biblical Prophecy" by Jerry Schroyer.)

BIBLE OVERVIEW

27 . THE

MILLENNIUM &

TRIBULATION

MAIN EVENTS: Tribulation (7 years), Millennial Kingdom (1,000 years) and then eternity forever

MAIN PEOPLE: God, Jesus, Holy Spirit, angels, all believers

BIBLE VERSE: *Revelation 21:1-4 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."*

TIME: Immediately after the rapture.

GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION: Worldwide

Immediately following the Rapture, the Church will celebrate their marriage to their Groom, Jesus, at the **MARRIAGE SUPPER OF THE LAMB** (Revelation 4:4; 5:6, 8, 14; 19:9). Here we will be given rewards for faithful service on earth and assignments for future service will be made (1 Corinthians 3:12-15; Matthew 27:19; John 19:13; Romans 14:10)

While believers have been raptured and are in heaven celebrating with our Groom, Jesus, the **TRIBULATION** will be taking place on Earth. This is the 70th week of Daniel (Daniel 9:24-27). It is the prophesied time of destruction worldwide (Ezekiel 38:19-23; 39:9, 25-29; Revelation 6 - 19). The time of grace will be over, and the Law will be back in effect, like in Old Testament times. This is the day of God's vengeance on sin and unbelievers. When He quoted Isaiah 61:1-3, Jesus stopped before "the day of vengeance of our God" because this was not a part of why He came the first time (Luke 4:16-21), but it will be what happens on earth after we are raptured.



SATAN will rule the world. When the Church is raptured, Satan will know his time is short. He won't have God's people, the Church (Bride of Christ) to attack, so He will turn his attention to attacking God's people, the Jews. Jews and Gentiles who become believers during this time will be attacked especially hard (Revelation 12:7-9). Satan will do all he can to destroy Israel (Revelation 12:13-17).

He will rule the world, something he has been trying to do since he was cast out of heaven. He will indwell the Antichrist and through him rule the world.

THE ANTICHRIST will be a Gentile (Revelation 13:1) and will come from 'Rome' (Daniel 7:7-8; 9:25). This refers to the land area and countries that have been influenced by Rome (like Europe and the United States).

THE FALSE PROPHET is the third person of Satan's counterfeit trinity (Revelation 16:13). Satan counterfeits God the father, The Antichrist counterfeits God the Son (Christ) and the False Prophet counterfeits God the Holy Spirit. He will be a Jew (Revelation 13:11) who is the head of apostate church which forms after Rapture of true Church. Those who are 'religious' but never accepted Jesus as their Savior will be left behind, forming this 'church' (1 Timothy 4:1-2).

THE EVANGELISTS who will share God's message of salvation with everyone will be new believers, saved after (or perhaps because of) the Rapture. All true believers will be taken at the Rapture, along with the Holy Spirit and His restraining influence (2 Thessalonians 2:5-9). Therefore God will set aside others to carry his word throughout the world. There will be 144,000 Jewish evangelists, like Elijah, Elisha or John the Baptizer. They will turn to Jesus for salvation after the Rapture and be set apart for God. They will preach throughout the whole earth (Revelation 7:1-8; 14:1-5). They will be sealed with the Holy Spirit, so they cannot be killed (Joel 2:28-32). This is the ultimate fulfillment of that which was only pictured at Pentecost (Acts 2)íí. Many Jews and Gentiles will come to God for salvation because of the pressures of the tribulation. This is one of the main purposes of the Tribulation - to turn Israel to God (Zechariah 12:10; Hosea 3:4-5; Romans 11:25-39; Revelation 7:9). These Evangelists will go throughout the whole earth and preach God's Word.

THE TRIBULATION WILL START with the Antichrist making a seven-year covenant with Israel, assuring them of peace and protection for their disarming (Daniel 9:27). This will make them vulnerable to attack. This happens very shortly after the Rapture, after the Antichrist first comes to power. Remember, he won't be known until after the Rapture (II Thessalonians 2:3). He will be alive but not seen in the position and power he will have as the Antichrist until after the Rapture.

The Antichrist will come to power by deceiving the world. There is a 'lie' of his that those left behind will believe (2 Thessalonians 2:9-12). No one knows what this lie will be, but it could be his explanation of what happened to everyone just raptured. He could state that evil people were taken and good people left (as in Noah's day). He could say they were taken by space invaders (UFO's) or provide some 'scientific' explanation for the Rapture. Despite all that happens, God is still in sovereign control over everything, as in Job 1, 2 where Satan had to get permission from God before he could do anything to man (Revelation 13:7; 6:11; Daniel 7:25).

THE FIRST HALF OF THE TRIBULATION will be characterized by the Antichrist trying to bring peace and stability to the world. But it will really be a time for God to bring judgment on unbelief. All these coming judgments are wrapped up in a scroll, and only Jesus Himself can open it and bring about God's judgment (Revelation 5:1-14). His opening the scroll releases the first series of judgments - the seal judgments (Revelation 6:1-17; 8:1-2).

During this time, the Antichrist will make Babylon the new world capital to unite all people everywhere. This can be likened to the tower of Babel which Nimrod used to try to unite the world in his day. It will be the center of the false religious system (Revelation 17) as well as world political center (Revelation 18).

The North and allies (Russia and Arab nations) will move in to take control of Palestine, despite the Antichrist's promise of peace. They will do so to control the riches in Palestine (Ezekiel 38:1-11, 15-23; Joel 2:2-21; Isaiah 10:12; 30:31-33; 31:8-9). The South (Egypt) will lead an attack against Israel (Daniel 11:40). Being disarmed made Israel very vulnerable. The Arabs will have

gotten all the concessions they can through treaties and peace summits, thus weakening Israel. When they get no more through peaceful means, they will use warfare. The West, under the Antichrist, will protest but won't be able to stop them (Ezekiel 38:1-23). God will immediately and supernaturally destroy the North and allies as He destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah. It will take seven years to burn all the weapons (Ezekiel 39:1-4, 9-12). This will throw off the balance of powers in the world and leave the Antichrist as undisputed world ruler.

By the middle of the Tribulation, the third Temple will be rebuilt and functioning in Jerusalem on the site of the Dome of the Rock (Matthew 24:15; Daniel 9:27; 11:31; 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4; Revelation 11:1-2). It could be built before the Rapture or after, but it will be fully functioning by the middle of the Tribulation. What about the Dome of the Rock, which is a holy spot to the Arabs? How will the Jews get control of it? Perhaps settling this issue will cause Israel to trust the Antichrist. The Arabs will be weakened greatly after the North (Russia) is destroyed. The Antichrist may relocate the Dome of the Rock to the new Babylon as a special privilege for the Arabs. However he will do it, this will cause the Jews to further trust him, a mistake they will soon regret.

The first half of the Tribulation will be full of war and its results: famine and death. Great earthquakes will shake the earth and move every mountain and island. Still, the first 3 ½ years will be relatively peaceful and prosperous compared to what is to come. Literally all hell will break loose starting in the middle of the tribulation and continuing to the end.

THE MIDDLE OF THE TRIBULATION will bring many changes as things get much worse for everyone on earth, believers and unbelievers (Matthew 24:20-22; Revelation 6:17; 7:14; 11:1-3). It will be especially bad for the Jews. That is why it is also called "the time of Jacob's troubles" (Jeremiah 30:7). It will be FAR worse than the Spanish Inquisition or the Holocaust of Adolph Hitler (Deuteronomy 32:35; Obadiah 1:12-14).

This time is referred to as the "Day of the Lord" in the Old Testament. It also includes the time Jesus comes back and restores the Kingdom to Israel (1 Thessalonians 5:2-3; Joel 1:15; 2:1, 11, 31; 3:14; Amos 5:18-20; Obadiah 15; Zephaniah 1:7-8, 14, 18; 2:2-3; 14:1; Malachi 4:5).

Jesus gave some specific signs to know when this time will come. The labor pains He equates them to will have reached this point: the desecration of God's temple, the Jews regathering and worldwide deception (Matthew 24:15-26). During this time, the worst demons, now bound in chains, will be released to torment people on the earth (2 Peter 2:4; Revelation 12:7-9). Satan himself will be go wild, knowing his end is near. The Antichrist will break his treaty with Israel and forbid them to worship God (Daniel 9:27; 12:11). He will set his image up in the temple to be worshipped and require everyone to worship him and him only (Daniel 11:36-39; Revelation 13:14-15; 2 Thessalonians 2:4). All who aren't believers will worship him as god (2 Thessalonians 2:11). Anyone who doesn't worship him and show it by taking the mark of 666 will be killed (Revelation 13:7, 18).

Despite how terrible these days will be, God will still offer forgiveness to those who turn to Him. He will show His power through two special witnesses who are set apart BY God 3½ days before the middle of the Tribulation. These will be men very similar to Moses and Elijah. They can't be harmed and will kill all who try to harm them. They will perform miracles and bring terrible drought and plagues (Revelation 11:1-13).

THE SECOND HALF OF THE TRIBULATION will be much, much worse than the first half.

Trumpet Judgments will flow from the scroll Jesus unrolls following the Seal judgments. These will be spread out through the final 3 ½ years (Revelation 8:7-9:19; 11:15-9). The Bowl Judgments will occur right on the heels of the trumpet judgments during the final year of the tribulation (Revelation 16:2-21), culminating with the Battle of Armageddon

With the North defeated by God and the balance of powers thrown off, the West with the Antichrist (Daniel 7:7-8) will move in and take over Palestine (Daniel 11:36-42). The Antichrist will set up a coalition of nations (Revelation 13:7; 17:13; Psalm 2:1-3). They will fortify the mountains in anticipation of an attack by the East (Zechariah 12:2-3; 14:1-3). Because the North is out of the way, the East (with a 200-million man army) wants Palestine for herself (Revelation 9:14-16). This sets the stage for the Battle of Armageddon.

THE END OF THE TRIBULATION is the culmination of the labor pains predicted by Jesus, His Second Coming. Signs indicating this is near will include the sun and moon turning dark, stars falling, the heavens being shaken and the glory of Christ being seen (Matthew 24:27-31).

At this time, everything will get as bad as it will ever get – the final end is near. Thus, this is called the Great and Terrible Day of the Lord (Joel 2:31; Malachi 4:5). The two witnesses will be killed and lie dead in the streets of Jerusalem for 3 ½ days where all will see them, then be miraculously brought back to life and taken to heaven (Revelation 11:7-12). The last Trumpet and Bowl Judgments are taking place during this time (Revelation 11:15-19; 16:17-21).

Then comes the **Battle of Armageddon**. This is when all the armies of the world are gathered ready to fight each other. Jesus will appear with His people who have been in heaven with Him and His angels. He will instantly and totally destroy all who oppose Him (Joel 3:2; 3:11-16; Daniel 11:40-45; Zechariah 12:1-9; 14:1-5; Isaiah 33:10; 34:2-4; Jeremiah 25:27-33). The nations will gather from the town of Megiddo (Ezekiel 38:9; Revelation 16:16), south through the Valley of Jehoshaphat (Joel 3:2), and into Jerusalem itself (Zechariah 12:2; 14:1-3), then down to Edom (Isaiah 34:1-6; 63:1) – an area 200 miles long. These armies will be completely destroyed by Jesus when He returns (Revelation 11:5; 19:11-20; Psalm 2:2; Zechariah 12:1-9; 14:1-4; Isaiah 33:1 to 34:17; 63:1-6; 66:1-6; Jeremiah 25:27-33; Daniel 11:45). With this defeat, the 'Times of the Gentiles' comes to a close. It started with the Babylonian Captivity and marked the time when Gentiles ruled in Jerusalem (Luke 21:24). Now Jesus will take His rightful throne, and the Jews will be restored. This is His Second Coming.

The **SECOND COMING**, also called the Glorious Appearing, is prophesied 318 times in the Bible (Titus 2:13; etc.). Jesus Himself will return from heaven, and we will be with Him (Daniel 7:13-15; Matthew 26:62-65). A single word from His mouth will destroy all the gathered armies of the world, ending the Battle of Armageddon (Revelation 19:11-20). Every eye will see Jesus' return (Zechariah 14:3-5; Acts 1:9-11; Daniel 7:13-15). The Jews will mourn when they realize they have rejected their Messiah (Zechariah 12:10-14).

Jesus will come down on the Mt. of Olives (Zechariah 14:5; Revelation 14:1) where the 144,000 will be gathered awaiting His return (Revelation 14:1). He will then enter Jerusalem through the Eastern Gate (Ezekiel 43:1-4). This is the same place God's Glory departed earth in Ezekiel's day (Ezekiel 10:18-19; 11:22-24). During Jesus' time on earth, God's Glory indwelt Him (John 1:1-14; Matthew 17:1-3; Mark 9:2). Now God's Glory indwells Christians, for His Spirit indwells us (1 Corinthians 3:16-17; 6:19; 2 Corinthians 6:16).



The thousand-year **MILLENNIUM**, also called the Kingdom, is the culmination of all that has happened since Creation. It is what would have happened 2,000 years ago if the Jews had accepted Jesus as their Messiah when He came the first time. The earth will return to Garden of Eden conditions (Matthew 13:31-33).

Many Scriptures tell about the conditions during this time. Christ will reign on His throne (Zechariah 14:9). He is Prophet (Old Testament - past); Priest (New Testament - present) and King (Millennium - future). Jerusalem will be the center of the world

(Zechariah 8:3; 3:14-17). The temple will be rebuilt and the land settled (Ezekiel 40 – 48). Israel will be exalted (Isaiah 62:1-12) and will have a new heart (Jeremiah 31:33-37; 32:37-41; Ezekiel 36:24-28). Everyone will worship Christ (Isaiah 12:1-6; 26:1-19; 35:10; Amos 9:11-12).

Believers will rule with Christ (Revelation 3:21; 5:9-10; 11:15-18; 15:3-4; 19:16; 20:4-6). The Jews will finally be safe in the land (Ezekiel 20:33-38). Jew and Gentile believers who weren't martyred will live on into the Millennium in physical bodies on earth (Matthew 25:31-46). This will fulfill the promises to Abraham and his descendants (2 Samuel 7:8-17). They will marry and have children in perfect conditions, like Adam and Eve would have had if they hadn't sinned.

The code of conduct for those alive on earth during the Millennium will be the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7). Righteousness will prevail everywhere (Isaiah 11:1-5; Jeremiah 33:15-16; Ezekiel 34:23-24). There will be rest, peace and joy everywhere (Isaiah 11:10; 25:1-12; 54:11-14; Jeremiah 23:5-6; 31:10-14; Ezekiel 34:11-15; Zechariah 8:3-6). The land will be blessed and made fruitful (Psalm 72:16; Isaiah 27:6; 35:1-2, 7-9; 55:12-13; Ezekiel 34:11-15, 26-27; 36:30-38; Joel 3:17-21; Amos 9:13-15; Zechariah 8:12). Animals will not be afraid of men (Isaiah 11:6-8; Ezekiel 34:25). Pain & death will be gone (Isaiah 65:20, 22; 11:9; 60:18; Jeremiah 23:5-6). The main passages about conditions during the Millennial Kingdom are Ezekiel 40:1-4; Joel 3:17-21; Isaiah 11:7; 65:25).

With some minor alterations, things will transition into the **ETERNAL STATE** (2 Peter 3:13). Time will be no more. It's not that eternity is unending time; it's that there is no such thing as time anymore, so there can be no end to it. Believers alive on earth at the end of the Kingdom will receive resurrection bodies, as will kingdom age believers who died during the kingdom (Revelation 21:24). There will be an eternal city, the New Jerusalem (John 14:1-3; Revelation 21:1-2, 9-27). It will be about the size of the moon.

The end of the book of Revelation shows that all had been lost in Eden had been regained. There is a close connection between the start of the Bible and the end of the Bible. The results of the fall (sin and the curse) are gone. (

Life from here on, of course, will be perfect (Revelation 21:1 to 22:20). There are some things that won't be in heaven for eternity (Revelation 21 - 22). There will be no more sea (21:1), no more tears, death, sorrow, crying or pain (21:4), no more sinners (21:8), no more fear (21:12), no more sun or moon (21:23), no more night (21:25), no more sin or evil (21:27), no more disease or injuries (22:2) and no more curse (22:3),

There are other things that will be in heaven for eternity (Revelation 21 - 22). These include unending fellowship with God (21:3, 7, 22), unending newness (21:5), unending water of life (21:6; 22:1), unimaginable beauty (21:11, 21), uncompromised security (21:12), unbroken unity between believers (21:12, 14), unlimited holiness (21:16), unparalleled size (21:16), untold wealth (21:18-21), unending light (21:23; 22:5), unrestricted access (21:25), unending fruit from the tree of life (22:2), unceasing service to God (22:3) and unending reign of Jesus on His throne (22:5).

Heaven will be a place of rest (Hebrews 4:1-11; Revelation 14:13), full knowledge (1 Corinthians 13:12), holiness (Hebrews 12:14; Ephesians 2:21), joy (1 Thessalonians 2:19; Jude 24), glory (2 Corinthians 4:17) and worship (Revelation 7:9-12; 19:10). This will continue for all eternity (John 6:51, 58; 1 Peter 1:25; 2 Peter 3:18; 2 John 2; Hebrews 13:8; Revelation 1:8; 22:13).

(For more information about this see "Biblical Prophecy" by Jerry Schmoeyer.)

AFFECT ON DAILY LIFE NOW Seeing these things about to come, we should be motivated to make sure we have accepted Jesus as our Savior and make sure He is the Lord of our life. We can find comfort and encouragement in these things as we remember that this life and everything in it is temporary. It should help us to live for Jesus each moment of our lives.

What a wonderful practical tie there is between this truth of the coming of the Lord and our appearing before Him, and the living of our daily life! "Everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure."

CONCLUSION

We have seen the framework for history from eternity past to eternity future, as revealed to us in the Bible. By breaking all history down into time periods we can better understand each one and see how it relates to those before and after it.

We looked at the foundation of the Old Testament, the events up to the time of Jesus. Then we looked at the structure, or framework, of the life of Jesus and finally at the rest of the New Testament which builds on and fleshes out what Jesus came to accomplish.

I hope this book motivates you to read God's Word and to better understand it as you study it daily. The Bible is more than a framework of history, it is our spiritual nourishment as well. What you learn will not only feed you now but will be something that you will take with you for all eternity (Isaiah 40:8; 1 Peter 1:25). May God richly bless you as you continue to study His Word.



CLOSING COMMENTS

I have enjoyed the privilege of writing this book. Thank you for reading it. I would love to hear from you. If you have any suggestions to improve this book, questions for me or requests for prayer, please write to me. I can be reached at jerry@schmoyer.net. Thank you and may God bless you as you serve Him. Keep looking for His return. It could be any moment!

Jerry Schmoyer