



The Bible

A Chronological Overview
Name _____



Mid-2016, the elders of Faith Fellowship Church approached various individuals and requested a brief overview of a specific portion of the Bible. The submissions were then compiled into this study. In the pursuit of uniformity, some of the work was condensed so that each portion fit into the template being used.

You will observe, as you can imagine, various writing styles and personalities, which is the beauty of this study. To each one, thank you for your work in reviewing and summarizing your portion of Scripture, the living and powerful Word of God.

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The Bible

The Gospel From Beginning to End

We needed Jesus way back in **Genesis**, because we rebelled against the Father and obeyed the enemy. Early on, God graciously showed the righteous man **Job** that He sovereignly controls all things. Job had a job, and so do we, to show that God is gracious, glorious, and great.

However, not even the first stately patriarchs of God's people, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, walked in God's great glory. We like captivity better than freedom, evidenced by all our complaining during the **Exodus**. And clearly, not even the law of Moses or the human priests in **Leviticus**, **Numbers** and **Deuteronomy** could save us. **Joshua** shows us that **Judges**, as in the time of **Ruth**, couldn't save us either.

So we asked for kings, starting with King Saul, who should have known better but thought he knew better than God. King David started off rather well in **1 Samuel** and the early part of **1 Kings**. He even wrote great hymnals of praise to Almighty God, which we read in **Psalms**. Later, Solomon imitated his dad, penning moving love songs in **Song of Solomon**, and pithy wise sayings in **Proverbs**, and cynical anecdotes in **Ecclesiastes**. But all that wise writing just evidenced that our hearts are full of longing and without Jesus we are tragically lacking. By **2 Samuel**, even the great King David had failed as badly as anybody. And after the fiasco-filled life of King Solomon, God's people split in two.

The kings of the divided kingdom are recorded in **2 Kings** and **2 Chronicles**. King after king led the people away from the One True God and the law He had given. Israel, to the north, had no godly kings, so they didn't last long, but still God sent repentance-preaching prophets their way—**Amos**, **Jonah**, and **Hosea**. Judah, in the south, did have a few godly kings, but God had to call them to repentance too, through prophets **Isaiah**, **Joel**, and **Micah**.

After Israel's destruction, Judah suffered many wicked kings, only a few godly ones. During that time God pleaded for repentance through **Nahum**, **Zephaniah**, **Habakkuk**, **Jeremiah**, and **Lamentations**. As rebellion ruled, Bad Boy Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians captured Judah, as we read in the first chapters of **Daniel**. God's grace reached into Babylonian captivity, pleading for repentance via the cries of **Ezekiel** and **Obadiah**.

And God sent a remnant of exiles back to Jerusalem, where **Ezra** preached Scripture and **Nehemiah** built walls. When, as usual, the people rebelled, the cruel Persians overtook them, and **Esther** prayed, and Daniel, who was still around, prayed harder. God's grace sent prophets **Haggai**, **Zechariah**, and **Malachi** to plead for repentance. But it wasn't enough. All God's people could do was wait for a Savior.

Four hundred years later, God stepped down from Heaven wrapped in flesh, and Jesus walked with **Matthew**, **Mark**, and **Luke**. They transcribed sermons Jesus preached, that confounded law and drove the call to repentance deep into condemned hearts. They cherished prayers Jesus prayed, such as His High Priestly prayer in **John**. All four of the gospels describe Jesus Christ's death, burial, and resurrection with brilliant vividness—life!

The **Acts** of the twelve apostles tell us how the church began, a Holy Spirit empowered remnant that proclaims Christ's glorious excellencies and lives Christ's cleansing mercy and grace as His body here on earth. **Romans** gives us the doctrines Preacher Paul preached—condemnation, justification, sanctification and glorious life. His letters showed that beginning two-thousand years ago, churches everywhere could choose to walk in Christ's Spirit—**1 & 2 Corinthians**, **Galatians**, **Ephesians**, **Philippians**, **Colossians**, and **1 & 2 Thessalonians**. We can imitate godly church leadership and structure from **1 & 2 Timothy** and **Titus**, and follow a great discipleship model in **Philemon**.

Hebrews calls the Jews to stay with Jesus, **James** writes of faith come alive, **Peter** speaks unity to the dispersed, **John** calls the beloved to holy love, **Jude** warns about false dissenters, and every letter calls us to the grace of Jesus Christ.

Finally, in **Revelation**, Christ Himself speaks to the churches, then provides an apocalyptic vision that triumphantly concludes with His return for those He has rescued from their sin. From creation to the end of time, the Bible speaks and sings the gospel of God's amazing grace.

The Bible

A Chronological Overview

Old Testament Index

8. Earth's Early Years	Genesis 1-11 Bob and Ruth Froese
10. God's Sovereignty in Suffering	Job Jad Kebbe
12. The Patriarch Abraham	Genesis 1-23 John Wassink
14. The Patriarch Isaac	Genesis 24-27 Brian Yaiser
16. The Patriarch Jacob	Genesis 27-36 Rick Williamson
18. The Patriarch Joseph	Genesis 37-50 Brian Wright
20. Exodus Led By Moses	Exodus Eric Hall
22. The Law	Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy Nick Wells
24. Israel Enters the Land	Joshua Stephen Waldvogel
26. Israel Ruled by Judges	Judges, 1 Samuel 1-7 Frank Snyder
28. Kinsman Redeemer	Ruth Matt Takach
30. Saul & Young David	1 Samuel 8-31, 2 Samuel 1-10, 1 Chronicles 1-18 Levi Choate
32. David & Solomon	2 Samuel 11-24, 1 Kings 1-11, 1 Chronicles 19-29, 2 Chronicles 1-9 Brian Wright

34. Lament Songs	Psalms 1-41 Kurt Froese
36. Kingdom Songs	Psalms 42-106 David Froese
38. Praise Songs	Psalms 107-150 Brett Sitzman
40. A True Love Story	Song of Solomon Paul Leubner
42. Book of Wise Sayings	Proverbs Steve Woodard
44. Book of Life's Meaning	Ecclesiastes Joel Lattimer
46. Kings of North/South	1 Kings 12-22, 2 Kings 1-17, 2 Chronicles 10-28 Stephen Waldvogel
48. Prophets to North - Israel	Amos, Jonah, Hosea Rich D'Amico, Jim Woodard
50. Prophets to South - Judah	Isaiah, Joel, Micah Cliff and Abby Albrecht
52. Kings of Judah	2 Kings 18-25, 2 Chronicles 29-36 Frank Snyder
54. Prophets to Judah	Nahum, Zephaniah, Habakkuk, Jeremiah, Lamentations Frank Snyder
56. Judah Under Babylon	Daniel 1-9, Ezekiel, Obadiah Dale Bartholomew
58. Return of the Exiles	Ezra, Nehemiah Parker Woodard
60. Prophets to Returned Exiles	Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi Gordon Fern
62. Judah Under Persia	Esther, Daniel 10-12 Tyler Weymouth

The Bible

A Chronological Overview

New Testament Index

64. Harmonized Gospels	Matthew, Mark, Luke Colin Bartholomew
66. Sermon on Mount	Matthew 5-7 Brandon Williamson
68. John's Gospel	John Sal Esposito
70. Early Church under Peter	Acts 1-12 Mike and Karen Saeli
72. Early Church under Paul	Acts 13-28 Jason and Alice Nightingale
74. Condemnation	Romans 1:1-3:21 Kurt Froese
76. Justification	Romans 3:21-5:21 Jeff Lattimer
78. Discipleship Defined	Romans 6:1-16:27 Raffi Wright
80. Paul to Corinth 1	1 Corinthians Andy Fagan
82. Paul to Corinth 2	2 Corinthians Josh Jones
84. Paul to Galatia	Galatians John Hancock

86. Paul to Ephesus and Colosse	Ephesians and Colossians Josh Freeburg
88. Paul to Philippi	Philippians Bob Shannon
90. Paul to Thessalonica	1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians Ron Martin
92. Paul to Timothy	1 Timothy, 2 Timothy Stephen Sementilli
94. Paul to Titus	Titus Dave Haney
96. Paul to Philemon	Philemon Scott Berchou
98. Letter to the Hebrews	Hebrews Bob and Ruth Froese
100. James to the Jews	James Stephen Sementilli
102. Peter to the Dispersed	1 Peter, 2 Peter Mike Cervino
104. John to the Beloved	1 John, 2 John, 3 John Jeremy Hoffmann
106. Jude to the Called	Jude Josh Saeli
108. Christ to His Church	Revelation 1-3 Jim Kocz
110. Endtime Revelation	Revelation 4-22 Jim Kocz

Earth's Early Years

Genesis 1-11

Bob & Ruth Froese

I. THE CREATION

- A. The Bible opens with a description of God's boundless, majestic, creative work on six days—Genesis 1-2.
 - 1:1-2:3—God's creation of earth is recorded day-by-day, with each framed by "and God said"... and..."there was evening and there was morning."
 - 2:24-25—The record of God's creating the first people wisely includes the perfect ordering of the husband/wife relationship.
- B. The main point of the creation revelation is the fall in light of God's glorious redemption plan—Genesis 3.
 - 3:1-6—In the good world created by the perfect God, enter Satan's temptation and human desire.
 - 3:6-13—The people respond in fear, covering, and hiding.
 - 3:14-24—God promises hope of seed that will crush the enemy's head, and provides curses that describe defiance to God's wise creative ordering for humanity.

II. THE FIRST FAMILY

- A. Sacrifices are required, but corruption has entered and breaks loose—Genesis 4-6
 - 4:1-8—Abel's sacrifice is accepted, Cain's rejected. Rather than repent & rejoice, he murders Abel and begins a lineage of evil.
 - 4:9-26—Cain is cursed because of the murder (his anger).
 - 4:25-6:8—Seth is born and yields another kind of family tree, but corruption still results.

III. THE FIRST RESCUE

- A. God decides to destroy earth and its corruption, but provides protection for earth's one righteous man—Genesis 6:9-8:19.
 - 7:2-3—God makes provision for sacrificial offerings.
- B. Noah offers sacrifice, God provides a covenant promise and a curse—Genesis 8:20-9:29.
 - 8:20-22—Noah offers sacrificial burnt offerings to God.
 - 9:1-17—God responds with a covenant, symbolized by a rainbow.
 - 9:20-29—Noah's son Ham is cursed because he dishonors Noah. The curse is on Canaan, Noah's youngest son.

IV. GENERATIONS BECOME NATIONS

- A. Noah's three sons father clans, languages, land and nations—Genesis 10:1-32.
- B. The Tower of Babel—Genesis 11:1-9.
 - 11:4—The people seek security in a city.
 - 11:4—The people desire fame for themselves.
 - 11:9—God provides confusion of languages and the people are dispersed.
- C. Shem's descendants are listed, ending with Terah, the father of Abram—Genesis 11:10-32.
 - 11:27-32—Terah moves from Ur, heads for the land of Canaan, settles and dies in Haran.

Application

The enemy is still employing the tactics he used with Adam and Eve. He still says:

- ❑ “Doubt the Bible—Place your faith in the god of self, listen to your heart.”
- ❑ “Distort the Bible—Focus on limitations, indeed, exaggerate them. Human logic will quickly tell you to stay away from God’s commands.”
- ❑ “Deny God’s Word—Don’t listen when God says you need to deny yourself, rather embrace health, wealth, self-esteem.”
- ❑ “Desires are important, listen to your heart. Do you want to feel better? Have more? Be more? Go for it, at all costs!
- ❑ “Disobey God’s Word! Accept only your own authority.”

Next Adam and Eve set a pattern of response to the shame/guilt that inevitably follow obedience of the enemy. We still respond in the same ways:

- ❑ We pick up “fig leaves.” We try to cover up our sinful thoughts/sinful actions by defending/justifying them.
- ❑ We fear. We avoid at great cost the sound of God’s voice, the conviction of His Spirit, and the power of His Word.
- ❑ We run away and hide. We change jobs, locations, marriages, even children.
- ❑ We blame. There’s always some sinner who can provide shelter for victim thinking, that slippery robber of good old conviction. Adam blamed Eve, Eve blamed Satan, and we find someone to blame for our sin too.

God then cursed Adam and Eve. We are daily faced with the choice to choose blessing or cursing.

- ❑ Women—We choose cursing when we elevate desire for children above the one-flesh relationship with a husband, or desire to rule a husband.
- ❑ Men—We choose cursing when we desire to be free of our responsibilities in leading our wife, or elevate desire for work above godly priorities.

Without looking to God in repentance, ours is a Cain-like countenance that chooses anger and sin. It all begins in our thought processes, just like in Noah’s day, when the intention of their thoughts was not for God, but for evil.

Questions

1. As in Genesis 3:1-5, this week, in what ways were you tempted to deny God’s Word? Distort God’s Word? Be deceived rather than believe God’s Word? Listen to your desires rather than God’s Word? Disobey God’s Word?
2. As in Genesis 3:7-13, this week, when you were faced with shame because of your sin, in what ways have you covered up? Attempted to escape or hide from God’s conviction? Run away from those who would help you be accountable? Blamed others?
3. In Genesis 4:5-6, God gave Cain a choice. He could have lifted his countenance to choose humble joy and repentance, but he chose bitter anger and sin. The same desires that trapped Eve also trapped Cain—to feel better (she saw that the tree was good), to have more (it delighted her eyes), and to be more (she could be wiser). Cain’s desires, that caused him to bring an offering God rejected, are not described for us, but we do know that he chose desire/emotion (anger) over obedience. We are warned about desires in 1 John 2:16. In what ways in your life is it dangerous to desire to feel good, to have more, and/or to be more?

God's Sovereignty in Suffering

Job

Jad Kebbe

- I. PROLOGUE—Job 1:1-5: The book opens with a description of a godly, wealthy man in the very early years of this earth. No inference is made regarding the role of his godliness in his wealth.
- II. A RARE GLANCE BEHIND THE CURTAINS OF HEAVEN—Job 1:6-12: God boasts about Job's uprightness before Satan. The latter needs permission from the former in order to test Job, asks for it, and God grants it.
- III. TRIALS, LAMENT AND SILENCE—Job 1:13-3:26: Job is subjected to the most severe of human suffering: his wealth is lost; his ten children are dead; his health is all but gone. Enough breath is left in him to bless God, rebuke his wife (who has become the voice of Satan), and then wish he was never born. Meanwhile, his friends carry their best action: Be at his side in utter silence for seven days.
- IV. THE DISCOURSES:
 - A. Eliphaz speaks three times—Job 4-5, 15, 22. His theology mimics that of Islam: God is good and great, yet so high and holy that we can never have a real relationship with Him. We can try to please him in our life, and as such, reap the benefits.
 - B. Bildad speaks three times—Job 8, 18, 25. So insensitive in alluding that Job's children got what they deserved, Bildad moves on to expound on his theology of double retribution: The good will be blessed and the blessed will do good; the evil will suffer and those who suffer must have done evil.
 - C. Zophar speaks twice—Job 11, 20. Even more headstrong than the previous two, this friend is quicker to condemn and more personal in his accusation. His obtuse theology is one we frequently encounter today: the course of time will surely bring visible justice upon those who have done evil.
 - D. Job answers—Job 6-7, 9-10, 12-14, 16-17, 19, 21, 23-24, 26-31. As the book progresses, the friends speak less and Job speaks more. Cynicism and rhetoric, patience and wisdom culminate in ch 31 where he speaks to his uprightness against lust, falsehood, covetousness, adultery, the mistreatment of servants, callousness towards the poor, failure to clothe the poor, perversion of justice, trust in wealth, idolatry, gloating, lack of hospitality, unconfessed sin, and abuse of the land.

Along the way, Job provides two great insights:

 - 9:33; 16:19-21; 17:3; 19:25-27—There must be a mediator between God and man, indeed a kinsman-redeemer who lives forever.
 - 14:14; 17:15-16; 19:25-27—Death surely is not the end. God has indeed put eternity in the heart of man. The man of faith hopes in a resurrection in which he shall see the Redeemer.
 - E. Elihu—Job 32-37. Unlike the other friends who focused on what Job might have done, Elihu's focus is on the way Job responded to his afflictions. And God does not rebuke him at the end of the book.
- V. THE LORD SPEAKS—Job 38-41: He does not give an answer, but reveals His overarching glory and greatness. The more a man discovers God's greatness, the less the "why" questions will bother him.
- VI. THE END—Job 42: Job regrets his ignorance, repents with a desire to be reconciled, and worships in wonder. God tested His servant, but also loved him. He is indeed a God of mercy. He is not satisfied by reconciliation with Job alone; He has come that all may repent.

Application

Early in the biblical narrative, Job testifies to the inevitability of suffering. In a book punctuated by ill-devised words and heartache, God speaks the most in the midst of the suffering of one who is beloved.

Satan wanted to test Job's faith to disprove it. God wanted to test his faith to prove it, not to God, but to Job himself, his friends and us. Job persevered as a saint, and he did so with questions but not doubt. Even when faced by the bad advice of his wife and ill counsel of his friends, he persevered in godliness.

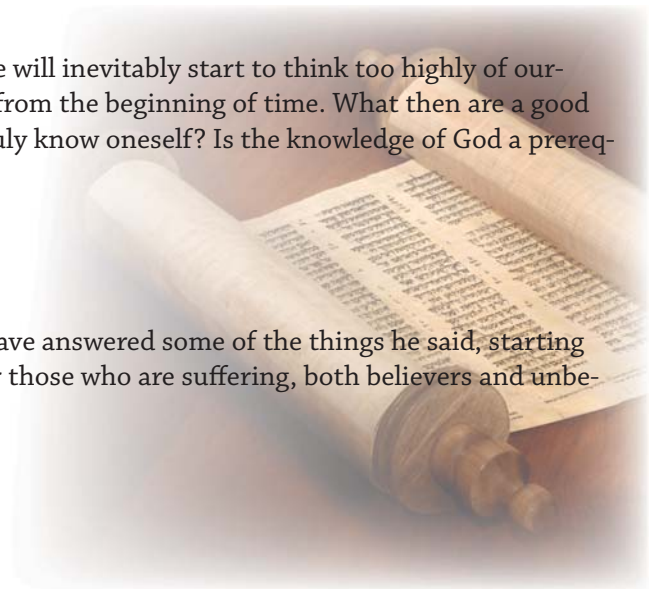
After Job questions God, the latter starts questioning him with indignant love and long-suffering mercy. This, though seemingly forceful and angry, is the outpouring of the love of a Father whose young son cannot comprehend the ultimate good behind the current apparently distressing situation. God turns what we perceive as the epitome of evil and pride into agents to his own ends. In fact, evil is one of the highest proofs for the existence of God: by assuming the presence of evil, we posit that of good. There must be a moral law to differentiate between them, and hence a moral Lawgiver who is steadfast and immutable. And we find that in God alone.

The one who is able to stand firm in faith is, in fact, the one who is willing to sacrifice all things, namely count them as refuse, for the sake of his Lord. If you fix your eyes on God, you will find value in the midst of pain and suffering. If you fix them on anything else, especially pleasure, you will find no value, no meaning, no purpose, but hopeless despair and helpless despondency.

In the end, as I imagine Mr and Mrs Job on the front porch watching their ten children play, I cannot help but notice in the background ten tombstones - silent reminders of the reality of suffering, God's sovereignty and

Questions

1. If God is so great and man so insignificant, why does He care about us? Is God worthy of our worship? Does He need to "bribe" us with a good life in order for us to love Him? Does He in fact owe us?
2. Apart from the revelation of God's perfect character, we will inevitably start to think too highly of ourselves. Yet God has determined the essence of wisdom from the beginning of time. What then are a good knowledge and a perfect wisdom? How can a person truly know oneself? Is the knowledge of God a prerequisite for this?
3. How would you have comforted Job? How would you have answered some of the things he said, starting with chapter 3? What is your strategy as you come near those who are suffering, both believers and unbelievers? Where do you draw comfort and hope from?



The Patriarch Abraham

Genesis 10-23

John Wlassink

I. THE DESCENDANTS OF NOAH—Genesis 10-11

- A. Shem, Ham and Japheth were the sons of Noah and the fathers of all the nations—Genesis 10.
- B. At that time, all men spoke the same language. With one mind and one language, the men planned to build a tower (11:4) that would be a monument to their own greatness. The Lord confused their languages in order to stop them because “nothing which they purpose to do will be impossible for them,” (11:6). This is how the different nations and different languages came about—Genesis 11.

II. THE LIFE OF ABRAHAM—Genesis 12-20

- A. Abram was the the father of the Jews and was from the line of Shem (Semitic people).
- B. God chooses Abram out of a pagan nation and makes what we refer to as the “Abrahamic Covenant”—Genesis 12.
 - 12:1-3—God promises to bless Abram, make a great nation out of him, and blessings or curses to other nations depending on how they treat Israel.
- C. Abram was an extraordinarily rich and powerful man. Running out of room in the land, Abram graciously gives preference to his nephew Lot who chooses the better land— Genesis 13-14.
- D. God reiterates his promise to Abram that he will be the father of a large nation. Abram believed God, and it was “reckoned to Him as righteousness” (15:6). Becoming saved or justified, has always been by faith alone— Genesis 15.
- E. Although Abram believed God and trusted in His promises, Abram wavers; he impatiently takes matters into his own hands and goes into his maidservant—Genesis 16.
- F. God reaffirms His covenant with Abraham (and changes his name). Circumcision is now the sign of the covenant. In their old age, Abraham and Sarah are skeptical of God’s promise to provide a son— Genesis 17:1-18:15.
- G. The exceeding wickedness of Sodom and Gomorrah prompts the Lord’s judgment. Abraham negotiates God down to withhold judgment if 10 righteous people (down from 50 people) are found there—Genesis 18:16-19.
 - The wickedness of Sodom, the foolishness of Lot, and God’s awesome judgment is shown graphically in Genesis 19 in this amazing account.
- H. Abraham settles in Gerar, but old habits die hard as Abraham continues to scheme and deceive kings instead of trusting in God’s promised protection. Again, God protects Sarah from kings that desire her—Genesis 20.
- I. God miraculously fulfills His promise and Isaac is born—Genesis 21.
- J. God tests Abraham and commands him to sacrifice his only son. Abraham is obedient and Isaac goes untouched. God reaffirms His covenant with Abraham—Genesis 22.
- K. Abraham buries Sarah. He is offered the choicest burial spot by the Hittites due to his reputation and power—Genesis 23.

Application

It's extremely important to recognize how an accurate understanding of Genesis will shape your world view and that of your children. In this section, the tower of Babel explains how men were scattered by God into different nations with different languages. Those who understand the Bible in its entirety have insight into life's most important questions, and have the proper perspective on history, life in the present, and the future. Make sure your children understand these things.

Throughout Genesis 10-23, notice how Abram and Lot make decisions (both good and bad). Reflect on the situation between Abram and Lot and his choice of the land. Ultimately, notice Lot's disastrous life and Abram's blessed life and some of the decisions that led there.

Notice in Genesis 22 how God tests us with what we hold most dear. Abraham demonstrates his great trust in the Lord and is willing to sacrifice his only son in obedience to God.

Questions

1. It's important to understand the covenant God made with Abraham. Read each of these passages and describe what the covenant involves:

Genesis 12:1-3:

Genesis 15 (the ceremony; location of the covenant v. 18-20):

Genesis 17:9-14 (circumcision):

2. A reoccurring issue in this section of Scripture is Abraham and Sarah's struggle to hold fast to God's unconditional promise. Their behavior at times seems ridiculous and often led to serious consequences. We should consider if we are doing the same and determine how we fall short in fully trusting the many rock solid promises God has made to us. List some promises God has made to us as His chosen people and evaluate your own responses to them. Do you scheme and deceive, or do you patiently trust and obey? Do you fall into thinking God needs your cunning to help accomplish His purposes?
3. The shortcomings of Abraham and Sarah are well documented in this portion of Scripture. But read Hebrews 11:8-19. Write down the ways Abraham and Sarah demonstrated their tremendous faith. Is this type of faith evident in your own life?

The Patriarch Isaac

Genesis 24-27

Brian Yaiser

I. A WIFE FOR ISAAC

- A. Abraham, richly blessed by God, obeys God and desires his son, Isaac, not take a wife from the Canaanites, among whom he lived, but rather from Abraham's native land.
- God commissions his unnamed servant to acquire a wife for Isaac. The servant's job is simply to tell the bride all about the bridegroom, not about Himself (John 15:26, 16:13-14).
 - 24:27—God's promise.
 - 24:10-12—The servant's obedience in prayer.
 - This passage tells us that Rebekah was beautiful. This reminds us of how Jesus sees the church (Ephesians 5:27, 2 Corinthians 11:2).
 - 24:14-15—The servant's faith
 - The servant asks permission to take Rebekah to Isaac. Her family tries to hinder her. Often our family and friends will try to hinder the bride from following Christ. Rebekah had to leave all that was familiar to her to be married to a man she never met, only on the testimony of the servant.
 - 24:34-36—The servant instructs regarding the wealth of the father.
 - Jesus said, "All things that the Father has are mine." The church has not seen Christ, the Holy Spirit convicts and draws us. We love because He first loved us (1 Peter 1:8, John 20:29).
 - As all that belonged to Isaac would belong to Rebekah, we too have no concept of how unfathomably rich we are "in Christ."
- B. The servant asks permission to take Rebekah to Isaac—Genesis 24:37-38
- C. Rebekah's family hinders her from going, but when she is asked to go, she says yes—Genesis 24:58.

II. ABRAHAM'S OFFSPRING

- A. Abraham lives to the ripe old age of 175 years, after having two children, Isaac, born from Sarah and Ishmael, whom Hagar, Sarah's slave bore to Abraham.
- B. Isaac has two sons, Esau and Jacob.
- 25:29-34—Esau sells his birthright.
 - 26:3—God promise reaffirmed to Isaac.
- C. Isaac's ultimate financial blessing by God—Genesis 26:12-16.
- D. God reaffirms His blessing of Isaac's offspring—Genesis 26:24.

III. THE STOLEN BLESSING

- A. Esau, already having sold his birthright is now deceived by his brother, Jacob. With the help of Isaac's wife Rebekah, Jacob poses as Esau and receives Isaac's blessing—Genesis 27:1-4.
- 27:5-10—Rebekah's deception.
 - 27:26-29—Jacob falsely receives Isaac's blessing.
 - 27:34-38—Esau's anger.

Application

GOD'S PROMISE

Hebrews 6:13-18
Philippians 4:19
2 Corinthians 7:1
Ephesians 2:8
John 20:19-23
2 Chronicles 7:14

OUR OBEDIENCE

Colossians 3:22
Hebrews 13:17
John 15:14
Romamns 2:6-8
Luke 11:28

HIS FAITHFULNESS

Deuteronomy 7:8-9
2 Peter 3:9
Galatians 3:14
Hebrews 10:23
Acts 13:22-33

God's Word, in hand, the Bible.
Think right, do right, feel right.

Our roles today as master and
servant in our church, family,
workplace, community.

Doing His will.

Questions

1. (See application passages about God's promises) Does God fulfill His promises today as He did yesterday? How do His promises impact your life?
2. (See application passages about our obedience) What kind of master and servant are we? When do you struggle to obey? What influences us to obey man vs. God?
3. (See application passages about God's faithfulness) Are we thankful and content in all circumstances? Do we believe His promise and respond to it? Do we fear, the sound of God's voice, the communication of His Spirit, and the power of His Word?



The Patriarch Jacob

Genesis 27-36

Rick Williamson

Jacob is considered to be the third Patriarch after the flood to whom a covenant was given by God. Between the Old and New Testaments, the three Patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob) are used together over thirty times as a reference to the covenants that God had made to His people (e.g. Exodus 2:24-25, Matthew 22:32).

The covenants that God had given to Abraham and Isaac, that they would be a people with a place and a possession, would continue with Jacob and begin to materialize as God changes Jacob's name to Israel, and his twelve sons would become the twelve tribes of Israel. But Jacob's life was not one of ease or comfort. The very name Israel means "to wrestle with God". Though Jacob's life was full of battles, there were many blessings. God is faithful and true in His covenants!

- I. THE BIRTH—Genesis 25:19-28: The prayer of Isaac for his barren wife Rebekah is granted by God. Through Jacob's very birth as a twin, born after Esau, the purposes of God are declared.
- II. THE BIRTHRIGHT—Genesis 25:29-34: Esau, in his arrogance despised his birth-right.
- III. THE BLESSING—Genesis 27:1-29: Through the deception of Rebekah, Jacob receives the blessing Isaac intended for his eldest son, Esau. What was the blessing that Jacob therefore received from Isaac?
- IV. FROM BEERSHEBA TO BETHEL—Genesis 28:1-22: The blessings from Isaac begin in Jacob's life as he obeys his father and mother and leaves for Padan Aram to take a wife from his mother's family. In his heavenly dream God affirms His covenant with Jacob. What were the promises God gave to Jacob and what was his response?
- V. THE BETROTHALS—Genesis 29:1-30: In his obedience to his parents and his faith in God, Jacob finds not just one, but two wives of his mother's family. Jacob's love for Rachel was evident.
- VI. THE BARREN AND BARRENNESS—Genesis 29:31-30:24: Ironically for Jacob but sovereignly by God, Rachel whom Jacob loved the most could not conceive but Leah did. In fact she had six sons before Rachel even had her first of two. Not only that, Zilpah the maid of Leah bore Jacob two sons as well as Bilhah, the maid of Rachel bore Jacob two sons.
- VII. THE BATTLE—Genesis 32:1-32: In a journey to meet his brother Esau, Jacob becomes fearful of a potential battle with big brother. Jacob's recourse is a prayer for protection based on the promises of God. God responds in a battle with Jacob himself, but it is a battle for a blessing. The blessing Jacob received caused him to desire to bless his brother.
- VIII. THE BEREAVEMENT AND BURIALS—Genesis 35:1-29: As time would come to pass, Rachel whom Jacob loved, died while giving birth to Jacob's last son, and Isaac, Jacob's beloved father also died. Previous to this, God commanded Jacob to build an altar to Him and also reaffirmed the covenant.
- IX. THE BITTERNESS AND BETRAYAL—Genesis 37:1-36: Joseph was the favorite son of Jacob and his older brothers were bitter of this. So bitter that they would betray their own father by lying that Joseph had been killed by a wild animal, when in fact they had sold him into slavery.
- X. THE BELIEF—Genesis 45:17-46:5: At a point in his life where Jacob may have lost all hope due to his circumstances, God shows Himself faithful. Why would Jacob have been more revived by the news of Joseph being alive over the abundance of provisions he was sent by Pharaoh? As Jacob offers sacrifices to God what assurances did God give him?
- XI. THE BLESSINGS—Genesis 48:1-49:28: In his last days Jacob blessed the two sons of Joseph, Manasseh and Ephraim, and also some of his own sons.
- XII. THE BURIAL—Genesis 49:29-50:14: Despite a life that appeared at many times in turmoil, Jacob dies in peace. Until his death he remained faithful, obedient and continued to worship God. Jacob had hope!

Application

The biblical account of the life of Jacob is recorded in Genesis chapters 25-50, with numerous references throughout the Old Testament books of the Law, Psalms, the Prophets, the Gospels, and Acts. Jesus mentions Jacob in the context of the history of God's dealings with His people. The Apostle Paul refers to Jacob in a theological context and the writer of Hebrews reflects on the faith of Jacob. Through the references to Jacob, we see the divine sovereignty of God displayed. Read Romans 9:10-14. What does this passage teach us about God?

The Battle—Genesis 32:1-32

God responds in a battle with Jacob himself, but it is a battle for a blessing. The blessing Jacob received caused him to desire to bless his brother. What attitude and actions of Jacob demonstrate this grace? How can you bless those who curse or persecute you?

The Bereavement and Burials—Genesis 35:1-29

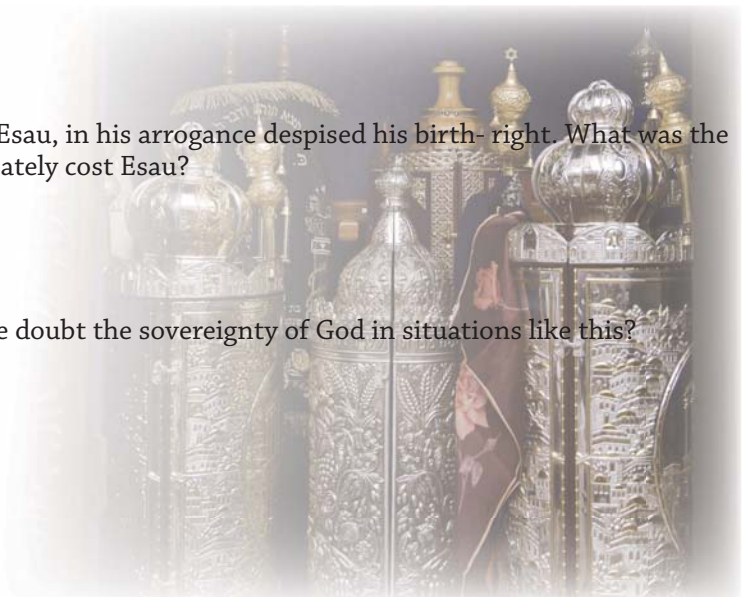
God commanded Jacob to build an altar to Him and also reaffirmed the covenant. Why would God have done this and what is the hope for you in times of bereavement?

Write out some scripture passages of the hope we have in the promises of God.

Write out some scripture passages where God promises peace and hope to those who put their trust in Him and persevere to the end.

Questions


1. List the names of the twelve sons born to Jacob by the four women. Read Genesis 35:22-26 for reference. What was the name of the one daughter born to Jacob by Leah? In Genesis 48:1-49:28, we read of Jacob's blessings. What is the significance of the blessing he gave his grandsons? Read Hebrews 11:21 as a reference. Some of Jacob's sons did not receive a blessing but a curse. Note what the blessings and cursing's are to each son and what does that reveal about Jacob himself?
2. Read Genesis 27:30-40 and Hebrews 12:12-17 Esau, in his arrogance despised his birthright. What was the significance of a birthright and what did it ultimately cost Esau?
3. What is at the root of bitterness? Why would we doubt the sovereignty of God in situations like this?



The Patriarch Joseph

Genesis 37-50

Brian Wright

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- I. JOSEPH REJECTED—Genesis 37:1-36
 - A. Jacob esteeming—Genesis 37:1-4
 - B. Joseph dreaming—Genesis 37:5-11
 - C. Brothers scheming—Genesis 37:12-36
 - II. JOSEPH REFINED—Genesis 38:1-40:23
 - A. A shameful interlude concerning Judah's sin—Genesis 38:1-30
 - B. Joseph tested morally when abounding—Genesis 39:1-20
 - C. Joseph tested physically when lacking—Genesis 39:21-40:23
 - III. JOSEPH RESURRECTED—Genesis 41:1-45
 - A. Pharaoh dreams and despairs—Genesis 41:1-8
 - B. Joseph interprets and instructs—Genesis 41:9-36
 - C. Pharaoh ponders and promotes—Genesis 41:3-45
 - IV. JOSEPH REIGNING—Genesis 41:46-57
 - A. The seven years of plenty—Genesis 41:46-49
 - B. The birth of Ephraim and Manasseh—Genesis 41:50-52
 - C. The seven years of famine—Genesis 41:53-57
 - V. JOSEPH RECONCILING—Genesis 42:1-47:31
 - A. The first journey of Jacob's sons to Egypt—Genesis 42:1-38
 - 42:1-5—The need of grain.
 - 42:6-24—The conviction of guilt.
 - 42:25-38—The provision of grace.
 - B. The second journey of Jacob's sons to Egypt—Genesis 43:1-45:28.
 - 43:1-14—Jacob gives way to Judah's persuasion.
 - 43:15-34—Joseph is reunited with Benjamin.
 - 44:1-34—Judah offers himself on behalf of Benjamin.
 - 43:1-5—Joseph's set-up.
 - 43:6-13—Benjamin's up-set.
 - 43:14-34—Judah's set-back.
 - 45:1-15—Joseph reveals himself to His brothers.
 - 45:1-4—Joseph's revelation to his brothers.
 - 45:5-8—Joseph's rationale of God's sovereignty.
 - 45:9-13—Joseph's rescue of Jacob.
 - 45:14-15—Joseph's reconciliation with his brothers.
 - 45:16-28—Jacob learns that Joseph is alive.
 - 45:16-20—Pharaoh's invitation.
 - 45:21-24—Joseph's preparation.
 - 45:25-28—Jacob's exaltation.
 - C. The third journey of Jacob and his family to Egypt—Genesis 46:1-47:31.
 - 46:1-7—God's blessing on Israel and his children.
 - 46:8-27—The children of Israel who are heirs of God's blessing.
 - 46:28-30—Israel and Joseph are reunited.
 - 46:31-47:12—Joseph honors Jacob's family in Egypt.
 - 47:13-26—Joseph prospers Pharaoh during the famine.
 - 47:27-31—Joseph promises to bury Jacob in Canaan.
 - VI. JOSEPH REWARDED—Genesis 48:1-49:33
 - A. Joseph is rewarded with blessing for his sons—Genesis 48:1-22.
 - B. Joseph is rewarded with blessing among his brothers—Genesis 49:1-33.
 - VII. JOSEPH RETURNING—Genesis 50:1-26
 - A. Joseph returns with his brethren to Canaan to bury Jacob—Genesis 50:1-13.
 - B. Joseph returns with his brethren to Egypt—Genesis 50:14-21.
 - C. Joseph prepares for his final return—Genesis 50:22-26.

Application

Throughout the Genesis account of Joseph, we are forced to reckon with the persistent question of Is God in control? As you read Joseph's story, you probably already knew the outcome. It is a very inspiring story when you know the ending. But that is not how Joseph experienced it. It looked as if he would never see his father or his God-given dream fulfilled. He was a slave in a foreign nation. He couldn't leave Egypt. He was the property of another man for life. Joseph was learning obedience by what he suffered. His brothers were skillfully wielded instruments in the hand of God. Perhaps when Joseph had his dreams he saw them as a confirmation of the favor on his life. He had not yet learned that authority is given to serve, not to set you apart. Often in these training periods we focus on the impossibility of our circumstances instead of the greatness of God. As a result we are discouraged and need to blame someone, so we look for the one we feel is responsible for our despair. When we face the fact that God could have prevented our whole mess—and didn't—we often blame Him. This kept ringing through Joseph's mind: "I have lived in accordance to what I know of God. I've not transgressed His statutes or nature. I was only repeating a dream God Himself gave me. And what's the result? My brothers betray me, and I'm sold as a slave! My dad thinks I'm dead and never comes to Egypt to find me." To him the bottom line was his brothers. They were the force that had thrown him into this dungeon. Maybe he entertained thoughts of how things would be different once he was in power, when God put him in the position of authority he had seen in the dreams. How different it all would be if his brothers had not aborted his future. How often do we hear our brothers and sisters fall into the same trap of assigning blame? It is easy to blame everyone else for the problems you have and imagine how much better off you would be if it had not been for all those around you. You know that your disappointment and hurt are their fault. Absolutely no man, woman, child, or anyone can ever get you out of the will of God! No one but God holds your destiny. Joseph's brothers tried hard to destroy the vision God gave him. They thought they had ended it for Joseph. They said out of their own mouths, "Come, therefore, let us now kill him and cast him into some pit. . . . We shall see what will become of his dreams!" (Gen. 37:20). They were out to destroy him. It wasn't an accident. It was deliberate! They wanted no chance of his ever succeeding. God has already seen every adverse circumstance we will encounter—no matter how great or small—and He has the way planned for escaping it. And, even more thrilling, often the thing that looks like an abortion of God's plan actually ends up being the road to its fulfillment if we stay in obedience and free from offense. So remember: Stay submitted to God by not becoming offended; resist the devil, and he will flee from you (James 4:7). We resist the devil by not becoming offended. The dream or vision will probably happen differently than how you think it will, but His Word and His promises will not fail. We only risk halting them by our disobedience.

Questions

1. Could there be a worse scenario of mistreatment than that which Joseph endured?
2. Who sent Joseph to be enslaved and imprisoned? His brothers or God?
3. If you've been genuinely mistreated, do you have the right to be offended?
4. According to Psalm 105:18 what was Joseph's condition in prison?
5. What is a temptation you struggle with? In what ways could that temptation cause you to compromise your integrity? What can you do, in Christ, to have victory over the temptation? How will you prepare for situations when your integrity will be tested? What do these scriptures teach us regarding integrity; Esther 7:1-10; Psalm 99:6,7; Proverbs 11, Daniel 1:1-21; Mark 12:13-17.
6. Why was Joseph not angry with his brothers for selling him to Egypt?
7. Why did Joseph believe God had sent him to Egypt? What do these scriptures teach us about God's will, see Numbers 9:1-23; 20:1-13; Esther 9:1-32; Matthew 1:18-25; 26:36-46; Romans 1:16-32.
8. Why did Joseph not seek revenge on his brothers?
9. In what ways does Joseph's forgiveness parallel God's forgiveness?
10. What does Hebrews 11:22 teach us about Joseph's faith as an example to his family and to every Christ follower? Genesis 15:13-16; Psalm 105:17-19; Genesis 37:5-10; Genesis 50:24-26; Exodus 13:19; Joshua 24:32.

Exodus Led by Moses

Exodus



I. THE EXODUS

- A. Setting—Exodus 1-2.
 - 1:8-16—There's a new king in Egypt and he was so afraid at the sheer number and might of the Israelites that he enslaved them with intense labor and commanded that every male born child to be killed.
 - 2:1-10—Moses is born under these harsh conditions and with God's intervention Moses is not only spared from being murdered but he is able to safely grow up in Pharaoh's own house.
- B. Call of Moses—Exodus 3-4.
 - 3:1-4—God, within the midst of a burning bush, miraculously calls Moses.
 - 4:27-28—God sends Aaron to help Moses on this journey and task.
- C. Moses & Aaron—Exodus 5-7:7.
 - 5:4-9—Moses and Aaron make their first appeal to Pharaoh but to no avail; in fact, things get worse for Israel rather than better.
 - 6:6-8—God sends encouragement and a promise of deliverance to the Israelites through Moses.
- D. Plagues & Exodus—Exodus 7:8-15:21.
 - 7:8-12:30—Due to the hardness of Pharaoh's heart God uses Moses to send 10 different plagues upon the land of Egypt.
 - 13:17-14:31—The infamous & miraculous crossing of the Red Sea by the Israelites and the subsequent destruction of the Egyptian army.
- E. Journey—Exodus 15:22-18.
 - 15:22-27—The Israelites begin a long journey where they would encounter trials and complain to the Lord. Despite their grumbling the Lord would provide food, water, shelter, and protection.

II. MOUNT SINAI COVENANT

- A. Setting—Exodus 19.
 - 19:1-8—The Israelites journey brings them to the base of Mount Sinai and there God makes a special covenant with the people that is conditional upon their obedience to God.
- B. Covenant Words & Rules—Exodus 20-23.
 - 20:1-21—God gives Moses a list of covenantal rules and commands that the Israelites must follow including the first giving of the ten commandments.
- C. Covenant Confirmed—Exodus 24.
 - 24:15-18—Moses spends roughly a month and half alone with the Lord and was able to experience a glimpse of His glory on the top of Mount Sinai.
- D. Instructions for the Tabernacle—Exodus 25:1-31:17.
 - 25:1-31:17—While in the glory cloud God gives Moses very explicit directions on how to construct the tabernacle and its various items and instructions on performing ceremonies, offerings, and rituals.
- E. The 10 Commandments—Exodus 31:18.
 - 31:18—Upon the completion of the conversation that God has with Moses within the glory cloud, God inscribes the covenant law onto two tablets of stone with His very own finger.
- F. Broken Covenant, Intercession, & Renewal—Exodus 32-34.
 - 32:1-6—The Israelites were impatient with Moses during that month and a half that he was with God in the glory cloud and in their impatience broke the covenant and had Aaron create a golden calf.
 - 32:7-14—In light of the golden calf, God's anger burns severely against the Israelites and He plans to destroy them but Moses intercession for the people causes the Lord to relent.
 - 32:15-34:35—Moses is furious with the people and in his anger throws the covenant tablets and breaks them. God then punishes the people for their sin and creates two new stone tablets. Following this interaction with God, Moses' face is radiant with God's glory.
- G. Preparing the Tabernacle for the Lord—Exodus 35-40.
 - 35:1-40:33—God provides final instructions for the preparation of the tabernacle and various items within it.
 - 40:34-30—The book of Exodus concludes with the glory of God filling and resting on the tabernacle.

Application

God is still looking for those whose trust and dependence is completely on Him and not on themselves.

- ❑ God called Moses, a regular guy, from his ordinary life and gave him a job that was far beyond his ability.
- ❑ God isn't looking for the extraordinary; He's looking for the faithful. We look at ours (and others) personalities, wealth, and talents and think that God is impressed by our "abundance" or confined by our lack.
- ❑ Moses gave excuse after excuse of why God had chosen the wrong person and through this God was patient with Moses in preparing him for the task.
- ❑ When God presents a task to you that seems beyond your "paygrade" then He has you exactly where He wants you; dependent and walking by faith.

In this book we see that God gives a lot of time to giving some pretty specific commands regarding the tabernacle and how worship should be.

- ❑ In fact, the book of Exodus allots 13 of its 40 chapters (32.5% of the Book) to specific instructions on the tabernacle's construction, the construction of the elements within the tabernacle and how specific ordinances and ceremonies must be performed.
- ❑ God is still serious about how we treat the church body and conduct ourselves within the household of God.

We also see here that God is a forgiving and faithful God.

- ❑ After the sin of the Israelites and intercession from Moses, God relents from the destruction He had planned for them and instead shows mercy.
- ❑ We too deserve destruction as we are all sinful people but God has withheld his wrath and anger from us and placed it on the shoulders of His Son.

Questions

1. This week how specifically will you walk by faith. Hebrews 11:6 is clear that without faith it is impossible to please God. So, with that in mind, what is it that God wants you to do that seems impossible? Maybe it's sharing the gospel with a co-worker, neighbor, or family member? Maybe it's sacrificially giving of your time, money, and/or abilities even though it seems that you don't have enough. How will you walk by faith this week?
2. A large portion of Exodus is given to the attention of the tabernacle. How important is the church to you? Is attending church something you do when it fits into your schedule or is it something that you just can't live without. How about in the way you treat and speak of the people of the church (the Body of Christ)? Would you be considered one who brings unity or that sows disunity? What needs to be confessed?
3. In Exodus chapters 32 – 34 we see the people of God breaking the covenant that they had made with Him only a few chapters earlier; yet God still shows them mercy. What sin is it in your life that so easily besets you? Do you make excuses for your sin or are you quick to confess and seek reconciliation? How do you treat others when they have wronged you? How about when they have wronged you multiple times?

The Law

Leviticus, Number, Deuteronomy

Nick Wells



I. ABOUT THE BOOKS

A. Leviticus

- Though Leviticus does not explicitly state the date on which the events occurred, because of Exodus 40:17 and Numbers 1:1, we can be confident of the fact that God's giving of the law to Moses for the people occurred during the month that the tabernacle was erected, just prior to God speaking to Moses from the beginning of Numbers.
- As can be seen from the first and last verses in Leviticus, this book records God giving His laws to Moses so that Moses could relay them to Israel. This will be the primary content of the lesson.

B. Numbers

- Numbers is classified as a book of the Law; however, it follows the giving of the law from Leviticus and recounts almost 39 of the years when Israel was wandering in the wilderness prior to entering the promised land (though there are some laws discussed in it, too).

C. Deuteronomy

- Deuteronomy is a book that recounts Moses speaking to Israel. Chapters 1-3 are a brief history of Israel and are followed by Moses' explanation of how they are called to live in light of the laws that God had given them (4-30). The final chapters cover Joshua's succession of Moses and record Moses' song (32), final blessing on Israel (33), and death (34).

II. AUTHORSHIP

- These books are the latter three of five books that make up the Pentateuch (the first five books of Scripture). The authorship of the Pentateuch is ascribed to Moses throughout the Scriptures (Joshua 8:31; II Kings 14:6; Nehemiah 8:1; Mark 12:26; John 7:19).

III. THE METHOD OF INTERPRETATION

- Scripture is the best commentary for Scripture. Our knowledge from the New Testament needs to inform our interpretation of the Old Testament because there is no authority above God's Word.
- The way that a Jew would have understood the Law under the Old Covenant is different from the way that a New Testament Christian understands it, and, because of this, we will be reviewing the law from the Old Testament in light of the fullness of God's revelation from the New Testament.

IV. THE PURPOSE OF THE LAW—Romans 3:20; Galatians 3:23-27, 2:19

- The law was never meant to justify; rather, it tells us what constitutes sin. The law exists to show us the hopelessness of trying to keep the law, leading us to our true hope (Christ). Christ frees us from trusting in our obedience to the law for our salvation. It should be noted that the law is a reflection of God's character and that we should still learn about Him through it.

V. THE SOBERING REALITY OF SIN: IT IS OBJECTIVE—Leviticus 4:1-6:7, specifically 5:17; Numbers 15:22-31

- God reveals to us that, even if someone is unaware of what God requires of them, they are still found guilty for their transgression; however, in God's grace and mercy, there is hope for the one who sins unintentionally as well as the one who sins intentionally (hence, the sacrifices).

VI. THE REQUIREMENTS FOR FORGIVENESS—Leviticus 17:11; Hebrews 9:11-14, 22

- This verse answers a question that many have: Why did Christ need to die, and why does his blood need to be shed? This verse gives us the principle that defines the requirement for atonement through sacrifice. It is with this verse that we can more fully comprehend Hebrews 9. By understanding this truth, the depth of our understanding of God's sacrifice in Christ is deepened, which should lead to a greater devotion to God for ourselves and a more thorough understanding to tap into when giving others the gospel.

Application

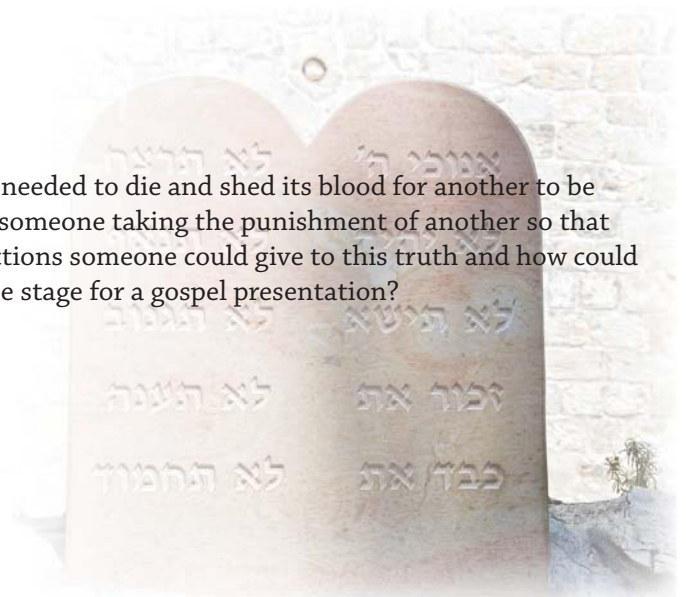
As previously mentioned, we should not content ourselves with having a shallow understanding of God or who He has called us to be. If our understanding of theology were an ocean we would want it to be both deep and wide. The width would be indicative of how much doctrine we know and the depth would be in reference to how thoroughly we understand them. We should always seek to know God better and better which should be affecting both the width and depth of our theological oceans.

An understanding of Leviticus 17:11 is absolutely necessary for us. Not only should the knowledge of this verse deepen our own faith and inspire greater devotion in us, but it also answers the question that the current generation is the most likely to ask: Why? We certainly can understand Hebrews 9 apart from Leviticus 17:11; however, without Leviticus 17:11, we are still left asking why Hebrews 9:22 says, "...almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins."

Scripture should inform our understanding of other Scripture. We have the privilege of looking at the Old Testament through the lens of the New Testament, which allows us to understand many things that saints from the Old Testament would not have been privy to. We should seek to comprehend the Old Testament in light of the New Testament as well as what the truths meant to their initial hearers. Additionally, regarding the interpretation of the Scriptures, we should not allow ourselves to be swayed by the qualifications of men regarding our beliefs (many knowledgeable men promote atheism or heresy); rather, we be like the Bereans from Acts 17 and be diligent to test what men say against the Scriptures. I say this not in reference to the leadership of the local church who have proven themselves trustworthy (unless, of course, heresy was being taught), but in regards to a foreign teacher who may be heard on the radio or other such places.

Questions

1. The Old Testament Law can be presented as a dry topic that is irrelevant to us today. What do you think of that idea? Think about some of the laws that you are familiar with from the Old Testament and write down how they are a reflection of God's character to us. I would encourage you to read through Leviticus, as you may find it more interesting than you would expect!
2. Leviticus 17:11 gives the principle for why a sacrifice needed to die and shed its blood for another to be forgiven of their sin. Many people balk at the idea of someone taking the punishment of another so that the guilty party can be forgiven. What are some objections someone could give to this truth and how could you respond to them to justify it while also setting the stage for a gospel presentation?



Israel Enters The Land

Joshua

Stephen Waldvogel

- I. GOD'S INSTRUCTIONS—Joshua 1: Joshua is called by God to lead the people of Israel into the promised land. "I will give you every place that you set your foot...I will never leave you nor forsake you", but be "strong and very courageous". There is great unity in the camp.
- II. RECONNAISSANCE—Joshua 2: Joshua sends spies into the land. They are saved when Rehab the prostitute hides them. In return they promise to spare her family.
- III. CROSSING THE JORDAN—Joshua 3-4: God parts the Jordan river and the people enter the promised land on dry ground. A memorial is set up "so that all the people of the earth might know that the hand of the Lord is powerful and so that you might always fear the Lord".
- IV. RENEWING THE COVENANT—Joshua 5: The men are circumcised symbolizing a renewal of the Abrahamic covenant and their consecration to God. The Passover is celebrated with food from the land as the provision of manna from heaven ceases.
- V. JOSHUA'S COMMISSION—Joshua 5: Joshua is confronted by the commander of the Lord's army. He falls face down in reverence and is commissioned to take possession of the promised land.
- VI. THE DESTRUCTION OF JERICHO—Joshua 6: God gives special instructions regarding Jericho. He would fight for them but all of the spoils were to be consecrated unto the Lord. They were to march quietly for seven days in special procession. They obeyed and God brought down the wall. The City was totally destroyed and all perished except for Rehab's family.
- VII. SIN IN THE CAMP—Joshua 7-8: Achan sins by taking some valuables for himself. Consequently, the Israelites are routed at Ai and lose 36 men. God reveals that they have violated the covenant. Joshua commands Achan to "give glory to God" by confessing his sin. Then Achan and all of his family are stoned after which God grants a great victory over Ai.
- VIII. THE COVENANT RENEWAL—Joshua 8: Joshua builds an altar and prepares offerings unto the Lord. Then all the words of the law are read to all the people and a copy is made in stone.
- IX. DECEIVED—Joshua 9: The fearful Gibeonites deceive them with a ruse. Rather than inquiring of the Lord, the Israelite leaders rashly make a peace treaty believing the Gibeonites are from a distant land.
- X. GOD GRANTS VICTORY—Joshua 10-13: God works many miracles and grants spectacular victories over their enemies including on one occasion, causing the sun to stand still. The Israelites move throughout the land destroying city after city as God commanded until the land was subdued. Thirty-three kings fall before the army of the Lord, yet not all the inhabitants are dislodged.
- XI. THE DIVISION OF THE LAND—Joshua 13-22: The land is divided among the tribes of Israel. Each tribe received a specific allotment of land with the exception of the Levites, for the Lord God was to be their inheritance. Cities of refuge were established and the Israelites generously gave certain towns and lands to the Levites from out of their own inheritance.
- XII. JOSHUA'S FAREWELL—Joshua 23-24: As Joshua nears the end of his life he exhorts the people to faithfully love and obey the one true God. He recounts all of the marvelous deeds that the Lord wrought on their behalf, culminating in a place of peace and rest. Joshua reminds them that it was God who fought for them and that all of his promises were fulfilled. He commands them to "be careful to obey all that is written in the Book of the Law...without turning aside," and to "choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your forefathers served...or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household we will serve the Lord". He issues a stern warning of disaster if the people forsake the Lord and urges them to put away any foreign gods and yield their hearts completely to God. Finally, Joshua makes a covenant for the people and records these things in the book of the Law and sets up a large stone as a witness of the covenant.

Application

The book of Joshua gives an account of God's redemptive work on behalf of the nation of Israel. Forty years earlier God had delivered the people from the bondage of Egypt but due to their lack of faith and disobedience he delayed their entrance into the promised land. Now after the death of Moses, Joshua is commissioned to lead God's chosen people to forcefully take possession of their inheritance and finally enter the peace and rest of their redemption.

Throughout the book are woven many powerful truths and applications for the current day believer. God has similarly redeemed us and promises us a wonderful spiritual inheritance, a land to possess. If we faithfully allow God drive out those things in our lives that are sinful and detestable to him, we will enjoy his peace. If we choose to serve our God and with his strength destroy the idols in our lives he will give us rest. In contrast, Joshua warns that if we choose to turn away from God, he will turn from us and we will suffer eternal harm. Ultimately, the story of Joshua brings us to life's greatest imperative – we all must choose whom we will serve.

The spiritual warfare that we must endure may be fierce and most certainly we will not secure victory in any other way than to be careful to obey all that is written in the Book of the Law. Oh let us not turn to the left or to the right but walk in his ways, obey his commands and love the Lord God with all of our heart, with all our soul, and with all our mind until we enter our final inheritance.

Questions

1. God provided a tremendous victory for his glory at Jericho. God's instructions must have seemed very peculiar and probably didn't make sense to the people. Why would God tell them to walk around the enemy city multiple times without saying a word? Do you think they felt foolish or maybe embarrassed? Did they think that they were wasting their time? Maybe some even considered rebellion against Joshua's ridiculous commands. Have you ever wondered what may have happened if the people hadn't obeyed? Praise the Lord - the people obeyed even when they couldn't understand God's plans. They simply trusted his word and obeyed. Are there difficulties in your life that don't make sense? Does it seem that God not responding to your prayers quickly enough? Do you feel you are wasting time? Remember God's work at Jericho – the walls came down in God's time and in God's way.
2. At the end of Joshua's life he recounts the many miraculous provisions and victories God provided for his people. He reminds them that it was God who fought for them. They enjoyed the spoils of victory but only because God had chosen them and blessed them with a marvelous inheritance. Take some time to reflect on the miraculous redemption in Jesus Christ that God has provided for you. What specific victories has God accomplished in your life?
3. Joshua also points out that there were still some remaining inhabitants in the land and exhorts to people to press on and drive them all out. Are there areas in your life which are not completely surrendered to God? Are there things that influence you that must yet be driven out? Be encouraged, in the midst of your struggle no matter what it is, as you obey God's word, He, the Lord God will fight for you also.

Israel Ruled By Judges

Judges

Frank Snyder

There is a recurring plunge of Israel in the book of Judges. First people revered and served God—because Joshua and his generation kept the memory of God’s mighty acts alive among the people they revered God. But then the nation of Israel forsook true worship of God and turned to worship other gods. God brought the judgment of His wrath upon the nation of Israel for their disobedience. Israel would realize why God was punishing them and confess their sin. God would deliver them through a Spirit-filled judge.

I. INCOMPLETE CONQUEST OVER THE CANAANITES—Judges 1

- A. There was failure in the north because of unfulfilled commitment, incomplete obedience, and compromising tolerance.
- B. The writer says 7 times that the Israelites did not drive out the enemy. This is not a tedious list, but a theological accusation.
 - Israel was to drive out the Canaanites not for hardheaded reasons but for spiritual reasons. God had warned Moses in Exodus 23:33 that the remaining Canaanites wouldn’t be so much a military threat as spiritual snare.
 - If Canaan’s native populations are tolerated, it will lead Israel to intermarriage with them, and genuine faith will be kissed goodbye (Deuteronomy 7:1-4).

II. THE DECLINE AND JUDGMENT OF ISRAEL—Judges 2-3:6

- A. Israel’s response to God’s grace. They were disobedient and broke the covenant—Judges 2:1-6.
- B. Israel forgot the Lord and abandoned the Lord—Judges 2:7-13.
- C. The astonishing character of God—Judges 2:14-18.
- D. Increased slavery to sin—Judges 2:19-3:6.

III. GOD’S SELECTED JUDGES—Judges 3:7-Judges 16

- A. Othniel vs. Mesopotamia—Judges 3:7-11.
- B. Ehud vs. Moab; Shamgar vs. Philistines—Judges 3:12-31.
- C. Barak vs. Canaanites—Judges 4- 5:31.
- D. Gideon vs. Midianites—Judges 6:1-8:35.
- E. Trouble within, Jotham’s curse on Abimelech and Shechem—Judges 9.
- F. Tola and Jair vs. Abimelech’s effects—Judges 10:1-5.
- G. Jephthah, Ibzon, Elon, Abdon vs. Ammonites—Judges 10:6-12:15.
- H. Samson vs. Philistines—Judges 13:1-16:31.

IV. ISRAEL DID WHAT WAS RIGHT IN THEIR OWN EYES—Judges 17-21

- A. The idolatry of Micah and the Danites. Worship false gods, worship God wrongly—Judges 17-18.
- B. The crime of Gibeah which is very reminiscent of Sodom and Gomorrah, but unfortunately Sodom is the land of Benjamin—Judges 19.
- C. War against Benjamin and wives provided for Benjamin. There was no king in Israel and everyone did what was right in their own eyes—Judges 20-21.

V. GOD’S LAST JUDGE FOR ISRAEL—1 Samuel 1-7

- A. Samuel is born and given to the Lord—1 Samuel 1.
- B. Hannah’s prayer. Hannah affirms the Lord’s faithful care for His children; the vast difference between Samuel and Eli’s sons—1 Samuel 2.
- C. The calling of Samuel, the Word of the Lord through Samuel, only truth to Eli/Israel—1 Samuel 3:1-4:1.
- D. The Philistines capture the ark and God brings it back to Israel—1 Samuel 4:2-7:1.
- E. Samuel judges Israel, Samuel Israel’s sin—1 Samuel 7:2-17.

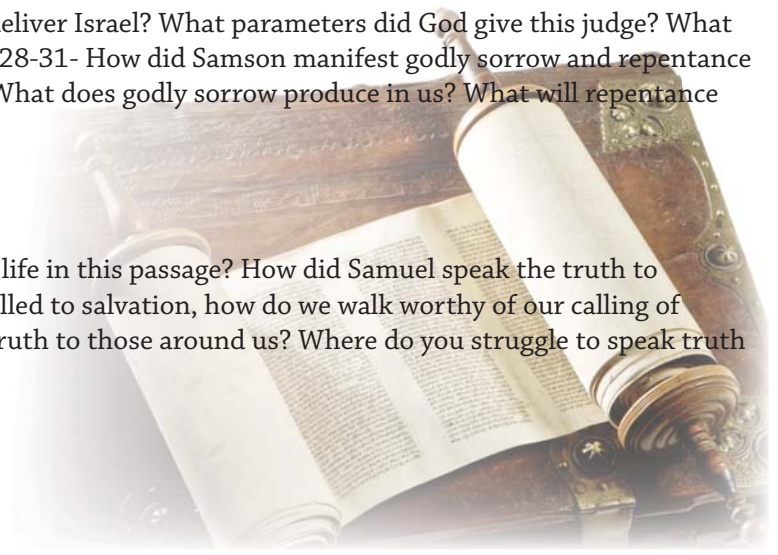
Application

One of the phrases that stick out in the book of Judges is this phrase, “In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes.” Israel did what they wanted to do, they lived out their own desires rather than what God wanted them to do. We are all susceptible to living the same lifestyle as Israel. Israel’s problem started way back in Judges 1. They were told to drive everyone out of the land and rather than doing that, they kept many people in their land as slaves and take a look at the result, Judges 2:10-13 says, “And there arose another generation after them who did not know the Lord or the work that He had done for Israel. And the people of Israel did what was evil in the sight of the Lord and served the Baals. And they abandoned the Lord, the God of their fathers, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt. They went after other gods, from among the gods of the peoples who were around (whom they were commanded to get rid of), and bowed down to them. And they provoked the Lord to anger. They abandoned the Lord and served the Baals and the Astharoth.” Israel stopped communicating about who God is and what God has done for them, therefore they stopped living to please God, and lived to please themselves.

Praise God that He is a covenant-keeping God, and He proved that He by not giving up on Israel, but continued to work with them. God did not want Israel to stay the way they were, but He wanted them to lived differently so that He was glorified and that His name was made known throughout all the nations. So each time Israel chose to walk in sin, God would deliver them to captivity or oppression of some kind and then He would send a judge to deliver them from oppression. God is still the same covenant-keeping and holy God. God, because of His holiness needed to unleash His wrath on sin. But because God is also a covenant- keeping God He supplied a way to deal with sin and still save us as sinners. God has judged and destroyed sin once and for all, by sending Jesus Christ. God redeemed us from our oppression and now we are no longer under dominion of our sin. Jesus Christ is far greater than Gideon, Barak, Samson, and Samuel, because He has delivered us from the possession, power, and penalty of sin. We must praise God every day for how He saved us through the Person and work of Jesus Christ.

Questions

1. Read through Judges 2- What is the cycle that Israel continued to follow all through the book of Judges? In what ways are you like the Israelites and abandon God, walk in disobedience, and serve other gods? How has God delivered you from your sin? How have you continually seen God at work in your life?
2. Read Judges 13-16- Who did God raise up to deliver Israel? What parameters did God give this judge? What ways did Samson walk in sin? Read Judges 16:28-31- How did Samson manifest godly sorrow and repentance in these verses? Read 2 Corinthians 7:10-11- What does godly sorrow produce in us? What will repentance look like in our lives?
3. Read 1 Samuel 3- What took place in Samuel’s life in this passage? How did Samuel speak the truth to Eli? Read Ephesians 4:1-6- We have all been called to salvation, how do we walk worthy of our calling of salvation? In what ways do we need to speak truth to those around us? Where do you struggle to speak truth to others?



Kinsman Redeemer

Ruth



Matt Takach

I. RUTH 1

- A. Elimelech the Bethlehemite takes his wife and 2 sons to the country of Moab due to a famine in Judah—Ruth 1:1-2.
- B. Elimelech dies in Moab. Sometime later his sons, Mahlon and Chilion, also die after taking wives from Moab, yet without any children, leaving his wife, Naomi, with no descendants—Ruth 1:3-5.
- C. Naomi hears that there is now food in Israel, and decides to take her daughters-in-law back to Judah with her—Ruth 1:6-7.
- D. Naomi has a change of heart, where she compassionately urges her daughters-in-law to return to their families in Moab in order to start new families. Her daughter-in-law Orpah reluctantly returns, but Ruth refuses to leave Naomi—Ruth 1:8-18.
- E. Naomi and Ruth arrive in Bethlehem where the people greet them. Naomi (pleasant) asks to be called Mara (bitter)—Ruth 1:19-22.

II. RUTH 2

- A. Ruth asks Naomi for permission to go work in order to provide, in which Ruth ends up gleaning in the field of Boaz, Elimelech's relative—Ruth 2:1-3.
- B. Boaz asks about Ruth, and receives a very favorable report of her. He then extends his favor and protection to her, as well as extra provisions than she would normally have—Ruth 2:4-18.
- C. Ruth reports back to Naomi, who praises God for leading Ruth to a family's redeemer—Ruth 2:19-23.

III. RUTH 3

- A. Naomi devises a plan for Ruth to ask Boaz to redeem the family—Ruth 3:1-5.
- B. Ruth meets Boaz on the threshing floor where Boaz agrees to redeem the family, however informing her that there is a closer redeemer who has rights over Boaz—Ruth 3:6-18.

IV. RUTH 4

- A. Boaz sits in the town gate where he meets the other redeemer. Boaz informs him of the land to be redeemed belonging to Elimelech, which the redeemer agrees to—Ruth 4:1-4.
- B. Boaz then informs this redeemer that he would also need to redeem Ruth, Mahlon's widow. Upon hearing this news, the redeemer declines—Ruth 4:5-6.
- C. Boaz then legally redeems the inheritance of Elimelech, as well as legally takes Ruth to be his wife, verbally acknowledging his duties—Ruth 4:7-10.
- D. The town leaders and elders recite a blessing of the arrangement—Ruth 4:11-12.
- E. Ruth bears a son with Boaz, naming him Obed. Obed is viewed as Naomi's, having been the legal heir of Elimelech—Ruth 4:13-17.
- F. A genealogy is given, showing this family line leads up to King David—Ruth 4:18-22.

Application

How did the people in the story of Ruth react in the circumstances?

NOAMI

- Compassion towards daughters-in-law—Ruth 1:8-13
- Produced victim mentality—Ruth 1:13, 1:20-21
- Emotionally driven/swayed by circumstances—Ruth 1:13, 1:20, 2:19-20, 3:3, James 1:5-8; Ephesians 4:14
- Trusted in self/abilities more than God's sovereignty—Ruth 3:1-4, Genesis 16:2-3

RUTH

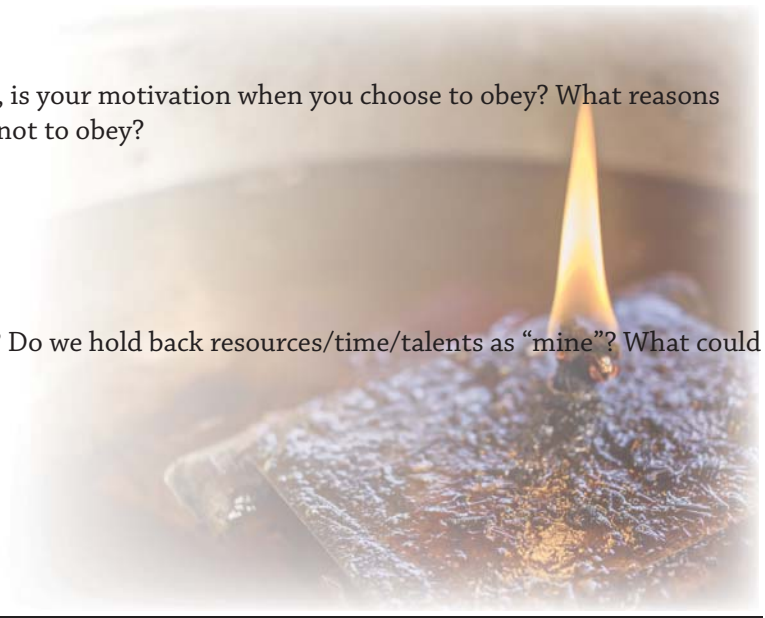
- Loyal/Honored Naomi—Ruth 1:17, 2:2, 3:5-6, Exodus 20:12, 2, Timothy 3:2
- Hardworking—Ruth 2:2, 7, Proverbs 31:15-17, 24
- Humble—Ruth 2:10, 2:13, Romans 12:16, James 4:6
- Obedient—Ruth 3:5, Ephesians 6:1
- Honorable/Choosing to do what is right—Ruth 3:10-11, 2 Timothy 5:11

BOAZ

- God-focused—Ruth 2:4, 2:12, 3:10, Hebrews 12:2
- Compassion towards strangers—Ruth 2:8-9, 2:14-18, 3:17, Leviticus 19:34
- Honorable/Choosing to do what is right—Ruth 3:11-13, 4:9-10, Romans 12:17, Matthew 5:33-37
- Transparent/No hidden agenda—Ruth 4:4-5, 4:9-10, 1 Timothy 3:2, Titus 1:8
- Self-sacrificial—Ruth 4:5, 4:10, Philippians 2:4, 1 John 3:16

Questions

1. How do we react in troubled times? Do we see God's hand at work? Do we question where He is? How can we rejoice and focus on God in the midst of trial?
2. Why do we choose to obey? What, specifically, is your motivation when you choose to obey? What reasons can we make up when we deliberately choose not to obey?
3. How much of ourselves do we give for others? Do we hold back resources/time/talents as "mine"? What could prompt us to sacrifice for others?



Saul & Young David

1 Samuel 8-31, 2 Samuel 1-10, 1 Chronicles 1-18

Levi Choate



I. SAUL—1 Samuel 8-31, 1 Chronicles 8-10

- A. When Samuel's sons failed to judge Israel righteously, the Israelites demanded a king—1 Samuel 8:5.
- B. Unlike other kings, Saul was not appointed by man but rather anointed by God—1 Samuel 10:1
- C. God used Saul to bring victory to the Israelites—1 Samuel 14:47-48.
- D. Although Saul was successful in the eyes of the Israelites, God rejected him as king on account of his disobedience—1 Samuel 15:28.
 - Note that any failure to fully obey the Lord constitutes disobedience and sin regardless of Saul's supposed intentions—1 Samuel 15:15

II. DAVID—1 Samuel 16-2 Samuel 10, 1 Chronicles 10-18

- A. While Saul was still acting king over Israel, after God had rejected him, David was anointed king.
 - David was not chosen for his outer appearance—1 Samuel 16:7.
 - David was anointed by the hand of Samuel—1 Samuel 16:13.
- B. When Saul and other men's heart failed, David's remained faithful—1 Samuel 17:11.
 - David didn't let other men's lack of courage discourage him—1 Samuel 17:26-28.
 - David fought courageously with zeal for God's glory—1 Samuel 17:36.

III. DAVID > SAUL

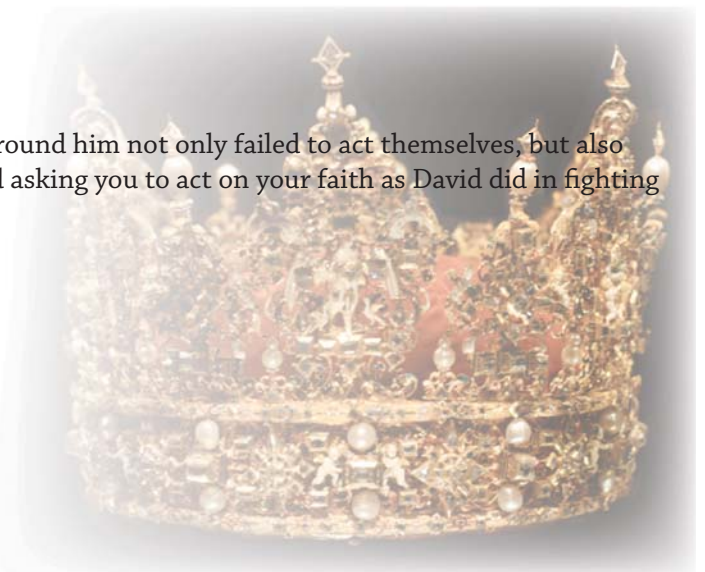
- A. From this point on God builds up David and reduces Saul.
 - God rescues David from Saul—1 Samuel 24:17.
 - Eventually Saul is killed in battle with the Philistines—1 Samuel 31:4.
 - David is first made king over Judah—2 Samuel 2:4.
 - David is later made king over all Israel—2 Samuel 5:3, 1 Chronicles 11:1.
- B. David's kingdom is exalted—1 Chronicles 14:2.
- C. David brings the ark of the covenant of the Lord to Jerusalem—1 Chronicles 15:28.
- D. God promises David that his son will be the future king and will build a house for the Lord—1 Chronicles 17:12-14.

Application

Through this time in history we see not just the importance of obedience, we also see the importance of our hearts' motivation to obey. On one hand, God highlights how important it is to obey 100%. Saul obeyed God partly in conquering the Philistines but he saved the best of them and did not utterly destroy them as God commanded. The lesson here is that 99 % obedience is disobedience and ultimately sin in the eyes of God. How many times in our own lives are we content with "incomplete obedience"? Saul claimed his motivation was good but he simply failed to act and carry out the command given to him. No amount of good intention can void the command of God. As Gods people we need to seek him in his word daily to protect ourselves from being self deceived. Shortly after Saul was rejected, the Lord anoints David to be king. While Saul had the physical qualities of a king, David had the heart of a king. David's heart for God was proven in his encounter with Goliath. David knew that the God he served was more powerful to deliver than any man could ever be to destroy. He knew that any man who in a prideful manner set himself up against God he was destined for destruction. David acted not out of fear or some social duty, but out of a zeal for God's glory. When everyone else's heart had melted away, David's stood fast. We serve the same God that David served. Do we have zeal for His glory? Do we have faith in His deliverance?

Questions

1. Like Saul in 1 Samuel 15:14-15, in what ways have you failed to obey God 100%?
2. What can you personally do to defend God's glory in your personal sphere of influence?
3. David chose to defend God's glory when everyone around him not only failed to act themselves, but also discouraged David from acting. In what ways is God asking you to act on your faith as David did in fighting Goliath?



David & Solomon

2Sam.11-24, 1Kings1-11, 1Chron.19-29, 2Chron.1-9 Brian Wright



I. 2 SAMUEL 11-24

- A. David's great sin against Bathsheba, Uriah, and the Lord—2 Samuel 11:1-12:31.
- B. Trouble in David's family: Absalom's murder of Amnon—2 Samuel 13:1-18:33.
 - 13:1-29—The violation of Tamar and the slaying of Amnon.
 - 13:30-14:33—The retreat and eventual return of Absalom.
 - 15:1-12 15:1-12—The conspiracy of Absalom.
 - 15:13-16:14—The flight of David from Jerusalem.
 - 16:15-17:23—The counsel of Ahithophel and Hushai.
 - 17:24-18:33—The defeat of Absalom.
- C. David's reinstatement as king—2 Samuel 19:1-20:26.
- D. David's reconciliation with the Gibeonites—2 Samuel 21:1-14.
- E. The exploits of David and his men—2 Samuel 21:15-22.
- F. The psalm of David in praise to the Lord for his deliverance—2 Samuel 22:1-51.
- G. David's last words—2 Samuel 23:1-7.
- H. The roster of David's mighty men and the numbering of the people—2 Samuel 23:8-24:25.

II. 1 CHRONICLES 19-29

- A. David's latter victories—1 Chronicles 19:1-20:8.
- B. His sinful census—1 Chronicles 21:1-30.
- C. His organization for building the temple—1 Chronicles 22:1-27:34.
- D. David's last days—1 Chronicles 28:1-29:30.

III. 1 KINGS 1-11

- A. The decline of David and the exaltation of Solomon as king—1 Kings 1:1-2:12.
 - Adonijah attempts to Usurp the kingdom of Israel from his father David.
- B. The establishment of the Solomon kingdom—1 Kings 2:13-46.
 - David's Death and Final Words to his son Solomon.
 - Solomon cleanses Israel of wicked men that dealt wrongly with David his Father.
- C. The wisdom of Solomon—1 Kings 3:1-4:34.
 - Jehovah grants Solomon's Request for Wisdom.
 - Solomon's appointed Governmental Positions and Power.
- D. The building program of Solomon's kingdom—1 Kings 5:1-8:66.
 - Solomon sets out to Build the Temple.
 - Solomon Builds the Temple.
 - Solomon's House and the Temple.
 - Ark of the Covenant is brought into the Temple and Solomon's Prayer.
 - Solomon Blesses the Nation of Israel.
- E. The events of Solomon's reign—1 Kings 9:1-11:43.
 - The LORD's Covenant with Solomon.
 - Solomon builds Millo.
 - Solomon and the Queen of Sheba.
 - The Riches and Luxury of Solomon.
 - Solomon's Wives and Apostasy.

IV. 2 CHRONICLES 1-9

- A. The Reign of Solomon—2 Chronicles 1:1-9:31
 - Solomon's establishment as king.
 - Solomon's construction of the temple.
 - His dedication of the temple.
 - Solomon's success as king.
 - Solomon's death.

What happened with Solomon? He went from being a man whose priorities were on the kingdom of God, justice, humility, and obedience to lust and gross disobedience to God. Solomon had turned his heart against The LORD (1 Kings 11:9). While the Lord gave so much to Solomon the king returns the Lord's favor with acts of evil. Reference: Matthew 16:26

Application

1 and 2 Samuel form one book in the Hebrew Bible. The Septuagint, the Greek version of the Bible, first divided these books into two parts. Although the book does not name a specific author, the material was compiled from documents written and collected by the prophets Nathan, Gad, and Samuel—the prophet for whom the book is named (1 Chronicles 29:29). 2 Samuel is set in the land of Israel during the reign of David and follows the course of his forty years as king of Israel (1011–971 BC). 2 Samuel chronicles the establishment of the Davidic dynasty and the expansion of Israel under God’s chosen leader. In chapters 11–24, we note that David’s adultery with Bathsheba was followed by a series of tragedies: their child’s death, David’s daughter Tamar’s rape by his son Amnon, Amnon’s murder, David’s own political overthrow by his son Absalom, and Absalom’s subsequent death.

Despite the turmoil in his later years, David enjoyed the Lord’s forgiveness and favor. His genuine sorrow and regret over his sins recorded in the Psalms revealed his repentant heart, with which the Lord was pleased. David is known as a “man after [God’s] own heart” (1 Samuel 13:14) because, though he sinned greatly, he acknowledged those failures and repented before God. (James 4:10).

When Absalom rebels against his father, David is about the same age as King Saul when his reign came to an end and Absalom is about the same age as David was when Saul was trying so hard to kill him. Both are driven by their respective circumstances into exile from the kingdom and the king’s household; both are noticeably handsome and charismatic; and both are increasingly recognized by others as potential successors to the throne.

But here the similarities end. Whereas in his rise David has a spiritual mandate from the priestly prophet Samuel, there is no record of Absalom’s seeking or receiving such a mandate. Whereas David is constantly respectful of King Saul’s position as “the Lord’s anointed” and never seeks to undermine his authority no matter how many injustices Saul perpetrates against him, Absalom devotes at least four years to assiduously undermining David’s authority. Whereas the discontented element in the kingdom gradually come of their own volition to David, Absalom purposely seeks out the potentially discontented and deliberately cultivates their discontent. Whereas David seems to know instinctively that to foment rebellion against Saul, Israel’s first king, would split the kingdom spiritually and politically, Absalom seems to have no such inhibitions. And whereas David’s greatest preoccupation is in defending Israel from its external enemies, Absalom’s focus is on persuading his countrymen to believe that their greatest enemy is within.

Most importantly, David steadfastly resists the temptation to kill Saul and take the kingdom by force even when urged by his closest associates to do so. By contrast, when Absalom’s counselor Ahithophel presents him with a plan with the specific objective of “striking down only the king.... This plan seemed good to Absalom and to all the elders of Israel” (II Sam. 17:1–4).

Questions

1. How did Solomon differ from his father David?
2. How was the beginning of their lives different than the end of their lives?
3. Which King would you describe as “successful?”
4. Which is a worse fate- passing inconsistency/failure or continuous decline?



Lament Songs

Psalm 1-41



I. PSALMS OF LAMENT

- A. Psalm 1-3—The follower of the law of the Lord will be delivered, the one that turns away will be unstable and their end will be judgment.
- B. Psalm 4-5—The writer asks “How long will you love delusions and seek false gods?” Those that don't trust God will deceive.
- C. Psalm 6-7—The writer is worn out from his groaning. David is open and honest with the Lord who hears him after crying out.
- D. Psalm 8-11—The Lord is majestic, not man. The unrighteous have dug their pit, they have hunted down the weak, but God is the protector of the weak. The Lord loves righteousness.
- E. Psalm 12-15—There seems to no longer be anyone faithful left in the world. In spite of this the writer is still convinced that the Lord will protect.
- F. Psalm 16-18—God is the only thing needed for fulfillment. God is his rock, He avenges for him.
- G. Psalm 19-21—The law of the Lord is sweet, there is great reward and victory in following it. Some trust in chariots, some in horses, but we trust in the name of the Lord our God.
- H. Psalm 22—My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? The writer cries out to God to give mercy because He is hurting. Amid the hurt he still knows where deliverance is found.
- I. Psalm 23—This often used Psalm is a great encouragement that God is our shepherd and our safety even through the hardest times.
- J. Psalm 24-28—There is separation between the sinners and the writer. The sinners deceive their neighbor and the difference is a reliance on and a respect for the Lord.
- K. Psalm 29-30—Listen to the Lord, and He will turn weeping into dancing.
- L. Psalm 31-32—He is weak, but he still trusts in God. Forgiveness brings freedom.
- M. Psalm 33-34—It is fitting to give praise to God, for He is the deliverer.
- N. Psalm 35-38—The wicked lie in wait. But salvation comes from the Lord.
- O. Psalm 39—Others are focused on wealth, but the writer wants to be secured to a love for the Lord.
- P. Psalm 40—David displays a relationship with God because he 1) desires to obey God, and 2) he wants others to know the freedom God can give.
- Q. Psalm 41—Blessed are those who have regard for the weak; the Lord delivers them in times of trouble. Even friends deceive, but God is faithful.

Application

“The thing is to rely on God. The time will come when you will regard all this misery as a small price to pay for having been brought to that dependance. Meanwhile, the trouble is that relying on God has to begin all over again every day as if nothing has happened.” C.S. Lewis

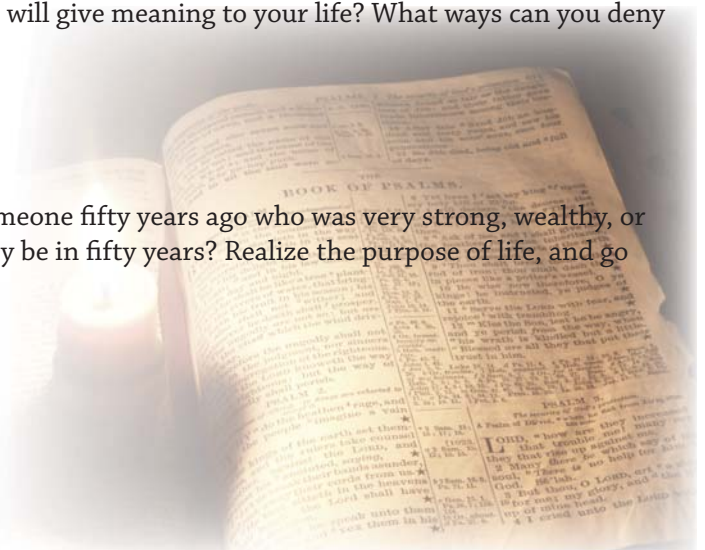
The songs of lament are based on one theme—reliance on God. In good times and bad David seems to know where peace and ultimately salvation are found. When David sins he eventually comes to the conclusion that only God can free him from the imprisonment of guilt. Along with the theme of reliance, the poor and the oppressed are mentioned often through these chapters. The reasoning behind why God protects and loves these people is because they are not proud. That is a theme that is present throughout the Bible. Christians have a complete reliance on Christ. This is salvation, it has nothing to do with what we do, it is all based on what Christ has done for us.

Timothy Keller has said that our salvation is by grace alone through faith alone, but it does not remain alone. This is what David shows in Psalm 40:8 when he says “I delight to do your will, O my God; your law is within my heart.” David’s response is a joy in doing the will of his Father. His faith results in a desire to do, not just know. It is also a desire to share, not just know about salvation.

Through reliance on God and through these chapters we see that God is the deliverer of the weak and the oppressed. David has a tangible relationship with the Lord which involves times of crying out, and total communication with the Lord. He is open, admits his struggles, and asks God to return his focus on the Lord. Psalm 1-41 shows that God will give grace to the humble, but reject the proud.

Questions

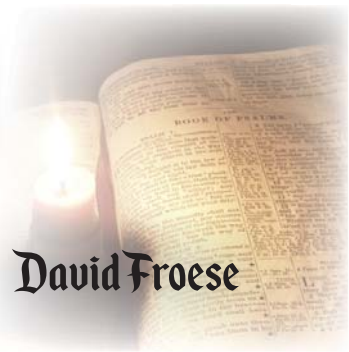
1. As C.S. Lewis asks in the quote above, what are some ways you are struggling today to remind yourself of the promises God has made?
2. What are some chariots and horses that you believe will give meaning to your life? What ways can you deny these things?
3. In human strength, deception is found. Think of someone fifty years ago who was very strong, wealthy, or powerful. Is this still the case today? Where will they be in fifty years? Realize the purpose of life, and go after that purpose of serving the Lord.



Kingdom Songs

Psalm 42-106

David Froese



- I. DESPERATION IN TIMES OF TROUBLE: WE MUST STILL WORSHIP GOD—Psalms 42-44
 - A. The “Kingdom Songs” begin with desiring to know God, to hope in God, and praise Him.
 - 42:1, 5, 11— Even when dejected and taunted by enemies, we must hope and trust God
 - 44:5, 6, 8—We are not trust in our means, the bow or sword. God is deliverer so must boast in His name.
 - 44:11, 18, 26—Even when we are “sheep for a slaughter,” a byword or laughingstock, “our hearts have not turned back, nor have our steps departed from your way.” The writer begs God to “Rise up, come to our help!”
- II. HOW GREAT AND POWERFUL GOD IS AND HOW WEAK WE ARE—Psalms 45-58
 - A. God is great “Splendor and Majesty” and “the peoples fall under you”—Psalm 45:3-5
 - 46:1—Reassures that God is our help.
 - 46:6, 47:2—God is in complete control off all things, “a great king over all the earth.”
 - 49:5, 12—Do not fear those that threaten us, the evil man is like a beast who is killed.
 - 50:4-5—We are not to love money, as God will judge us, but we are to be faithful and call upon God.
 - B. A three step process: 1) Call upon God in times of trouble, 2) God will deliver, 3) We glorify God—Psalm 50:15
 - C. The foolish and sinful ways of man—Psalm 51-53
 - 51:1-4— After his sin with Bathsheba David asks God for mercy, admits his sin against God and God alone.
 - 51:7-8—David asks cleansing. He knows God has the power to, and he will then have “joy and gladness” again.
 - 51:10—David desires a new, clean heart and the joy that comes from walking closely to God.
 - D. Trust in God, cast our burdens on him—Psalm 54-58
 - 57:3—His love and faithfulness to us (57:3)
- III. GOD DELIVERING US FROM OUR ENEMIES—Psalms 59-72
 - A. Written by David when Saul was trying to kill him—Psalm 59
 - 59:11—He repeatedly asks God for deliverance, to “Kill them not.” David is kind and gracious to his enemies.
 - 59:16—He turns to God as his “fortress and a refuge” and worships God even though his life is in danger.
 - 59:12—David knows his strength and success is all because of the Lord. God “treads down our foes.”
 - B. David waits on the Lord, knowing our salvation and all good things come from the Lord. Trust God always—Psalm 62.
 - 62:21—God will destroy the wicked “strike the head of his enemies” and give joy to the righteous.
 - 62:35—“He is the one who gives power and strength to his people.”
 - C. God in his incredible strength controls the entire earth and we need to be in awe of Him and worship Him— Psalm 65.
 - D. We must all worship the Lord in joy for his workings are amazing so others may know how great God is— Psalm 66-67.
 - E. Many people hate David and he is weary—Psalm 69
 - 69:14, 30—He asks God to “deliver me from sinking in the mire” while he continues to praise God.
 - F. Psalm 70-71 ask the Lord to help, and 72 particularly asks God to help the needy and oppressed—Psalm 70-72.
- IV. PSALMS ABOUT THE GREATNESS OF GOD—Psalms 73-89
 - A. God destroys the proud, so instead we must focus on eternity with God instead of earthly things—Psalm 73.
 - B. God will “defend his cause” and conquer his foes, while taking care of the oppressed—Psalm 74.
 - C. God will judge and so we must seek Him to help us—Psalm 75-78.
 - 76:7—“who can stand before you once your anger is roused”
 - 78:4, 31—Tell the coming generation the “glorious deeds of the Lord” lest the “anger of God rose against them”
 - 78:42-55—“Remember his power” is followed by God’s power and acts, as He “vented his wrath on his heritage”
 - D. Begs forgiveness and restoration for God’s people, that they may be saved, to thank and praise God—Psalm 79-80.
 - E. 81 says only God is to be worshipped, 82 asks God to rescue, 83 asks God to destroy his people’s enemies—Psalm 81-83.
 - F. Continually worship God while asking for revival and speaking of both God’s love and his wrath—Psalm 85-89.
- V. WORSHIPPING GOD IN JOY AND CONFIDENCE AND THANKFULNESS—Psalms 90-106
 - A. God is mighty and powerful; we need “the favor of the Lord our God,” our refuge and fortress—Psalm 90-91.
 - 92:15—Psalm 92 is thankfulness to God, declaring that “the Lord is upright; he is my rock.”
 - 94—A reminder of how short our lives are, and when we slip the Lord holds us up as he is our stronghold.
 - B. Worship the Lord in joyful song, a new song, be encouraged to write songs to Him—Psalm 95-98.
 - 97:4, 12— The earth obeys the Lord, we are to rejoice in his power and “give thanks to his holy name.”
 - C. David promises that he will “walk with integrity of heart within my house”—Psalm 101.
 - 101:2—A follow up to David’s confession and repentance of sin with Bathsheba.
 - 101:4—he “will know nothing evil.”
 - 101:8—David refuses to spend time with the dishonest, “cutting off all the evildoers from the city of the Lord.”
 - D. The affliction of the writer and how great the Lord is that he wants future generations to seek the Lord—Psalm 102.
 - E. Bless the Lord, tell how great the Lord is, seek the Lord and his strength and presence continually—Psalm 103-106.

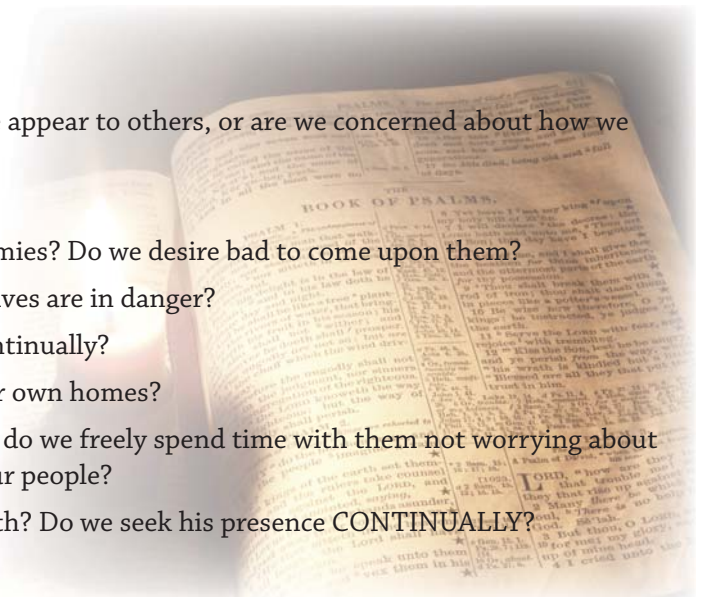
Application

Songs from Psalm 42-106 (Match the song name to the verse):

Psalm 42:1	10,000 Reasons
Psalm 51:10	As The Deer
Psalm 61:3	Sing Unto The Lord
Psalm 73:25	Better is One Day in your Courts
Psalm 84:1	The Lord Reigns
Psalm 89:1	I Will Sing of the Mercies of the Lord
Psalm 93:1	Create in Me a Clean Heart
Psalm 96:1	You are My Strong Tower
Psalm 97:1	Whom Have I in Heaven
Psalm 103:1	The Lord Reigns

Questions

1. Psalm 42:1—Do we desire God as a deer pants for water – or as much we would want to breath if we are underwater?
2. Psalm 50:15—Do we:
 - 1) Call upon God in times of trouble?
 - 2) So He can deliver us?
 - 3) Then we worship God and Glorify Him!
3. Psalm 51:4—Are we more concerned about how we appear to others, or are we concerned about how we appear before God?
4. Psalm 57:3—Do we cast our burdens on God?
5. Psalm 59:11—Are we kind and gracious to our enemies? Do we desire bad to come upon them?
6. Psalm 59:17—Do we worship God even when our lives are in danger?
7. Psalm 79:13—Do we thank God and praise him continually?
8. Psalm 101:4—Do we walk with integrity within our own homes?
9. Psalm 101:8—Are we careful to cut off evildoers or do we freely spend time with them not worrying about the impact they will have on us, our families and our people?
10. Psalm 105:4—Do we seek the Lord and HIS strength? Do we seek his presence **CONTINUALLY**?



Praise Songs

Psalms 104-156

Brett Sitzman

The entire collection of Psalms is entitled “praises” in the Hebrew text, also known as “The Book of Praises”. The Septuagint (Greek translation of the Old Testament) calls it “Psalms” or “The Book of Psalms” (also referred to in the NT - Luke 20:42, Acts 1:20). The Psalms are broken down into five “books.” This section covers book five, also known as The Book of Songs. Many of the Psalms in this book have titles indicating such things as author, dedication and occasion. Book five ends with a doxology (150:6), as is the case with the other four books. Doxology as defined by Webster’s Dictionary is “a liturgical expression of praise”.

The Psalms are known as ancient Israel’s “hymnbook” and musical accompaniment is inferred by the use of the Greek verb from which the noun “psalms” comes from; explained as the “plucking or twanging of strings”. This ancient “hymnbook” lays out for us, the proper spirit of worship. It’s original and primary purpose is to bring God’s people to understand the proper praise and worship of Him.

“The basic theme of Psalms is living real life in the real world. The sinfulness of man is documented concretely, not only through the behavioral patterns of the wicked, but also the periodic stumblings of believers. The sovereignty of God is everywhere recognized, but not at the expense of genuine human responsibility.” (John MacArthur)

Psalms 110 & 118—These psalms are messianic in nature and are the most quoted in the New Testament (Matt. 21:9, 42; 23:39; Mark 11:9-10; 12:10-11; Luke 13:35; 19:38; 20:17; John 12:13; Acts 4:11; Heb. 13:6; 1 Pet. 2:7).

Psalms 117 & 119—Psalm 117 is the shortest chapter in the Bible and Psalm 119 is the longest.

- A. The Egyptian Hallel (Hallel is Hebrew for praise)—Psalms 113-118.
 - Sung at Jewish feasts (celebrations), especially significant at Passover due to their deliverance from captivity in Egypt.
- B. The Great Hallel (15 of 17 are “Songs of Ascent”)— Psalms 120-136.
 - Psalm 134—Worshippers exhortation to the Levites (God’s servants).
 - Psalm 136—Closes the Great Hallel with what is believed to be responsive worship (“for His steadfast love endures forever”)
- C. Songs of ascent—Psalms 120-134.
 - There is a progression as the Jewish pilgrims traveled from far towards Jerusalem to the temple for worship.
 - Psalm 139 is titled “Search Me, O God, and know my Heart” and is addressed “To the CHOIRMASTER, A Psalm of David”.
 - The Lord looks on the heart—1 Samuel 16:7.
 - The natural condition of our heart—Jeremiah 17:9.
- D. The Final Hallel— Psalms 145-150.
 - Psalm 145 starts the crescendo of praise.
- E. Praise worship—Psalms 146-150.
 - Each Psalm in this section starts and ends with “Praise the LORD”.
 - Psalm 150 really brings it home with the four W’s:
 - 150:1—Where?
 - 150:2—What for?
 - 150:3-5—With what?
 - 150:6—Who?
 - If we don’t praise Him, the rocks will cry out! (Luke 19:37-40).

Application

The following quote is by John Piper in his book, *Solid Praise*.

“Why does God demand we must praise God? C.S. Lewis writes:

Just as men spontaneously praise whatever they value, so they spontaneously urge us to join them in praising it: ‘Isn’t she lovely? Wasn’t it glorious? Don’t you think that magnificent?’

The Psalmists in telling everyone to praise God (Psalm 67:3, 5) are doing what all men do when they speak of what they care about. My whole, more general, difficulty about the praise of God depended on my absurdly denying to us, as regards the supremely Valuable, what we delight to do, what indeed we can’t help doing, about everything else we value.

I think we delight to praise what we enjoy because the praise not merely expresses but completes the enjoyment; it is its appointed consummation. It is not out of compliment that lovers keep on telling one another how beautiful they are; the delight is incomplete till it is expressed.

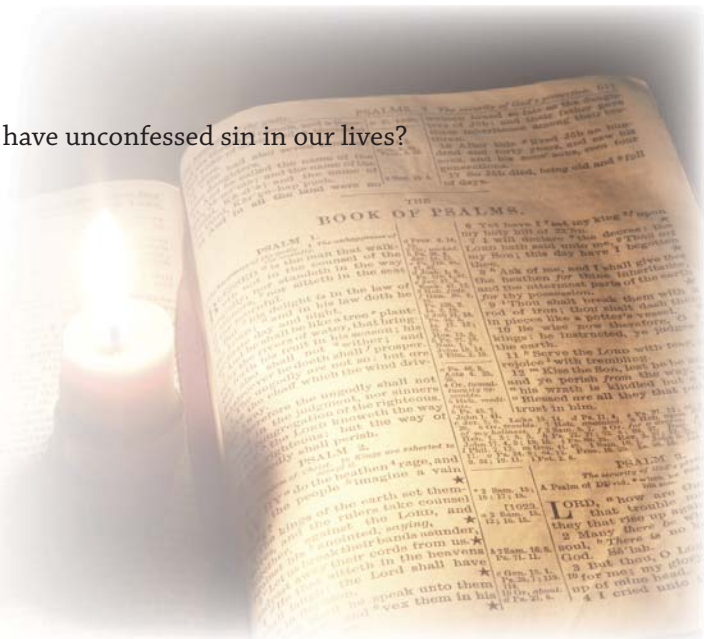
There is a solution! We praise what we enjoy because the delight is incomplete until it is expressed in praise. If we were not allowed to speak of what we value and celebrate what we love and praise what we admire, our joy could not be full.

So if God loves us enough to make our joy full, he must not only give us himself; he must also win from us the praise of our hearts - not because He needs to shore up some weakness in Himself or compensate for some deficiency, but because He loves us and seeks the fullness of our joy that can be found only in knowing and praising Him, the most magnificent of all beings.”

Questions

1. How do we experience fullness of joy in our lives?
 - Read Psalm 16:11, John 15:11, 16:24 and 1 John 1:4
 - Explain -
2. Will the Lord God hear and accept our praise if we have unconfessed sin in our lives?
 - Read Psalm 66:18
 - Explain -
3. Why is it important for us to praise the Lord?
 - Read Luke 19:37
 - Explain -

Resources: ESV MacArthur Study Bible
John Piper’s Solid Praise Devotional



A True Love Story

Song of Solomon

Paul Leubner



I. THE COURTSHIP BEGINS

- A. The author of this book is Solomon—Song of Solomon 1:1
- B. Shulamite girl expresses her desire for Solomon—Song of Solomon 1:2-8
- C. There is an exchange of deep passionate compliments between the couple—Song of Solomon 1:9-2:2.
- D. She desires to rest in his authority and be overshadowed with his love—Song of Solomon 2:3-6.
- E. Solomon warns the young woman not to arouse love until it desires—Song of Solomon 2:7.
- F. She speaks to herself about being with him, he responds in kind—Song of Solomon 2:8-17.
- G. There is a call to protect this special relationship they share—Song of Solomon 2:14.
- H. She dreams of missing her lover, goes to find him and asks others for help in her pursuit of him—Song of Solomon 3:1-4.
- I. Second warning to not arouse love—Song of Solomon 3:5
- J. Solomon makes preparations for the marriage ceremony—Song of Solomon 3:6-11.

II. CONSUMMATION EXPERIENCE

- A. The couple experiences the physical pleasures of marriage—Song of Solomon 4:1-5:1.
- B. God tells the couple to “drink their fill”— Song of Solomon 5:1.
- C. First troubles of marriage— Song of Solomon 5:2-8.
 - 5:9—She receives help from other women.
 - 5:10-6:3—She has a repentant change of heart towards Solomon.
- D. Solomon exalts her beauty and expresses his single-minded devotion—Song of Solomon 6:4-10.
 - 6:11-13—She receives honor from Solomon and other women.

III. THEIR LOVE DEEPENS

- A. Solomon recounts her beauty and responds physically—Song of Solomon 7:1-9.
- B. She invites him to the countryside— Song of Solomon 7:9b-13.
 - 8:1-3—The woman desires to express her desires publically.
- C. Last warning about guarding the heart— Song of Solomon 8:4.
- D. The couple enjoys time together— Song of Solomon 8:5.
- E. The Shulamite asks Solomon for a total commitment of love that would not be broken— Song of Solomon 8:6-7.
- F. Her brothers helped her to be pure— Song of Solomon 8:8-10.
- G. She likens herself to a vineyard given to Solomon— Song of Solomon 8:11-12.
- H. There is a mutual desire to be together again— Song of Solomon 8:13-14

Application

MARITAL COUNSEL

- ☐ It is natural and good to express one's desire for another in view of marriage.
- ☐ A young woman who wants to be under her future husband's authority with respect brings herself joy and security.
- ☐ Three times throughout the book there is a warning to not arouse love until it desires.
- ☐ Catching the "little foxes" is wise counsel. There should be a mutual responsibility to protect the relationship.

PHYSICAL INTIMACY & ENCOURAGEMENT

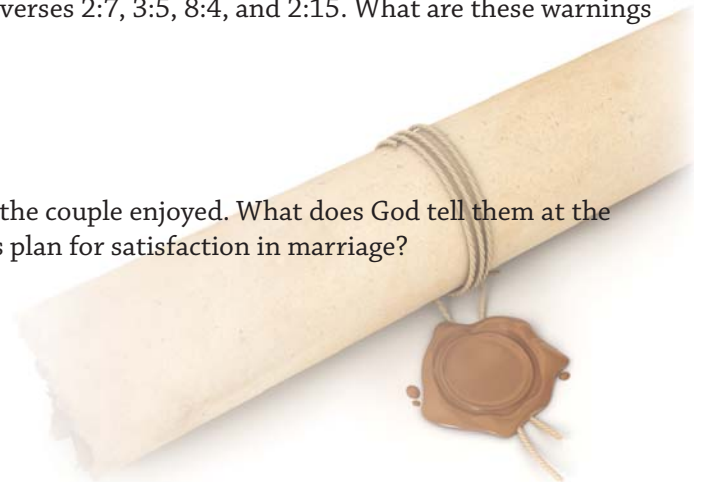
- ☐ Couples find physical intimacy satisfying within the context of marriage.
- ☐ We encourage our mate when we give compliments regarding their physical appearance.
- ☐ God blesses the couple and encourages them to drink their fill of love.
- ☐ There will be problems after the "honeymoon" but we must always pursue reconciliation.

OUR LOVE GROWS AND MATURE

- ☐ Publically expressing our love to each other encourages others.
- ☐ Daily committing ourselves to our spouse insures a strong and loving marriage.
- ☐ We have a responsibility to help young people stay pure until marriage.
- ☐ Close couples long to be together

Questions

1. Throughout the book the couple has exchanged complements and expressed desire for each other. No matter how long you have been married, what are some ways that you can encourage and build up your spouse? Read 1 Corinthians 13. Be proactive today to verbally reaffirm your love for your mate.
2. There are several warnings laid out in this book. See verses 2:7, 3:5, 8:4, and 2:15. What are these warnings and why should we heed them?
3. Chapter 4:1-5:1 recounts the physical intimacy that the couple enjoyed. What does God tell them at the end of 5:1? What does this reveal about God and His plan for satisfaction in marriage?



Book of Wise Sayings

Proverbs

Steve Woodard

I. GAINING WISDOM IS THE CENTRAL THEME OF PROVERBS.

A. Wisdom begins with the fear of the Lord—Proverbs 1:7, 9:10.

- The fear of the Lord, besides the two verses above, is mentioned in the following verses—1:29, 2:5, 3:7, 8:13, 10:27, 14:2 and 26-27, 15:16 and 33, 16:6, 19:23, 22:24, 23:17, 24:21, 31:30.
- What wisdom looks like and why we should seek it—1:1-7.
 - 1:2—To know wisdom and instruction, to understand words of insight. Notice you can have instruction but lack wisdom. Wisdom guides you how to handle instruction.
 - 1:5—We are never wise to stop learning. Hating knowledge and not choosing wisdom is folly.

B. Proverbs speaks frequently to a father disciplining his son, both our heavenly Father and earthly father—Proverbs 3:11-12; 6:23; 12:1; 13:24; 19:18; 22:6, 15; 23:13-15; 29:15 and 17.

- One of the goals of discipline is correction, and hopefully we learn from that discipline. Think of the lessons you've learned from discipline, sometimes it took more than one teaching!
- C.S. Lewis in *The Problem of Pain* wrote "God whispers to us in our pleasure, He speaks to us in our circumstances, but He shouts to us in our pain."

II. OUTLINE

A. A father's invitation to wisdom—Proverbs 1:8-9:18.

- 1:8—"Hear, my son, your father's instruction."
- 2:1—"my son, if you receive my words and treasure up my commandments with you", you can hear a father pleading and warning his son to listen and to remember his words. That they are a fountain of life.
- 3:1—"my son do not forget my teaching, but let your heart keep my commandments"
- 4:1—"Hear, O sons, a father's instruction, and be attentive, that you may gain insight"
- 5:1—"My son, be attentive to my wisdom; incline your ear to my understanding"
- 6:1—starts "my son" and gives instruction if you have pledged for someone else's debt
- 7:1-2—"My son, keep my words and treasure up my commandments with you, keep my commandments and live..."
- He wants his son's attention the same way God wants our attention.

B. Proverbs of Solomon—Proverbs 10:1-22:16.

C. The thirty sayings of the wise—Proverbs 22:17-24:22.

D. The further sayings of the wise—Proverbs 24:23-24.

E. Hezekiah's collection of Solomon's Proverbs—Proverbs 25:1-29:27.

F. The sayings of Agur—Proverbs 30:1-33.

G. The sayings of King Lemuel—Proverbs 31:1-9.

H. A wife of noble character—Proverbs 31:10-31.

Application

Proverbs are mostly written by Solomon who “God gave wisdom and understanding beyond measure and breadth of mind like the seashore”, “he was wiser than all other men”, “He also spoke 3,000 proverbs” and “people of all nations came to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and from all the kings of the earth, who had heard of his wisdom”—I Kings 4:29-34.

Proverbs 14:15 says: “A simple man believes anything, but a prudent man gives thought to his steps.” Do you give thought to your steps, or do you just follow the crowd? Do you react with that sounds good, based on impulse? Or do you pause to think through what you say and what you do? Do others see you as having discernment? Solomon’s wisdom was known far and wide.

You too can glean some of Solomon’s wisdom every day by just opening your Bible to the book of Proverbs. And it just so happens there are 31 chapters in the book of Proverbs so you can read one every day of the month! Do we desire wisdom? Then are we seeking wisdom? As we read Proverbs we must understand that these are general truths, not absolutes.

Some of the terms for Wisdom found in Proverbs:

- Hokmah—a proper grasp of the basic issues of life, particularly one’s relationship to God as a moral agent. It includes the ability to determine right from wrong and make the proper judgment on moral and ethical issues.
- Bina—denotes the ability to determine between sham and reality. The root is from ben, which means “between”, hence the ability to choose between two issues.
- Tasiyya—this denotes wisdom in terms of spiritual truth. The basic idea is that the source of this wisdom is divine and not earthly.


Questions

HOW CAN YOU PROMOTE THESE TRAITS?

Avoid strife	20:3
Contentment	13:25; 14:30; 15:27
Diligence	6:6-13; 12:24,27; 13:4
Faithful love	20:6
Faithfulness	3:5-6; 5:15-17; 25:13; 28:20
Generosity	21:26; 22:9
Honesty	16:11; 24:26
Humility	11:2; 16:19; 25:6-7; 29:23
Integrity	11:3; 25:26; 28:18
Kind to others	11:16-17
Kind to enemies	25:21-22
Leadership	30:19-31
Loyalty	19:22
Nobility	12:4; 31:10, 29
Patience	15:18; 16:32
Peacefulness	16:7
Praiseworthiness	27:21
Righteous	4:26-27; 11:5-6,30; 12:28; 13:6; 29:2
Self-control	17:27; 25:28; 29:11
Strength & honor	20:29
Strength in adversity	24:10
Teachable	15:31
Truthful	12:19,22; 23:23

HOW CAN YOU AVOID THESE TRAITS?

Anger	29:22
Antisocial behavior	18:1
Beauty without discretion	11:22
Blaming God	19:3
Dishonesty	24:28
Greed	28:25
Hatred	29:27
Hot temper	19:19; 29:22
Immorality	6:20-35
Inappropriate desire	27:7
Injustice	22:16
Jealousy	27:4
Lack of mercy	21:13
Laziness	6:6-11; 18:9; 19:15; 20:4; 24:30-34; 26:13-15
Maliciousness	6:27
Pride	15:5; 16:18; 21:4,24; 29:23; 30:13
Quarrelsome	26:21
Self-conceit	26:12,16
Self-deceit	28:11
Self-glory	25:27
Self-righteousness	30:12
Stubborn	29:1
Unfaithful	25:19
Vengeful	24:28-29
Wicked	21:10; 16:30



Book Re Life's Meaning

Ecclesiastes

Joel Lattimer



Ecclesiastes was written by Solomon when he was up in age. Solomon wrote the book as a warning for others to avoid the life that he lived as he sought after the things of this world and the wisdom that this world offers. He encourages them to follow after and seek the wisdom of God above all else since it is not fleeting or empty. (1:14)

In Sunday school I grew up being taught that Solomon was the wealthiest and wisest man to ever live and its very interesting to read a book that he wrote and how he personally compared all of his wisdom to. In 1 Kings 3:9-12 we learn that Solomon asked for a wise and understanding heart, and as a result he was given that from God.

Gods word is to be taken seriously and held in high esteem and honor and those who do not do so are subject to the deepest vanity possible. Solomon describes vanity, anything apart from focusing solely on the wisdom of God and His perfect will, throughout this book.

I. ECCLESIASTES IS BROKEN DOWN INTO MULTIPLE “VANITIES” THAT ARE EXPRESSED AS SUBTOPICS:

- A. HUMAN WISDOM: The fool is morally bankrupt and will not accept or be willing to accept wisdom other than from himself—Ecclesiastes 2:14.
- B. HUMAN EFFORT: Apart from God’s sovereignty we’re all doomed, and we seem to desire to seek after our own abilities not realizing that its all a gift given to us from God—Ecclesiastes 2:21.
- C. HUMAN ACHIEVEMENT: God’s gift of success given to us is his decision, we are nothing without his gift to us and his sovereignty allowing what comes in our lives. Anything we do on our own is vanity, grasping at the wind—Ecclesiastes 2:26.
- D. HUMAN LIFE: God has made our lives eternal; we have choices in how we will spend that eternity but only because of his sovereignty in dying in our place—Ecclesiastes 3:21-22.
- E. HUMAN RIVALRY: Everything we do always seems to revolve around envy of others since we are competing against one another for further prestige in this life and that is absolutely vanity—Ecclesiastes 4:4.
- F. HUMAN SELF SACRIFICE: There is no end of toil and labor and life is definitely better with companionship and friendship; joint participation in the faith and as we pursue God together—Ecclesiastes 4:8.
- G. HUMAN POWER: God is in charge of us and even the authority we were given was given to us by God so we have no reason to brag—Ecclesiastes 4:16.
- H. HUMAN GREED: We will never be satisfied with silver or abundance since it is always a downward spiral of discontentment, we must seek Christ alone—Ecclesiastes 5:10.
- I. HUMAN ACCUMULATION: God alone controls everything, even the wealth and honor that he may choose to give and taking it for granted or not being thankful is most definitely great vanity—Ecclesiastes 6:1-10.
- J. HUMAN RELIGION: God’s judgment is coming regardless of what we think, and although the wicked may seem to be getting away with things, eternal judgment is coming. Obedience is blessed indefinitely—Ecclesiastes 8:10-14.

Application

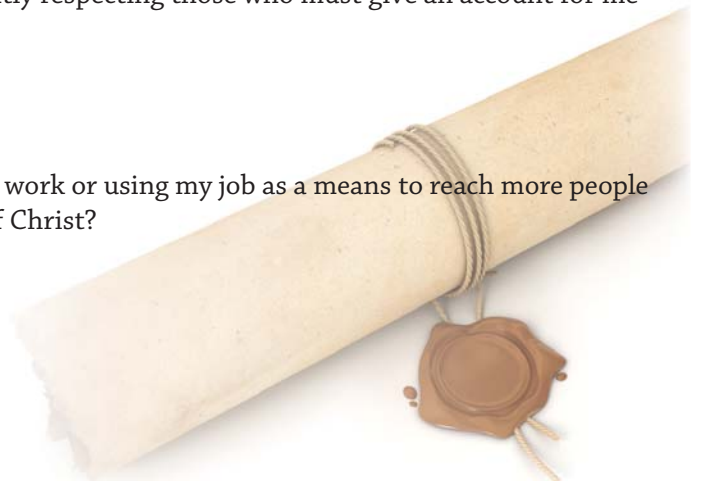
Solomon compares all that is in this world as being vanity. He had it all, the earthly success, the prestigious life, the women, the wealth and the power, yet he compares it all to vanity. It's clear to me that he is definitely the person we need to all learn from in regards to what we should be seeking. He says that all that is wisdom from God is to be held in high regard. Very interesting that he would say that considering he has experienced all that this world portrays as success and it was all empty and unsatisfying.

I personally chose this passage to study and teach on because I feel that it can specifically teach me a lot personally, in regards to my own work and business. It has taught me that although the world teaches that success financially and economically is most important, God views success differently and that the more people I can lead toward the cross, the more "successful" I am (5:10). Also he teaches us to be content with what he has given us and to seek wisdom rather than the things of this world. God desires that I not dwell on the things of this world but on being busy with the joy of my heart (5:20).

Also God has given me wisdom through the Bible and through those around me who are led by the Spirit, so seeking wisdom brings success (10:10); also I need to personally pray for my authority and not be gossiping or envious of others since that is not honoring to the Lord and he knows all things and I will reap what I sow (10:20).

Questions

1. According to Ecclesiastes 5:2, I should begin to think, is what I am about to say going to please God or cause me to sin based on a lack of self-control or a lack of obedience?
2. Am I honoring the authority in my life in what I say? Am I acting superior to those above me in how I joke and act just to get a laugh? Am I most importantly respecting those who must give an account for me within the church?
3. Am I seeking after financial gains/worldly success at work or using my job as a means to reach more people for Christ? Am I seeking after vanity or the things of Christ?



Kings of North / South

1 Kings 12-22, 2 Kings 1-17, 2 Chronicles 10-28 Stephen Waldvogel

931 – 722 BC

- I. GOD DIVIDES THE NATION INTO NORTHERN AND SOUTHERN KINGDOMS—1 Kings 12-16: Rehoboam inherits the kingdom from Solomon and attempts enforce higher taxes which results in rebellion. God divides the nation into two kingdoms; Israel in the north and Judah in the south.
 - A. Israel—New king Jeroboam leads the people to worship false gods. God soon prophesies total destruction due to his evil ways; “I raised you up...but you have done more evil than all who lived before you.” Tragically this establishes a pattern of sinful rebellion that ultimately ends in exile.
 - B. Judah—Rehoboam did evil in the eyes of the Lord, stirring up the Lord’s jealous anger by setting up high places. His grandson Asa did what was right in the eyes of the lord, but did not remove the high places.
- II. GOD SENDS THE PROPHET ELIJAH - HIS STRUGGLES WITH AHAB AND JEZEBEL—1 Kings 17-22
 - A. Two Opinions—God causes a drought in the land. Ahab attempts to blame Elijah but God makes it clear that their troubles are the result after he abandoned the Lord and followed Baal. A pivotal confrontation between Elijah and the prophets of Baal occurs on Mount Carmel. “How long will you waver between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow him; but if baal is god follow him”. God sends fire from heaven to burn up the sacrifice following Elijah’s prayer “....so that the people will know that you, O Lord are God, and that you are turning their hearts back again”.
 - B. God Keeps his Faithful People—Jezebel seeks to take Elijah’s life and he flees into the wilderness thinking he alone follows God. God brings him to Mt. Horeb, demonstrates his power and with a still small voice tells him of 7000 that have not bowed to baal.
- III. ELISHA’S MINISTRY—2 Kings Chapters 1-8
 - A. A Double Portion—As Elijah’s ministry concludes, he attempts to send his disciple Elisha away. Elisha refuses and instead inherits a “double portion” of Elijah’s spirit as he sees him taken up to heaven in a fiery chariot. By God’s choosing, Elisha succeeds Elijah as his representative.
 - B. Elisha’s Ministry—As God’s servant and prophet, Elisha’s ministry is marked by numerous miracles that demonstrate God’s mercy to both individuals and to the nation. Miraculous deliverance from debt, death, disease and destruction contrasts sharply with the rebellious hearts of the people.
- IV. THE COLLAPSE OF ISRAEL AND THE DECLINE OF JUDAH—2 Kings Chapters 9-17
 - A. Jehu’s Divided Heart—God uses Jehu to destroy the house of Ahab to avenge the Lord’s servants that died at the hands of Jezebel. God is pleased and promises that Jehu’s descendants would rule Israel for four generations. However, because Jehu was not careful to keep the law with all his heart and turn away from the sins of Jeroboam the Lord began to reduce the size of Israel.
 - B. The Collapse of Israel—King after king did evil in the sight of the Lord and would not listen. This angered the Lord until he thrust them out of his presence and in to exile by the Assyrians.
 - C. God’s Temple Restored—By God’s provision Joash’s life was spared as a baby and became king of Judah at the age of seven. Joash leads his people to repair the temple and to return to God’s word which influences the next several kings to do right.
- V. THE EARLY HISTORY OF JUDAH—2 Chronicles 10-28: These chapters give more historical background regarding the division of the kingdom and then the kings of Judah.
 - A. Judah’s Godly Leaders—Asa and Jehoshaphat turned the people back to the Lord. They commissioned teachers of his law and instituted righteous reforms. They entered a covenant to seek the Lord. God gave them victory and peace in the land but the high places remained.
 - B. Rebellious Kings—Many subsequent kings did evil in the sight of the Lord and lead Judah astray. The nation suffered many consequences, but the Lord was not yet willing to the destroy the house of David because of his covenant.

Application

This section of the Old Testament documents the history of God's chosen people from the time the kingdom was divided until the fall and exile of Israel in 722 BC. This covers a period of approximately 210 years and includes more than 30 kings. In the north = Jeroboam 1, Nadab, Baasha, Elah, Zimri, Omir, Ahab, Ahaziah, Joram, Jehu, Jehoahaz, Jehoash, Jeroboam 2, Zechariah, Shallum, Menahem, Pekahiah, Pekah, and Hoshea. In the south (Judah & Jerusalem) = Rehoboam, Abijam, Asa, Jehoshaphat, Jehoram, Ahaziah, Athaliah, Joash, Amaziah, Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz. It is largely a story of tragic national decline as the Jewish people fail to follow God's commandments. But is also a story that illustrates God's sovereignty and the great contrast between man's rebellion and God's faithfulness to his promises. There are timeless lessons that nations, leaders, parents and all of mankind can draw upon.

We learn that when a nation fears God, loves his word, and obeys his commandments they will be blessed and prosper. In contrast, we can see clearly, that a nation which rejects God and does evil in the eyes of the Lord can only reap decline, decay and ultimately destruction. The Kingdom of Israel began as a strong, united, stable, and prosperous people but ended in total depravity, devastation, and deportation.

We also can discern that our obedience or rebellion can influence many people for good or evil. On several occasions God promised tremendous blessings to those kings that followed after him. God is shown to be true to his word for several generations despite the many failures of the nation. Unfortunately, we also see the sins of one generation can reap terrible consequences for its progeny, and most often its sin is emulated by succeeding generations. Yet more than once, in his sovereignty, God shows himself merciful by raising up kings that turn the people back to God and thereby breaks the cycle of downward sinful progression between the generations.

Against the backdrop of a nation that has violated their covenant with God two prominent prophets stand out, Elijah and Elisha. It is through their troubles, fears, failures and triumphs we can see God's holy attributes contrasted with our shortcomings. Despite tremendous demonstrations of God power and a wonderful victory over the prophets of baal Elijah flees from Jezebel and gives in to his own fear and self-pity. But our loving God gently reminds him with a still soft voice rather than by earthquake, wind or fire that he is not alone and He comforts Elijah that there is a faithful band of followers that have not bowed their knee to false gods.

Questions

1. When we read about the rebellious children of Israel we may react with incredulity. We wonder how a people chosen and so blessed by God could repeatedly turn back to the sinful practices and idolatry of the nations that God had driven out before them. God's promises were so great and his warning so severe; how is it that they so foolishly and repeatedly turned to false gods. But are we so different? Aren't we similarly or even more wonderfully blessed yet we often cling to our idols? What idols in your life must you breakdown and destroy? How are you influenced by the culture that surrounds us?
2. Take some time to reflect on the inter-generational influences and impacts in your life. How has the obedience/disobedience to God's word by your parents, grandparents, or great grandparents affected your life? How will your life choices impact your children and grandchildren? How has the power of God's word through the Holy Spirit broken the multigenerational impacts of sin in your family? In what areas do you need God's Spirit to set you free?
3. We should be humbled and amazed when we reflect on God's mercy and long suffering towards his chosen people. Even more staggering is how God sovereignly accomplished his will in and through his chosen people in the very midst of the stiff-necked rejection and their egregious transgressions. How remarkable to think that God's used the sinful nation of Israel to bring about his redemption of all nations. How does this inspire faith in your life? How can this truth encourage others who are struggling through difficult situations or failure? *He who began a good work in you will be faithful to complete it. Phil 1:6*

Prophets to North-Israel

Amos, Jonah, Hosea

Rich D'Amico

I. AMOS

A. Introduction—Amos 1:1-2

- Amos prophesied during the reigns of Uzziah King of Judah (790-739 BC) and Jeroboam II (793-753 BC).
- Amos wrote two years before an earthquake, which is mentioned by Zechariah.
- Amos, being a shepherd, was near the bottom of the social order. Note God's irony in choosing Him to prophesy against Israel's wealthy, apostate leaders.
- Amos warns of imminent danger from a roaring lion, who is also Shepherd of the flock.

B. God is sovereign over all nations as well as Judah and Israel—Amos 1:3-6:14.

- 1:3-2:3—God pronounces judgment on Syria (Damascus), Philistia (Gaza), Tyre, Ammon, Moab.
- 2:14-16—God pronounces judgment on Judah and Israel for despising/disobeying God's law.
- 3:1-4:13—God emphasizes His sovereignty, and warned of judgment through the prophets. Israel despised God's discipline and did not return to Him.
- 5:1-17—God calls Israel to see after Him and live.
- 5:18-6:14—A warning to those who think the Day of the Lord will bring victory and to those who don't mourn over their sin.

C. Visions of warning—Amos 7:1-9:15

- 7:1-17—Israel did not like God's word through Amos (visions of swarming locusts, devastating drought, and plumb line of righteousness), and accuse him. But Amos kept preaching God's word.
- 8:1-14—A fourth vision of ripe fruit signifying Israel's ripeness for judgment. Israel will be in a famine, not for food/water, but for the Word of God.
- 9:1-15—A fifth, final vision of God standing by the altar, saying He is going to destroy Israel for false worship. But God will leave a remnant that will continue to worship Him.

II. JONAH—He also prophesied during the reign of Jeroboam (793-753 BC).

A. The book of Jonah could be set up in a chiastic structure:

- 1:1-3—Jonah's commissioning and flight
 - 1:4-16—Jonah and the pagan sailors (How did they respond?)
 - 1:17-2:10—Jonah's grateful prayer (How does Jonah respond to God's grace toward him?)
 - 4:5-11—Jonah learns about God's compassion
 - 4:1-4—Jonah's angry prayer (How does Jonah respond to God's grace toward others?)
 - 3:3b-10—Jonah and the pagan Ninevites (How do they respond?)
- 3:1-3a—Jonah's re-commissioning and compliance

III. HOSEA

A. Hosea's wayward wife—Hosea 1:1-3:5

- Hosea parallels the adulterous and covenant-breaking aspects of his relationship with Gomer and God's relationship with Israel. Hosea finds her and forgives her, and brings her home fully reconciled.
- Images of God's love, judgment, grace, and mercy were woven into this relationship. God then outlines His case against Israel: Their sins would ultimately cause their destruction.

B. God's wayward people—Hosea 4:1-14:9.

- 4:1-3—God explains the reasons for Israel's suffering
- 4:4-9—God charges the religious leaders with wrongdoing.
- 6:6, 8:13—God was not interested in Israel's ritual sacrifices, rather desired them to have a heart for Him.

C. Consequence of their sin—Hosea 9:1-17.

- 9:7-8—The people didn't listen. Hosea states they are as evil as Gibeah (Judges 19-20).
- 10:12-15—Hosea predicts punishment

D. God's love for Israel—Hosea 11:1-14:9.

- 11:3—God consistently provided for His people, but they were thankless.
- 11:9—We cannot define God by our terms.

E. Repentance will bring restoration—14:1-9.

- 14:1-3—Hosea calls on the people to repent.
- 14:4-8—God promises restoration. Hosea dramatically portrays God's constant and persistent love.
- 14:9—When God forgives us He judges the sin but shows mercy to the sinner.

Application

As we read the Bible we must always remember that the Bible is not about the great men and women of God, but the Bible is about the wretched and sinful men and women of a great and forgiving God. Throughout these three books of the Bible we see many attributes of God.

AMOS

- In the book of Amos we see God's justice extends to both individuals and nations (Amos 6:3-7).
- God has the right to execute justice, because He is the Lord of all creation.
- We see God's sovereignty over the whole world, not just over the nation of Israel.
- In God's sovereignty He warns Israel and the nations what is going to take place and He tells them to repent and seek after Him and live.
- Our God is the God of hope.

JONAH

- In Jonah we see rebellion against God and His response. We learn that God's will is the most important. The people of Nineveh were sinners totally lost apart from God's grace. Yet so was Jonah.
- God's sovereignty is displayed as we see the events of Jonah are God ordained, God ignited and God orchestrated revealing that God is omniscient, omnipresent and sovereign over all creation.
- We see God's compassion as He is willing to hear and respond in forgiveness to the prayer of repentance.

- May we be truly grateful for the compassion that the Lord has shown to us throughout our lives.

HOSEA

- Hosea's message is that nothing can separate us from the love of God. God loves His people with an undying love, He is truly a God of a million second chances.
- God's faithfulness is greater than all of Israel's sin.
- Throughout Hosea we see how God calls the people to repentance and then promises restoration. May we live in light of the grace of God rather than abuse it.

Questions

1. Has God's justice changed? Does God's justice extend to both nations and individuals? Why does God have the right to execute justice? (Amos 6:37; 4:13; 9:5-6)
2. What worldly temptations have we chased after? Two components of God's character are anger and compassion. (Hosea 4:14) God's response to our confession and repentance is His forgiveness. (1John 1:9) Do I understand God's love for me as explained in Hosea 3 and 4 ?
3. God was Israel's only hope, just as He is our only hope. (Amos 9:15) Israel's sin was great but God's grace and forgiveness was greater. (Hosea 6:1-3; Romans 5:20) Are any of our sins too great for God to forgive?
4. Is our devotion to God sincere or does our loyalty evaporate like the mist?
5. Do our accomplishments make us feel self-sufficient or are we God sufficient?
6. Do we recognize the destructiveness of our sin, and do we rely on God's grace and mercy?

Prophets to South-Judah

Isaiah, Joel, Micah

Cliff & Abby Albrecht

- I. ISAIAH—Isaiah, son of Amoz, delivered this message between King Uzziah's death (739BC) and Sennacherib's attack on Judah (701 BC).
 - A. Israel's condition: A rebellious nation—Isaiah 1-39.
 - 5:8-10—Exploiting others
 - 5:11-17—drunkenness and self-indulgence.
 - 5:18-19—Intentional sin
 - 5:20—Perversity
 - 5:21—Self-determination of good and evil, doing what is right in your own eyes.
 - 5:22-24—Social injustice, a blind eye to others needs.
 - B. Comfort for God's people—Isaiah 40-55
 - 53:5—Foretells the reason for Christ's coming as sacrifice for sin to provide forgiveness to mankind.
 - C. Salvation for all the nations: Promised Messiah, deliverance and future hope—Isaiah 56-65.
 - 55:1-56:8—Christ's second coming. Grace for Gentile sinners who trust in the Lord.
 - 59:1-21—Israel, condemned for sinfulness, will be converted through the spirit by the Redeemer.
 - 60:1-22—Following a short period of affliction, Israel will be blessed and Gentiles have access.
 - 65:1-25—The Lord's judgement for those who forsake Him and preparation for the remnant in the new heaven, new earth and New Jerusalem.
 - 66:1-24 In the great day of redemption the Lord will be worshipped and God will comfort His people.
- II. JOEL—Author is Joel (means Jehovah is God), a minor prophet.
 - A. Seek the Lord through repentance—Joel 1:1-2:27.
 - A plague of locusts had struck the land. Joel sees it as a warning from God, the beginning of the "Day of the Lord" which was coming.
 - B. Joel's prophecy of the future—Joel 2:26-3:17.
 - 2:26-32—Christ's return
 - 3:1-3—God will judge all nations on account of His people
 - 3:9-12—The nations call to do battle.
 - 3:13-17—The outcome: Great harvest. God's people find shelter and strength in Him. The Lord will reign forever in Jerusalem (Zion).
- III. MICAH—Written by Micah (means Who is like Jehovah?). Micah prophesied during the reign of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah. He prophesied to both Jerusalem and Samaria, and he evidently saw the captivity of the Northern Kingdom (Israel).
 - A. Proclaims future judgment for past sins—Micah 1-3.
 - 1:1-16—Idol worship
 - 2:1-13—Specific sins of covetousness, oppressing the poor, violence, heartlessness, drunkenness
 - 3:1-12—Leader's sins of injustice, false prophecies, love of money
 - B. Future glory because of past promises—Micah 4-5.
 - 4:1-13—Prophecies of the last days, prediction of Jerusalem as center of worship and government in the millennial kingdom. Israel will be regathered.
 - 5:1-16—Prophecy of first and second coming of Christ.
 - C. Pleading repentance because of past redemption—Micah 6-7.
 - 6:1-7:20—He recites their past history and how God redeemed them out of Egypt. God will not overlook their sin, but will judge them. God will perform His promises to Abraham and Jacob because He is the Truth and He can show mercy.

Application

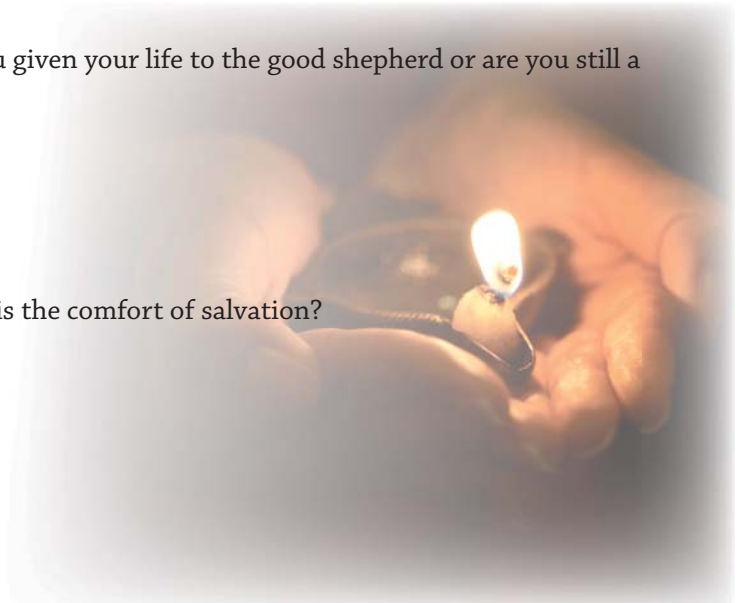
In Isaiah, the coming King is the key figure. Read the passages below and match them to the given description.

Isaiah 7-9	The child Emmanuel.
Isaiah 11:10	Root of Jesse, and will stand as the banner.
Isaiah 16:5	Sits on the throne of David displaying divine qualities.
Isaiah 32-33	Nobel King and Lawgiver.
Isaiah 42-49	Brings justice to nations.
Isaiah 49-50	Continues to trust God in spite of persecution and abuse.
Isaiah 53:1-6	The means by which God's light can shine on the nations.
Isaiah 53:1-3, Mark 8:27-33	Rejected servant, he was not supposed to look like a spindly plant on dry ground. God's strength was made manifest in weakness.
Isaiah 53:4-6, Romans 4:25, 2 Corinthians 5:21, 1 Peter 2:24-25	Endured suffering he for us.
Isaiah 53:5	Took our punishment, made us whole, brought us peace.
Isaiah 59:15-21	Comes in power to enable His people to live righteous lives.

Through Christ the coming King, God promises comfort, deliverance and restoration in the future kingdom. We can be comforted knowing that there is compassion for those who repent. No matter how bleak our situation or how evil the world is, we must be God's faithful people who watch for His return.

Questions

1. Read Isaiah 53:4-6. What does Isaiah say we have done?
2. John 10:11-16 uses the same analogy. Have you given your life to the good shepherd or are you still a wandering sheep?
3. Read Isaiah 56:4-8. Who is salvation for? What is the comfort of salvation?



Kings of Judah

2 Kings 18-25, 2 Chronicles 29-36

Frank Snyder



- I. ONLY TWO GODLY KINGS: After the fall of the northern kingdom (Israel), the kings who reigned (715-586 BC) were: Hezekiah, Manasseh, Amon, Josiah, Jehoahas, Jehoiakim, Johoiachin, and Zedekiah. We will study the godly kings, Hezekiah and Josiah.
- II. HEZEKIAH—2 Kings 18-20, 2 Chronicles 29-32
 - A. Hezekiah was 25 years old when he began his 29 year reign, in which he did what was right in the sight of Lord—2 Kings 18:1-8; 2 Chronicles 29-31.
 - He was the first king to eradicate the high places and destroy idols used to worship Baal & Asherah.
 - Hezekiah took down the serpent down Moses put up in Numbers 24, since it had become an idol.
 - The Lord blessed his obedience of trusting in the Lord, holding fast to the Lord, and following Him.
 - Hezekiah realized that his father's before him sinned against God, therefore he started out by having the Levites sanctify the temple.
 - He restored temple worship and commanded all Israel to keep the Passover.
 - B. King of Assyria, Sennacherib, spoke against Hezekiah and God—2 Kings 18:9-37; 2 Chronicles 32:1-19.
 - Hezekiah encouraged the Israelites not to be afraid of the king of Assyria with his arm of flesh, but be strong and courageous because of the Lord their God.
 - Sennacherib said no other god had ever stayed his hand therefore the Israelites should not listen.
 - C. God dealt with Sennacherib—2 Kings 19; 2 Chronicles 32:20-26.
 - Hezekiah turned to God and His prophet Isaiah. Isaiah prophesied the Lord would send a spirit upon Sennacherib and cause him to fall by the sword in his own land.
 - Hezekiah received more threats and continued to pray. The Lord again assured Hezekiah of victory.
 - God kept His word and sent His angel into the Assyrian camp to kill 185,000 soldiers.
 - God in His sovereignty also had Sennacherib killed by his own sons.
 - D. The remainder of Hezekiah's life—2 Kings 20; 2 Chronicles 32:24-33.
 - Hezekiah was told he would die. He prayed to the Lord, who gave him 15 more years.
 - Isaiah told Hezekiah that everything he accumulated would be stolen and taken to Babylon.
 - Hezekiah's response was, "The word of the Lord which you have spoken is good. Will there not be peace and truth at least in my days?" This statement acknowledged Isaiah as God's faithful messenger, and God's goodness in not destroying Jerusalem during Hezekiah's time.
- III. JOSIAH—2 Kings 22-23:30; 2 Chronicles 34-35
 - A. Josiah was 8 years old when he began his 30 year reign, in which he did what was right in the eyes of the Lord—2 Kings 22:1-13; 23:1-25; 2 Chronicles 34:1-22, 29-33; 35:1-19.
 - Josiah purged Judah of the high places, all false idols, and broke down all the altars of the Baals.
 - When Josiah was read the book of Law, he responded in great fear and repentance.
 - Josiah restored true worship by reading everything in the book of the Law that they found and making a covenant to the Lord. Josiah's covenant was to keep God's commandments and His testimonies and His statutes with all his heart and all his soul.
 - Josiah made all who were present in Jerusalem and Benjamin do the same and all of Josiah's days, Jerusalem did not depart from following the Lord God.
 - Josiah also kept the Passover to remember how the Lord delivered them from Egypt.
 - B. God promised destruction for Judah because of their sin, but promised blessing for Josiah because of his response to the Bible—2 Kings 22:14-20; 23:26-27; 2 Chronicles 34:23-28.
 - C. Josiah ended up dying in battle against Neco, the king of Egypt—2 Kings 23:28-30; 2 Chronicles 35:20-26.

Application

What Is the Theological Purpose?

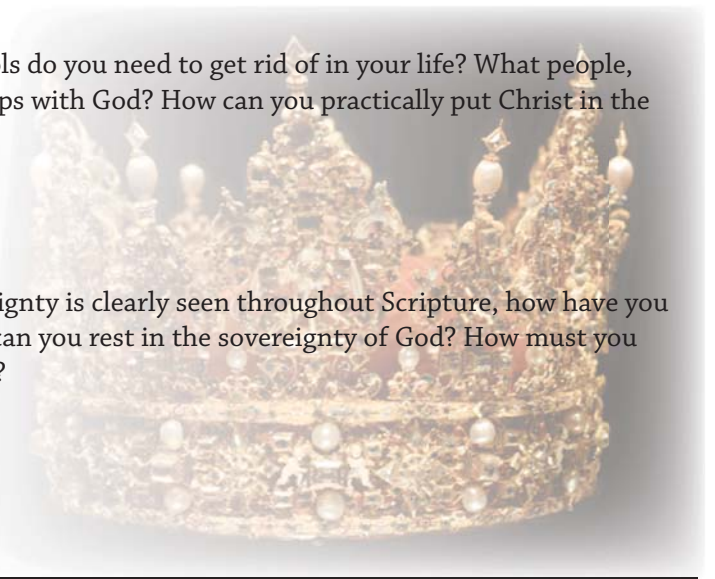
We say, “The Bible is not a book about the great men and women of God, but a book about the wretched and sinful men and women of a great and forgiving God.” We see that in these passages as well. We don’t want to elevate Hezekiah and Josiah, but we want to elevate our great God. The only reason why these kings were righteous is because they believed in God and the Word of God changed them. After Josiah heard the Word of God, his response was repentance and he and the people made a covenant to the Lord. That is the power of God’s Word. We also see the power of God on display in Hezekiah’s life. God said that He would destroy Assyria and Sennacherib and that is what He did. He sent the angel of the Lord and killed 185,000 people and ordained Sennacherib to be killed by his sons. We see God’s power by healing Hezekiah and giving him 15 more years to live.

What is the Christological Purpose?

We also say that all of the Scriptures point to Jesus Christ. As we read about the kings of Israel and Judah, we cannot help but think that there is perfect King to come and that is the King of kings and Lord of lords, Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ’s reign as king will never end. Hezekiah’s and Josiah’s reign both ended because they were finite and mortal. Jesus Christ does and will always rule with an iron scepter and He rules perfectly. Hezekiah and Josiah did not rule perfectly because they were sinful and imperfect. As we study through the kings in Israel’s history, hopefully we think of Revelation 15:11-16: *“Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on His head are many diadems, and He has a name written that no one knows but Himself. He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which He is called is The Word of God. And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following Him on white horses. From His mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and He rule with them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty. On His robe and His thigh He has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords.”*

Questions

1. Read 2 Corinthians 7:10-11—What is your response to the Word of God? Are you like Josiah who responds in confession and repentance or Jehoiakim who burned the scrolls in rebellion? What areas of Scripture do you fail to adhere to because you want to live out your desires rather than God’s desires?
2. Read Luke 14:25-33—What high places or false idols do you need to get rid of in your life? What people, places, or things do you put before your relationships with God? How can you practically put Christ in the number one position in your life?
3. Read Daniel 4:34-35; Psalm 115:1-4—God’s sovereignty is clearly seen throughout Scripture, how have you seen God’s sovereignty in action in your life? How can you rest in the sovereignty of God? How must you change because the Lord is sovereign over your life?



Prophets to Judah

Nahum, Zephaniah, Habakkuk, Jeremiah, Lamentations

Frank Snyder



I. NAHUM (695-642 BC)

- A. Nahum writes a sequel to, and contrast with, the book of Jonah. Ninevah's repentance did not last and Nahum announced the fall of Ninevah and overthrow of Assyria, in certain and irrevocable judgment from God.
- 1:2—God is a jealous, avenging, and wrathful God.
 - 1:3—The Lord is slow to anger and great in power. He will not clear the guilty, sin has to be punished.
 - 1:4-5—God reveals His great power through His creation.
 - 1:6—No one is able to stand and endure God's anger.
 - 1:7—The Lord is good and a stronghold to those who take refuge in Him.
 - 1:8-3:19—The Lord will destroy His adversaries who plot against Him; believe they are self-sufficient.

II. ZEPHANIAH (635-625 BC)

- A. Zephaniah, a contemporary of Jeremiah, writes during the reign of Josiah. The transfer of world power from Assyria to Babylon was imminent. Zephaniah speaks of coming judgment, exhorts the people to repent and seek the Lord, and proclaims the promise of eventual salvation for the Lord's remnant.
- 1:2-6—God will judge Judah.
 - 1:7-3:8—The Day of the Lord is near and He will destroy all sin in all nations.
 - 2:1-3—The Lord still calls for His people to humble themselves and seek after Him.
 - 3:9-20—There is still hope for God's people and all nations.

III. HABAKKUK (625-605 BC)

- A. Habakkuk prophesies during the final days of the Assyrian Empire and the beginning of the Babylonian Empire. Like Job, he argued with God, and through it grew firmer faith and a deeper understanding of God's sovereignty. Habakkuk realized that God was to be worshipped for who He is, not merely because of temporal blessings.
- 1:2-4—Complaint #1: "Why don't you listen, and why do you idly look at wrong?"
 - 1:5-11—God: "I am at work; I am not going to bring revival but terrible, dreadful judgment on sin."
 - 1:12-2:1—Complaint #2: "How can you use a wicked nation to judge Judah?"
 - 2:2-20—God: "The righteous shall live by faith; I will judge the Chaldeans as well."
 - 3:1-19—Habakkuk prays: "I fear the work of the Lord; even in the midst of judgment, I will rejoice in the Lord and in the God of my salvation. The Lord is my strength."

IV. JEREMIAH (627-580 BC)

- A. Jeremiah's ministry spans the reign of Judah's final five kings (Josiah, Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, and Zedekiah). It began in King Josiah's 13th year, to beyond the fall of Jerusalem to Babylon, when he was forced to go with a fleeing remnant of Judah to Egypt.
- 1:1-19—The calling and preparation of Jeremiah
 - 2:1-45:5—Prophecies to Judah: condemnation, the new covenant, destruction, and the remnant.
 - 46:1-51:64—Prophecies of judgment on the nations.
 - 52:1-34—The fall of Jerusalem.

V. LAMENTATIONS (586 BC)

- A. Jeremiah wrote Lamentations during or soon after Jerusalem's fall. Lamentations relates closely to Jeremiah, with anguish over Jerusalem's receiving of God's judgment for unrepentant sins. He concentrates on the bitter suffering and heartbreak over Jerusalem's devastation.
- 1:1-22—Jerusalem's devastation because of their sin.
 - 2:1-22—The Lord's judgment explained and justified.
 - 3:1-66—Jeremiah expresses that there is always hope in the Lord.
 - 4:1-22—The details why the Lord gave full vent to His wrath.
 - 5:1-22—The remnants' prayer to be remembered and restored.

Application

Key Themes in Jeremiah

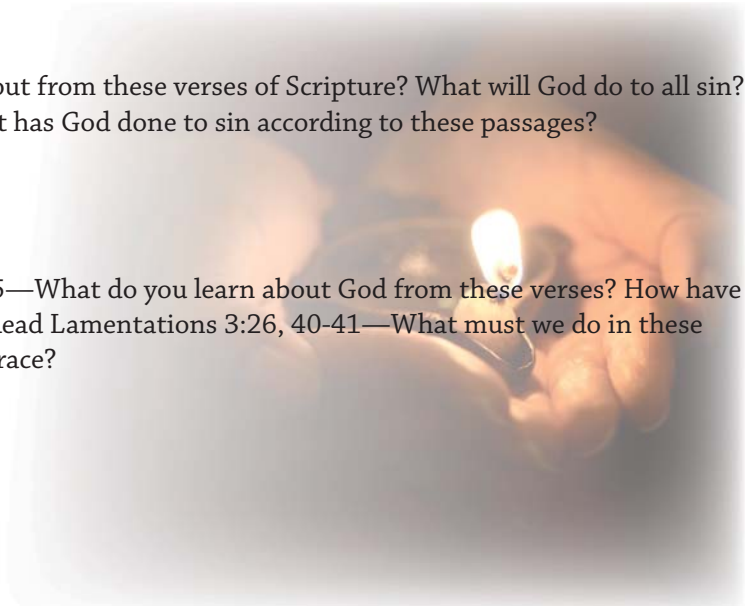
- ☐ Jeremiah preached against the people's idolatry and other sins.
- ☐ Jeremiah preached of the invader that God would send and the judgment and destruction that would come from God's invader.
- ☐ Jeremiah constantly preached of God's willingness to spare and bless the nation only if the people repent.
- ☐ Jeremiah portrayed the close, intimate relationship God had with Israel and that He yearned to keep. Jeremiah portrayed God's longing for Israel to be tender toward Him, as they used to be.
- ☐ Jeremiah also portrayed that there is suffering for servants of God, but that God is sufficient in all trouble and how God's Word plays a vital role in all of life, in times of peace or great trouble.
- ☐ One of the biggest themes that Jeremiah portrays is the hope that all people have in God and future restoration.

Three Theological Themes of these Books of the Bible:

- ☐ The sins of the Lord's people and the nations. The people of Israel constantly were in a downward spiral of sin. As time went on, Israel looked more and more like the world.
- ☐ God's holiness being offended and His holy wrath being poured out on His people and the nations. God is a holy and jealous God and He will judge and destroy all sin.
- ☐ The hope found in the Lord's compassion and God's faithfulness to His promises. Even though Israel chose to sin, God still promised a hope and future if they would hate their sin and turn from it.

Questions

1. After studying through these books of the Bible and reading about how the nation of Israel has committed idolatry against God, what idols are in your life that you must get rid of? How does your life show that you worship yourself or others things or people more than God Almighty?
2. Read Nahum 1:1-2, 6—What do you learn about from these verses of Scripture? What will God do to all sin? Read Isaiah 53 and Colossians 2:13-15—What has God done to sin according to these passages?
3. Read Nahum 1:3, 7 and Lamentations 3:22-25—What do you learn about God from these verses? How have you seen God's grace and mercy in your life? Read Lamentations 3:26, 40-41—What must we do in these verses? How must your live in light of God's grace?



Judah Under Babylon

Daniel 1-9, Ezekiel, Obadiah

Dale Bartholomew

I. DANIEL

- A. Keep in mind that Daniel uses images and symbolism. The book of Daniel is also historical and factual regarding the events of his captivity, as well as prophetic. The accuracy of Daniel's predictions has made critics of the Bible take notice.
- B. Daniel's message is to those already in captivity in Babylon, encouraging them to hold fast to faith in the face of adversity. In Daniel 1, he is taken away to Babylon, yet remains determined to be true to God through all of the trials that are set before him.
 - 1:9—We learn from Daniel's example that "he purposed in his heart not to defile God."
 - 6:1-2—Daniel served in the government of Darius the Mede, and no different than today, there are those who constantly seek to discredit his reputation.
 - 6:10—When the decree was made that no one could petition any man or god for 30 days, Daniel still prayed "as was his custom since early days." Not only did he know that God would deliver him from the lions, but King Darius knew that he would be delivered.
- C. Daniel's prayer—Daniel 9.
 - 9:4-19—Daniel prays for the people of Israel, confesses sin, acknowledges God's faithfulness and mercy, and cries out for forgiveness.
 - 9:20-27—God answers by sending the angel Gabriel to reveal the vision of seventy weeks hence, the 70 years of captivity. And yet, while there will be judgment, trials, and pain, there will also be restoration for Jerusalem and God's people.

II. EZEKIEL

- A. Written to the Israelites who had yet to be taken captive. His warning concerned the holiness of God. God does not merely possess the quality of holiness, He is holy—Ezekiel 1-3.
- B. Ezekiel warns Israel of their sinfulness against God—Ezekiel 16, 20, 23.
 - 17:24, 22:145, 24:14, 36:36, 37:14—As a result of their rebellion, God promised judgment. Five times, the Lord says "I the LORD have spoken and will do it."
- C. Ezekiel wants us to focus on our own personal responsibility for warning of the coming judgment.
 - 3:18—We are to be "watchmen."
- D. We are also responsible for our own relationship with the Lord. We cannot blame our circumstances. We are responsible for what we do with what we hear about God—Ezekiel 18.
 - 11:20, 14:11, 36:28, 37:23, 27—We are promised restoration as we humble ourselves and confess our sin. God has said "and they shall be my people and I will be their God."

III. OBADIAH

- A. Obadiah's prophecy is focused on the sin of Edom and the judgment coming upon them.
- B. The Edomites are the people descended from Esau, the son of Isaac and Rebekah and the brother of Jacob (Genesis 25:19-34). Esau was nicknamed "Edom".
- C. God is bringing nations against Edom in a battle. As a result of the coming battle, God will make Edom small among the nations and greatly despised.
 - Why? They are filled with pride, and it has deceived them. They boasted in their wisdom. They boasted in their alliances and trusted in their allies.
- D. When God brings judgment against Edom, they will know the sting of treachery against them. The alliances they once trusted in would come to nothing, and they would be double-crossed by their former friends. The brief prophecy of Obadiah ends on this high note. The Edomites seemed to have their day against God's people but at the end of it all, the kingdom shall be the LORD's.

Application

Nebuchadnezzar knew that the Jews were a stiff-necked and obstinate people, and that he used the sumptuous food to soften up the captives.

Satan uses a similar strategy against believers today, wanting to indoctrinate us into the world system. Satan wants us to:

- ☐ Feed on what the world offers
- ☐ Identify ourselves in reference to the world
- ☐ Educate ourselves in the ways of the world

Sometimes today a candidate or nominee for office will be set under this kind of scrutiny - imagine looking as hard as you could at a public servant who had been in office some 50 years and finding nothing wrong. No fraudulent expense accounts. No intern scandals. No questionable business deals. No gifts from lobbyists. No accusations from his staff. Simply, there were no skeletons in Daniel's closet. His enemies examined his life and found nothing to attack - they had to make up something.

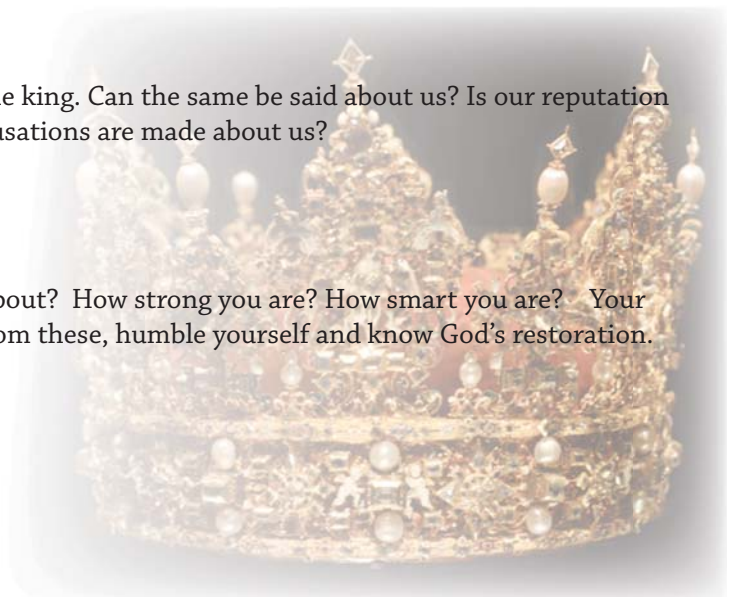
If Daniel believed that God would accomplish seventy years of captivity, then why did he pray as passionately as he did in Daniel 9? Daniel knew that God's promises invite our prayers and participation; they don't exclude our prayers and participation.

The Israelites were eager to return to Jerusalem, but Ezekiel taught them that they must first return to their God.

Like the Edomites, we can be deceived by our own pride, smarts and friends. Unless we confess and repent, God will allow us to experience the guilt and anguish that comes with living a life apart from God.

Questions

1. What are the things of the world that draw you away from your walk with the Lord? In what ways are you tempted to want to be identified with the world? Do you find it more appealing to be educated in the things of this world versus being educated in the Scriptures?
2. Daniel was found to be blameless as he served the king. Can the same be said about us? Is our reputation above reproach? What is our response when accusations are made about us?
3. What are the issues you find yourself boasting about? How strong you are? How smart you are? Your relationships with influential people? Repent from these, humble yourself and know God's restoration.



Return of the Exiles

Ezra, Nehemiah

Parker Woodard

I. EZRA

A. Return under Zerubbabel—Ezra 1-2.

- God keeps his promise and 70 years after the exile began, King Cyrus lets Israel return to Jerusalem.
- God uses world events and rulers to accomplish his purposes so that his word is fulfilled.

B. Rebuilding of the Temple—Ezra 3-6.

- 3—Worship is reinstituted even before foundation of Temple is laid.
- Rebuilding faces opposition and is forced to stop for 10 years, resumes under Darius.

C. 2nd Return under Ezra—Ezra 7-8.

- During his return to Jerusalem Ezra refuses protection from king since he told the king that God would be with them.

D. Israel puts away pagan marriages—Ezra 9-10.

- After reading the Law, Israel realizes they have sinned by intermarrying with pagans.
- According to the Law, the penalty for intermarriage was to be death (Numbers 25: 1-9). After 3 days of prayer and fasting God mercifully allows divorce rather than putting all to death.

II. NEHEMIAH

A. Nehemiah Returns to Jerusalem—Nehemiah 1-2.

- Before even asking for permission to go to Jerusalem Nehemiah goes to the Lord in prayer
- As soon as Nehemiah arrives he assesses the problem and purposes to rebuild the wall.

B. Rebuilding the Wall—Nehemiah 3-7.

- 3:1-32—Nehemiah has everyone in Jerusalem pitch in and rebuild a small part of the wall.
- 4:1-23, 6:1-19—As the walls near completion, Nehemiah faces opposition from those outside who fear the rebuilding of Jerusalem, and so guards are set to protect the wall.
- 5:1-19—Recognizing the poverty of the people, Nehemiah refuses to take the salary and provisions that were normally allotted to the governor, he wasn't in it for his own benefit.
- Through God's grace and the leadership of Nehemiah, the wall was finished in just 52 days.

C. The People Worship God—Nehemiah 8-12.

- 8:1-18—After completing the wall the people celebrated and worshipped God. From morning until the afternoon Ezra read the law in front of all the people.
- 12:1-47—Nehemiah dedicates the wall and reinstitutes Levitical roles within the temple.

D. Nehemiah as Governor—Nehemiah 13.

- After serving as governor for 12 year, Nehemiah returns to serving the king in Babylon, just like he told the king he would.
- After a time, Nehemiah returns to Jerusalem when hearing how the people have drifted away from obeying the Law.
- Back in Jerusalem, Nehemiah sets in place a series of reforms. He makes sure the Levites are provided for, he expels those trying to sell things on the Sabbath, and he reinstitutes Sabbath worship as the law required.

Application

In Ezra 3:6 we see worship as God meant it. Even before the foundation of the temple was laid, the people of Jerusalem brought sacrifices and worshiped God. This is a great preview of New Testament worship. The location of our worship is not as important as the object of our worship (John 4:21-24).

How we live needs to line up with what we say we believe—Ezra 8:21-23. Unbelievers notice!

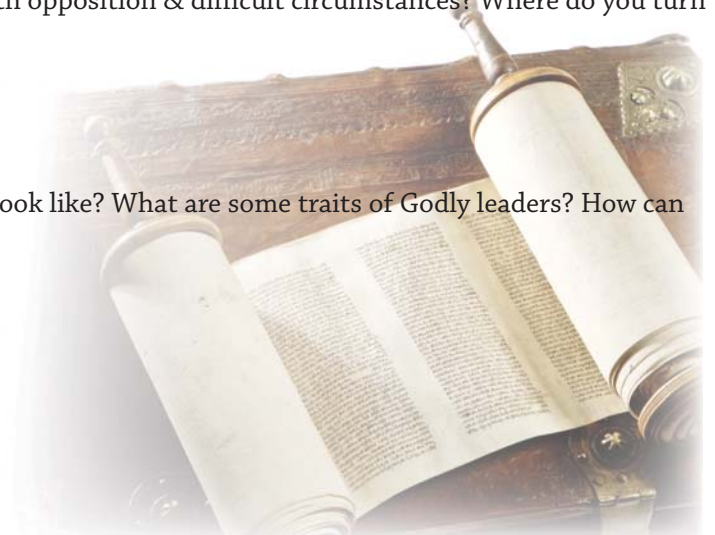
Ezra 9-10 can easily be misinterpreted or misused to advocate for divorcing an unbelieving spouse. This passage does not negate the fact that God hates divorce (Malachi 2:16, Mark 10:1-12, Matthew 5:31-32), and it IS NOT a precedent that is set for the Church. In the New Testament a believer is commanded to live as a light to an unbelieving spouse (I Corinthians 7:10-16). This passage is meant to show just how much more important our relationship with God is than any other earthly relationship (Matthew 10:34-39).

In his 20 years as king, Artaxereshad never seen Nehemiah sad, so he knew that something was seriously wrong when he saw Nehemiah downcast—Nehemiah 2:1. As Christians we should be the most joyful people in the world, while still being able empathize with others and mourn with those who mourn. Nehemiah was not sad for himself, he mourned for God's remnant in Jerusalem, whose city was in ruin—Nehemiah 1:3-4.

Discipleship is vital to the health of the church. In Nehemiah 13 we see that after Nehemiah leaves, Jerusalem quickly returns to her old ways. It is believed that in between Nehemiah's two stints as governor Malachi was written, which is a scathing rebuke of the spiritual state of Israel. Nehemiah was forced to return to Israel because in his absence Israel had fallen away, there wasn't a godly leader to take his place. Discipleship is so important because future generations need godly leaders that know the Word and aren't willing to compromise on truth.

Questions

1. Do you trust in God despite circumstances or do you try to control situations?
2. Both Nehemiah and Ezra faced opposition. It would have been very easy to quit and just say it wasn't God's will. Why is discernment important in dealing with opposition & difficult circumstances? Where do you turn for godly advice?
3. Based on Nehemiah, what does godly leadership look like? What are some traits of Godly leaders? How can you emulate these traits in your own life?



Prophets to Returned Exiles

Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi

Gordon Fenn

- I. THE LAST THREE PROPHETS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT ARE IN THE PERIOD FOLLOWING THE BABYLONIAN CAPTIVITY—THE POST-EXILIC PERIOD
 - A. The common message of the prophets was: return to the right ways of the Lord.
 - B. Haggai and Zechariah were particularly concerned with the rebuilding of the temple, which had been destroyed 70 years before.
 - C. The people had been tending to their personal affairs and neglecting the temple and other spiritual responsibilities.
- II. HAGGAI AND ZECHARIAH ARE CREDITED WITH GETTING THE TEMPLE COMPLETED.
 - A. The temple foundation had been laid almost immediately after the exiles returned from Babylon.
 - Sixteen years intervened before the work resumed.
 - It took the powerful exhortation of Haggai and Zechariah to motivate the people to arise and rebuild the temple of God.
 - B. The prophesy of Haggai consists of four messages to the returned exiles—Haggai 1:3-2:23.
 - 1:3-15—The first message was a call to rebuild the temple and was a rebuke for lack of commitment and the people's repentance.
 - 2:1-9—The second message was designed to give the people courage.
 - 2:10-19—The third message recalled that sin and impure hearts had brought God's punishment in the past.
 - 2:20-23—The fourth message gives a future hope of those committed to God.
- III. WHILE HAGGAI REBUKED AND ADMONISHED, ZECHARIAH ENCOURAGED AND LOOKED TO BRIGHTER DAYS.
 - A. The book of Zechariah contains many visions and a great deal of apocalyptic symbolism.
 - B. Zechariah is divided into four sections:
 - 1:1-6—In section one, there is a call to repentance.
 - 1:7-6:15—The second section describes a series of night visions about the people of God and His Kingdom.
 - 7:1-8:23—In the third section, a question about fasting is raised.
 - 7:4-7—The point is that fasting without obedience is useless.
 - 7:8-8:23—The Lord's expectations of the people are stated.
 - 9:1-14:21—In the fourth section, the people of God are reassured about the future.
 - 9:1-7—The people were told that the heathen nations will fall.
 - 9:8-11:17—They were told that Messiah would appear.
 - 12:11-14:21—They were told that salvation would be established.
- IV. MALACHI WAS THE LAST WRITING PROPHET TO SERVE GOD IN THE OT.
 - A. During this time, the priests were lax and wicked, offerings were being neglected, divorce was common and justice was perverted.
 - B. Malachi confronted the apathy and disloyalty of the people.
 - C. Malachi pointed out that the people were experiencing hard times because of their sin, not because God did not love them.
 - D. The book opens with an affirmation of the love of God—Malachi 1:1-5. It illustrates how this love has been spurned—Malachi 1:6-2:9.
 - Malachi 2:10-16—A rebuke of the people for their infidelity in marriage is given.
 - Finally, the prophet looks forward to the coming of the Messiah.

Application

God's Kingdom should be our priority rather than worldly possessions. The lack of commitment to God and church are not acceptable to God (Matthew 16:24, 6:24).

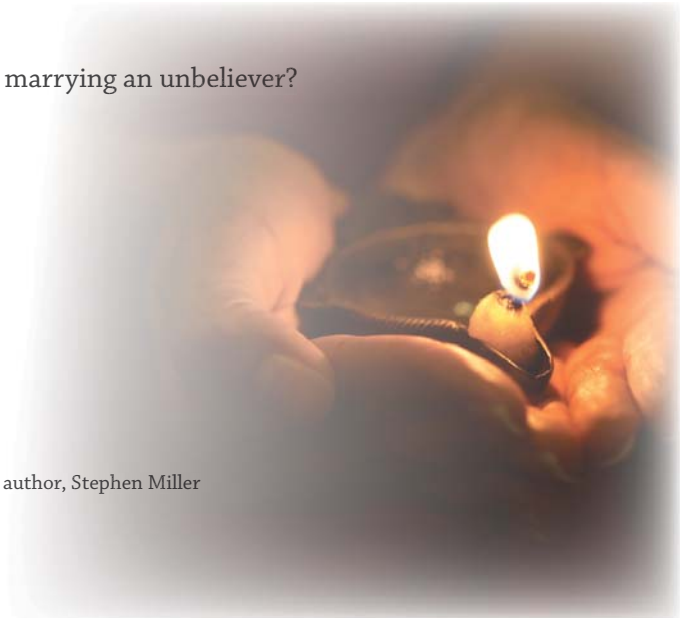
Repentance will restore fellowship with God. Confess any sin in your life now (2 Corinthians 7:9-10, 1John 1:9).

God proves his love for his people by His actions. Reflect on the ways God has shown His love for you. (Romans 5:8, Hebrews 13:5).

Questions

1. What things in our life can be more important than our relationships with God and with other believers?
What can we do to change this situation?
2. What are some of the dangers of a believer dating or marrying an unbeliever?

Resources: Holman Old Testament Commentary- general editor, Max Anders; author, Stephen Miller
Macarthur Study Bible (ESV)



Judah Under Persia

Esther, Daniel 10-12

Tyler Weymouth

I. DANIEL RECEIVES A DISMAL PROPHETIC WORD FROM GOD (circa 536 B.C.)—Daniel 10–11

A. Judah will be under the control of multiple successive pagan rulers and kingdoms.

- These changes in government would take place over hundreds of years, with the Jews being subject to the ungodly desires & dictates of unbelieving rulers.
- 11:21-31—The most infamous blasphemy was committed by Antiochus IV Epiphanes (a contemptible person, whose heart shall be set against the holy covenant), who is said to have set up the abomination that makes desolate by erecting an altar/idol to Zeus and who sacrificed swine in the Jewish temple in Jerusalem.

II. DANIEL RECEIVES A HOPEFUL PROPHETIC WORD FROM GOD—Daniel 12

A. God will be protecting His chosen people throughout the years.

- 12:12-13—Daniel is encouraged by knowing that God is in control (you shall rest and shall stand in your allotted place), and that there is blessing in obedience (blessed is he who waits and arrives).

III. KING AHASUERUS (XERXES I) CHOOSES ESTHER TO BECOME QUEEN (circa 479 B.C.)—Esther 1:1–2:18

A. 2:17—She won grace and favor in [King Xerxes'] sight more than all the virgins.

IV. MORDECAI UNCOVERS A PLOT TO KILL KING XERXES—Esther 2:19-23.

A. A Jewish man acting in the best interest of his pagan ruler! This event comes into play later on in the story.

V. HAMAN PLOTS TO KILL THE JEWS—Esther 3:1-15.

A. 3:2b—Haman was personally offended that Mordecai did not bow down or pay homage to him.

B. 3:5—Haman decides that all the Jews, the people of Mordecai, would die as a result of Mordecai's "offense."

VI. ESTHER AND MORDECAI ACT TO SAVE THEIR PEOPLE—Esther 4–8.

A. 4:11—Esther goes before the King without being called, a move which could easily have resulted in her death.

B. 5:1-8—Xerxes welcomes her and agrees to join Esther in a feast that she prepares for him and Haman.

C. 5:9-14—Mordecai has gallows 50 cubits (75') high (5:14) constructed so that he can have Mordecai hanged.

D. 2:19-23, 6:1-13—On the eve of the feast, Xerxes remembers how Mordecai disclosed the attempt on his life, and rewards him in front of Haman.

VII. ESTHER REVEALS HAMAN'S PLOT TO XERXES, THE JEWISH PEOPLE ARE SAVED—Esther 6:14–8:17.

A. 7:10—Haman swings on the gallows he had prepared for Mordecai.

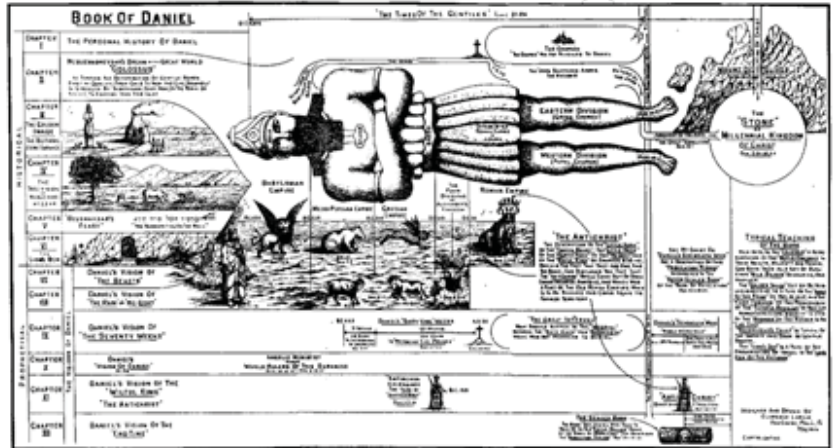
B. 8:9-14—Xerxes gave Esther & Mordecai full authority to decree Jewish protection through the kingdom.

VIII. ALL JEWISH ENEMIES ARE KILLED, A NEW FEAST IS INAUGURATED, AND MORDECAI'S PROMINENCE IS RECOGNIZED—Esther 9–10.

Application

PROPHECY (Daniel) – What do we do when we read biblical prophecy: try to organize it, chart it, detail it, explain it, or just accept it? Looking back at all that happened during and after the life of Daniel, we can see that everything happened as God foretold. Daniel simply had to trust that God knew exactly what He was doing, since He exists in the past, present and future.

When we look at the prophecy of God that has still yet to become reality, we need to simply trust – like Daniel did – that God can only do what is infinitely best.



PROVIDENCE (Esther) – Did you know the Book of Esther never once mentions the name of God? Even though His name is never used, Esther and Mordecai's story shows God's providence in many circumstances (i.e. Mordecai overhearing a plot against Xerxes, Esther being in a perfect position to petition Xerxes for the protection of Jews, Mordecai being honored & put in a place of prominence, and more). It was exactly as Mordecai had said to his cousin Esther: "And who knows whether you have not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?"

"We look at life from the back side of the tapestry. And most of the time, what we see is loose threads, tangled knots and the like. But occasionally, God's light shines through the tapestry, and we get a glimpse of the larger design with God weaving together the darks and lights of existence." - John Piper



Questions

1. What are biblical prophecies that have yet to take place? List the Scripture reference where you find them.
2. The word 'providence' comes from the Latin 'pro' (before) and 'videntia' (to see); "to see beforehand." How have you seen the providence of God in your life as you experienced Him through obedience to His Word, even when you couldn't see the end result(s)?
3. How can the promises of God be both a comfort and a warning to us as believers?

Harmonized Gospels

Matthew, Mark, Luke

Colin Bartholomew

I. WHAT IS THE BIRTH ACCOUNT OF JESUS?

- A. Throughout the Old Testament prophets looked forward and testified about a MESSIAH who is to come.
 - Isaiah 7:14 & Isaiah 9:6
- B. Fulfilling these prophesies, Jesus did come. He was born of a virgin, not as a MIGHTY KING, but as a HUMBLE SERVANT.
 - Matthew 1:18-25—Jesus' UNIQUE and miraculous birth
 - Luke 2:1-21—Jesus' HUMBLE birth

II. WHAT QUALIFIES JESUS AS THE SON OF GOD?

- A. Power over NATURE
 - Matthew 8:23-27, Mark 4:35-41, Luke 8:22-25
- B. Power over SUPER NATURAL
 - Matthew 8:28-34, Mark 5:1-20, Luke 8:26-39
- C. Power over HEALTH&LIFE
 - Matthew 9:18-26, Mark 5:21-43, Luke 8:40-56
- D. Power over DIVINE (sin)
 - Matthew 9:1-8, Mark 2:1-12, Luke 5:17-26

III. WHAT WAS THE MESSAGE OF JESUS?

- A. Love THE LORD YOUR GOD
- B. Love YOUR NEIGHBOR
 - Matthew 22:34-40, Mark 12:28-34
- C. Repent & BELIEVE
 - Mark 1:15
 - Luke 19:1-10 The example of Zacchaeus

IV. WHAT DID JESUS DO?

- A. Jesus was CRUCIFIED
 - Matthew 27:51-56, Mark 15:38-41, Luke 23:44-49
- B. Jesus was BURIED
 - Matthew 27:57-60, Mark 15:42-46, Luke 23:50-54
- C. Jesus ROSE AGAIN
 - Matthew 28:1-8, Mark 16:1-8, Luke 24:1-11
- D. Jesus COMMISSIONS HIS FOLLOWERS
 - Matthew 28:16-20, Mark 16:14-18, Luke 24:44-49

Application

GOD

- ☐ We see the evidence of a loving God, that sought/is seeking to redeem His people
- ☐ We see the promise fulfilled through a miraculous birth, that only God could orchestrate, of His promised Savior
- ☐ We see Jesus prove his statements of authority by his power over health, life, nature, supernatural, and the divine
- ☐ We see Jesus' power over life itself by his death and resurrection

MAN

- ☐ In these gospels we see the the lostness of man
 - People who rely on religious position above the grace & mercy of God
 - People who seek the benefits and treasures of this world
- ☐ In these gospels we also see lives changed by the message of Jesus
 - People who repented and believed
 - The gospel changes the heart, not actions only

ACTION

- ☐ Jesus gave His followers commands:
 - Taught us to pray
 - Proclaim the Gospel
 - Make disciples
 - Minister in word and deed

Questions

1. How does the message of the gospel change my life? Inwardly? My day to day actions?
2. In what ways am I ministering to others in WORD and DEED? To believers? To unbelievers?
3. Am I daily praying for those around me (family, workplace, community) that they may have ears and hearts to hear the gospel



Sermon on the Mount

Matthew 5-7

Brandon Williamson

I. GODLY CHARACTER AND ATTITUDE

A. The introduction to Christ's sermon is aimed at getting every listener's heart ready to receive His commandments for Godly living—Matthew 5:3-10.

- 5:3—Blessed are the Poor in Spirit. Our heart must be humbled by submission to God's will (James 4:6-7).
- 5:4—Blessed are those who mourn. Our sin shames us, because of it our joy is turned into sorrow (James 4:8-9).
- 5:5—Blessed are the meek. Don't be impressed by wicked ways, and be embarrassed to approve of it (Psalm 37).
- 5:6—Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for Righteousness. We have an insatiable desire for the Word of God that sustains us (John 6:47-51).
- 5:7—Blessed are the merciful. We don't keep a record of wrongs, instead we forgive with the love that has first forgiven us (Ephesians 4:32).
- 5:8—Blessed are the Pure in heart. We transform our thoughts to God's will through the study of it versus the study of the world's views (Romans 12:2).
- 5:9—Blessed are the peacemakers. My words are aimed with the intent to encourage you, not divide us (Ephesians 4:29).
- 5:10—Blessed are those that are persecuted for righteousness sake. Shame only comes when we are silent in evangelism (Romans 1:16-17).

II. CHRIST REAFFIRMS THE LAW

A. Christ uses the body of His sermon to put to rest any doubt that He has come to abolish the law given in the Old Testament.

B. Not only does He endorse the Law of the Prophets, but also He makes sure there is no room for anyone to think they are getting it done apart from the Holy Spirit—Matthew 5:17-7:23.

- 5:21-26—Cain's murder didn't happen while standing in a field, but instead in his heart with misguided anger (Genesis 4:1-5).
- 5:27-32—Again Christ takes away the "I have never gone that far so I am good" excuse. Very simply love is not about me, lust in any way is (1 Corinthians 13:5).
- 5:33-37—Don't use God's name to stamp your promises, because it isn't going to be delivered.
- 5:38-42—Just read through the arrest, trial, sentencing, and death of Christ, and get back to me when you see Christ defend Himself.
- 5:43-48—There are no factions of people in the body of Christ (Luke 10:25-37).
- 6:1-8—The greatest of many examples Christ had of spending time in prayer with God apart from others. It wasn't the attention of others that built the foundation of His relationship with God, it was time spent with God alone (Matthew 26:36-46).
- 6:9-18, 7:7-11—Christ teaches prayer was given to us for adoration, confession, thanksgiving, and supplication.
- 7:19-24—God will only accept 100% commitment to Him (Luke 18:18-27).
- 7:1-6—My sin eliminates my power to indict a sentence against others (John 8:1-11).
- 7:12—Ephesians 4:32.
- 7:13-23—We need to know the difference between the counterfeit and the real thing (John 10:1-18).

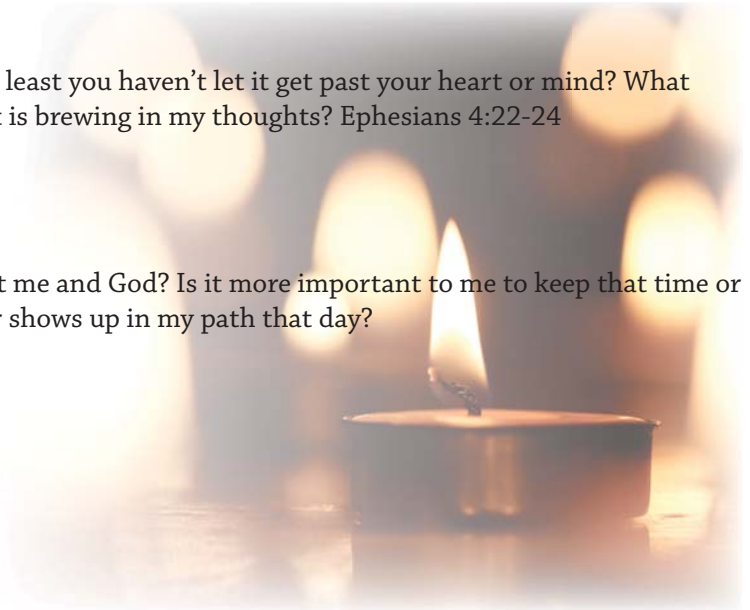
Application

Christ concludes His sermon with the parable of the two builders. As Christ teaches it is clear that both men have been properly equipped and trained for their task at hand. The blueprints have been given and materials have been purchased. Both men build homes that from the outside look just right. The only problem is one man heeded the instruction given to him and the other thought he could get away with one minor tweak. He wanted shelter but what was wrong with a little view to go with it. He was not 100% committed to valuable instruction he was given and in the end it cost him, as his home was washed away with the storm.

Christ knew the instruction He gave needed to be obeyed to be worth anything at all to the hearers, so he finished with this tale of warning. It is the same paradigm we see used over and over again. James 1:25, think right, do right, and then feel right. We have been given the correct instruction for Godly living, the blueprint you might say. We have been trained and given the tools and materials to succeed in our walk with God. As we go into the world our calling is obey it all the way through. If we do God will heap the blessings of His kingdom, His comfort, His earth, His fulfillment, His mercy, His face, His inheritance, and His heaven.

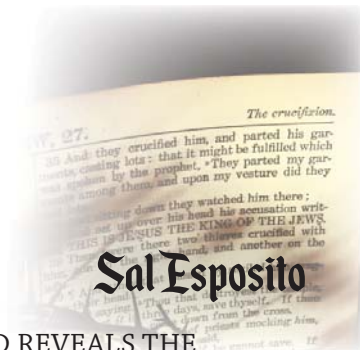
Questions

1. In what areas of my life do I see a display of character contrary to attitude of God? Which beatitude do I find myself lacking in the most? Where in my life do I desire the world's pleasures over the blessings of God?
2. In what areas do I rationalize my sin because at least you haven't let it get past your heart or mind? What scripture can I memorize to replace the sin that is brewing in my thoughts? Ephesians 4:22-24
3. What time do I have set apart in my day for just me and God? Is it more important to me to keep that time or can it moved around to accommodate whatever shows up in my path that day?



John's Gospel

John



I. THE BOOK OF JOHN IS ADDRESSED TO ALL THE PEOPLE OF THE WORLD AND REVEALS THE GLORIOUS TRUTH OF JESUS CHRIST.

A. The Book of John stands apart from the other three Gospels. Written nearly 30 years after Matthew, Mark and Luke, the purpose of John is dramatically evangelistic. John's language and tone emphasizes the focus of his book. Words such as "believe," "life," "love," "truth," "eternal" and "grace" are used more in the Book of John than in the other three Gospels combined.

- 3:1-21—The new birth discourse is unique to John.

B. John presents Jesus as the Great I am, creator of all things.

- 1:1, 1:14, 1:34, 5:24—Word of God, glory as of the one and only Son who came from the Father full of grace and truth, God's chosen One, whoever hears and believes has eternal life.
- Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world
- 4—Jesus is the Water of Life
- 6:35—Jesus is the Bread of Life.
- 8:12—Jesus is the Light of the world.
- 10:7—Jesus is the door.
- 10:11, 10:27-30—Jesus is the Good Shepherd.
- 14:6, 11:25-26—Jesus is the way, truth, life, resurrection. "The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?" Through Christ's own words, we understand the simple truth of His message. He then asks each of us to search our own hearts as to where our eternal hope rests.
- 15:5—Jesus is the true vine.
- 20:31—Jesus is the Son of God: "But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name."

II. OUTLINE OF THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

A. The following outline of the Gospel of John has been adapted from John W. Cawood in *Let's Know the Bible*.

- 1:1-12:50—Christ and the world.
 - 1:1-10—Christ reveals His identity to individuals and groups.
 - 11-12—How Christ was received.
- 13:1-17:26—Christ and the disciples.
 - Example to follow, relationship to enjoy, truth to believe and the prayer to ponder.
- 18:1-19:37—Christ crucified.
 - Garden, courtroom, Pilate's hall, and the cross.
- 19:38-21:25—Christ resurrected.
 - 19:38-40—Placed in the tomb.
 - 20:1-10—Raised from the dead.
 - 20:11-31—Seen after the resurrection.
 - 21:1-25—Instructions before the ascension.

Application

So, to sum up this short summary of The Gospel of John in Jesus's own words: "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. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him" (John 3:16-17).

IMMANUEL—"Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel"(which means, God with us) Luke1:23.

John presents Jesus as the Word become flesh. He also demonstrates Jesus to be the Jewish Messiah, the fulfillment of many OT themes, and the Son of God who was sent by God the Father to reveal the only true God and to provide redemption for humanity.

When we come to know Jesus in the Gospel of John we come to know God. Behold the Lamb of God! who takes away our sin (John 1:29). Those who embrace Jesus as their Lamb and their Lord will be saved from God's wrath. He came to seek and save lost sinners such as you and I.

The Book of John proclaims the wonderful Good News of Jesus Christ. Come, Repent, Believe.

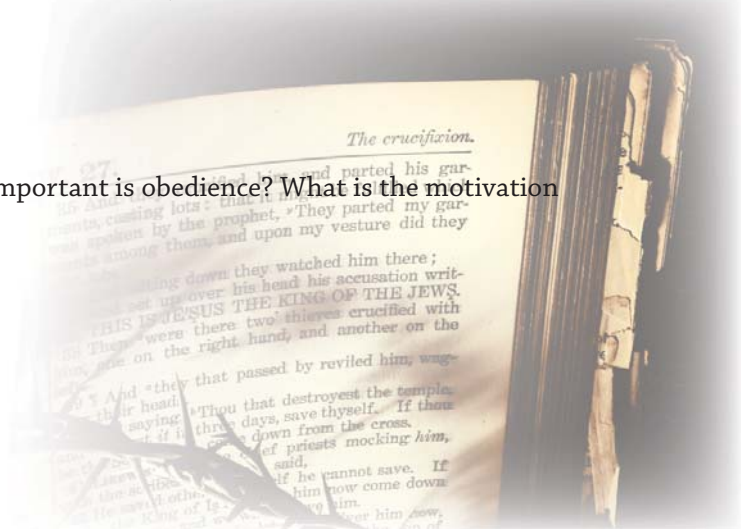
I love the Gospel of John because by it and through I come to know and love my Lord Jesus. The spirit of God used the Gospel of John to draw me to the Cross where I repented and believed.

"For God so loved Sal that He gave his one and only Son, that when he believes in Him he will not perish but have eternal life."

And you also.

Questions

1. Jesus is described as both the Lamb of God and the Shepherd of the sheeep. How is the sacrificial Lamb who made perfect atonement for our sins able to be our Good Shepherd?
2. How does knowing that Jesus is God—the Son of God sent by the Father to reveal Himself—provide assurance of God's love for us?
3. Study John 14:15, 14:21-24, and 15:10. How important is obedience? What is the motivation for our obedience?



Early Church under Peter

Acts 1-12

Mike & Karen Saeli

I. THE PROMISE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

- A. To give the apostles confidence to spread the Word Jesus stayed with them for 40 days speaking of the Kingdom of God—Acts 1:3-2:4.
 - 1:8—The Holy Spirit, the indwelling presence of Christ, will empower bold witness of the gospel to all earth.
 - 1:9—The dramatic and powerful ascension of Jesus provides additional inspiration to spread the Word.
 - 2:1-4—Gathered on the day of Pentecost, a mighty wind and tongues of fire fill them with the Holy Spirit.

II. THE GOSPEL IS PROCLAIMED

- A. By the power of the Holy Spirit Peter preaches boldly to all of Jerusalem—Acts 2:14-41.
 - 2:38—The people ask what they must do to be saved, Peter responds; repent and be baptized.
 - 2:39—The promise of forgiveness of sins and the Holy Spirit for anyone who the Lord calls.
 - 2:41—Three thousand people believed and were baptized.
- B. The lame beggar is healed—Acts 3:1-26.
 - 3:16—Peter gives God the glory as healer, the faith that is given through Jesus.
 - 3:19-26—Peter proves Jesus is the Christ, reminding the crowd of the Old Testament prophets that foretold.
- C. Peter and John speak boldly before the counsel—Acts 4.
 - 4:1-3—The high priests and Sadducees were angry at Peter and John because they were leading people to Jesus Christ, whom they crucified.
 - 4:8—Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit boldly exalts the name of Jesus Christ as healer of the crippled man.
 - 4:12—Salvation can only be found in the name of the Lord Jesus.
 - 4:19-20—They were threatened to stop preaching in the name of Jesus but they responded that they must obey God, not man.

III. THE GROWTH OF THE CHURCH

- A. The fellowship of believers had everything in common, and great grace was upon them all—Acts 4:32-37.
- B. Ananias and Sapphira—Acts 5:1-11.
 - 5:4—With Sapphira's knowledge Ananias sells land and lies to God by holding back money. They both die swiftly.
 - 5:14—Multitudes of people were lead to the Lord.
 - 5:41—The apostles were beaten for preaching the Word. They rejoiced that they were worthy to be persecuted.
- C. Stephen was accused by false witnesses and imprisoned—Acts 6:8.
 - 7:54-60—As Stephen is stoned he prayed for God to forgive his killers as Jesus did on the cross.

IV. UNLIKELY SERVANT

- A. Saul's persecution of the church helps to spread the gospel—Acts 8.
 - 8:26-39—An angel of the Lord sends Philip to lead an Ethiopian Eunuch to Christ. Philip baptizes him and he carries the Word back to Ethiopia.
- B. Saul of Tarsus, a Pharisee and persecutor of believers is converted by Jesus on road to Damascus—Acts 9.
 - 9:16—Saul will become a chosen servant and will learn what it means to suffer for Christ.
 - 9: 20-22—Saul immediately becomes a bold witness for Jesus as Christ in Damascus and then in Jerusalem.
 - 9:31—After Saul's conversion the persecution of the church diminishes and the church multiplies.
 - 9:32-43—Through Peter, the Lord heals Aeneas and restores Dorcas back to life. In Lydda and Joppa many believe in Jesus Christ. (These towns have roads that lead to Egypt, Syria, and Jerusalem - and so the Word spread).
 - 9:34 Peter gives all the glory to God.

V. THE GENTILES HEAR THE WORD—Acts 10-12.

- 10:15 In a vision God declares to Peter that Jesus also came for the Gentiles (non-Jews).
- 10:34-35—Anyone, not just the Jew that fears and obeys Him will be granted salvation.
- 10: 44-45—The gift of the Holy Spirit is poured out on the Gentiles
- 11:15-18—Peter defends the Gentiles inclusion in the church.
- 11:17—The Holy Spirit was given to the Gentiles by God who can stand in his way?
- 11:26—Saul taught a great many people in Antioch where they we first called Christians (of the party of Christ).

VI. HEROD REJECTS GOD—Acts 12.

- 12:1-5—Herod the King gained favor with the Jews when he killed James and imprisoned Peter.
- 12:11—The Lord sent an angel to rescue Peter from prison.
- 12:13-17—Peter tells the story of his rescue from prison to encourage his brothers to continue in the faith. (Herod would surely be looking for Peter so he leaves his brothers to keep them safe)
- 12:20-25—In a speech to his people they praise him as having a voice from God.
- 12:22—Herod does not give the Glory to God.
- 12:23—For rejecting God and persecuting James and Peter, God plagues him with worms and he dies horribly.
- 12:24— The church continues to grow.

Application

The Holy Spirit gives us strength to be bold for Christ

- ☐ Being bold cost the apostles their lives. What have you risked?
- ☐ Do you ignore the utterances of the Holy Spirit so you will be accepted by the world? Do you obey God or man?
- ☐ God gives us opportunities to share the Word. When was the last time you spoke into someone's life that needed it?
- ☐ Are you bold in the power of the Holy Spirit and trust in the Lord? Or do you worry what people will say? Do you turn your back on Christ?

God worked miracles through the apostles and brought multitudes to faith in Christ Jesus.

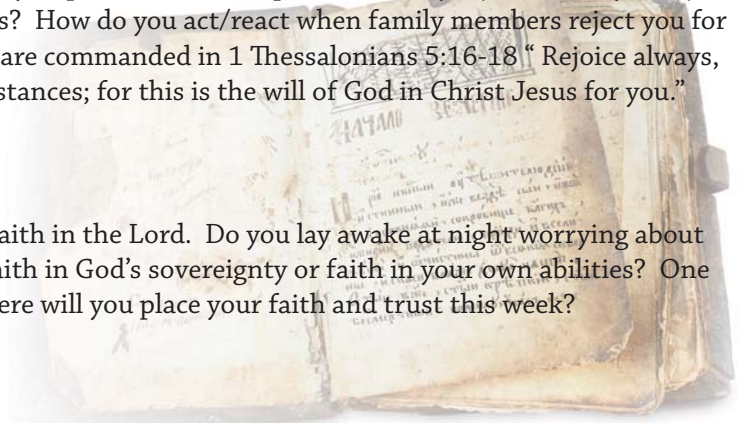
- ☐ Don't we all love to be congratulated and revel in the recognition of our accomplishments? Who do you give glory to? People come to the Lord for His Glory not by our works.
- ☐ When God works good things through you do you pat yourself on the back for following Him? In Ephesians 4:12 we are called to serve to build up the body of Christ.
- ☐ King Herod kept the glory for himself and was eaten by worms then he died.

The Apostles spread the Word at great cost.

- ☐ Ask yourself what does it really cost me to speak for Christ in this country?
- ☐ We think that dirty looks and ridicule is persecution. The apostles were imprisoned, tortured, and killed for their faith. How do you measure up?
- ☐ When was the last time you left your comfort zone to evangelize? We are not all like Peter but there are times when you need to stand-up and be counted as a Christian no matter the cost.

Questions

1. In Acts 7, Stephen stands before the Chief priests and defends the Christian Faith. He stood boldly preaching the righteousness of Jesus as Christ. This week will you take the opportunities that God gives you to stand for Him? Or will you turn away and deny Him? It is your choice to follow and obey and live by faith and trust or deny Him and incur his wrath.
2. In Acts 5:40-42, the apostles were beaten, probably flogged like Jesus, and threatened to stop preaching the Word. They praised God for finding them worthy of persecution. Scripture said they rejoiced. Do you rejoice when non-believers ridicule you for your beliefs? How do you act/react when family members reject you for following Christ and obeying God's Word? We are commanded in 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 "Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you."
3. In Acts 12:6-11 Peter exhibits great trust and faith in the Lord. Do you lay awake at night worrying about what might happen tomorrow? Do you have faith in God's sovereignty or faith in your own abilities? One leads to peace, the latter to worry and sin. Where will you place your faith and trust this week?



Early Church under Paul

Acts 13-28

Jason and Alice Nightingale

I. PAUL'S FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY—Acts 13-14

- A. In Antioch, Barnabas and Paul were set apart for mission work to which the Holy Spirit called them—Acts 13:1-3.
- B. The new missionaries bring the gospel to the Island of Cyprus—Acts 13:3-12.
- C. Paul is invited to share the gospel in the synagogue at Antioch in Pisidia—Acts 13:13-52.
- D. Paul and Barnabas receive a divided response as they share the gospel with the Jews and Gentiles in Iconium and Lystra—Acts 14:1-20.
- E. Paul and Barnabas revisit Lystra, Iconium and Antioch at Pisidia to strengthen and encourage the new believers on their way back to Antioch in Syria—Acts 14:21-23.

II. THE JERUSALEM COUNCIL—Acts 15:1-35

- A. Paul and Barnabas confront men from Judea teaching circumcision—Acts 15:1-5.
- B. Peter and James conclude that Gentiles should not be required to circumcise and that salvation for both Jew and Gentile is obtained by grace in Jesus Christ—Acts 15:6-21.
- C. The Jerusalem Council commissions a letter to the Gentiles—Acts 15:22-35.

III. PAUL'S SECOND MISSIONARY JOURNEY—Acts 15:36-18:21

- A. Paul and Barnabas have a sharp disagreement over including John Mark on the mission trip—Acts 15:36-41.
- B. Paul travels with Silas and Timothy to deliver the council letter—Acts 16:1-5.
- C. Paul is called by the Lord to bring the gospel to Macedonia—Acts 16:6-15.
- D. Paul and Silas are thrown in prison—Acts 16:16-40.
- E. Paul proclaims the gospel in Thessalonica, Berea and Athens—Acts 17:1-34.
- F. Paul befriends Aquilla and Priscilla in Corinth—Acts 18:1-21.

IV. PAUL'S THIRD MISSIONARY JOURNEY—Acts 18:22-21:16

- A. The gospel and new baptism in Christ is taught in Asia—Acts 18:24-19:10.
- B. God performs miracles and confronts idol worship in Ephesus—Acts 19:11-41.
- C. Paul ministers to the people of Macedonia, Greece and Asia—Acts 20:1-38.
- D. On the way to Jerusalem, a prophet predicts Paul's arrest—Acts 21:1-15.
- E. Paul arrives in Jerusalem amidst false accusations—Acts 21:17-31.

V. PAUL'S CAPTIVITY—Acts 21:32-28:31

- A. Despite being arrested in Jerusalem, Paul continues to make a defense of his divine calling—Acts 21:32-23:11.
- B. The Jews plot to kill Paul is avoided by sending him under heavy guard to Felix in Caesarea—Acts 23:12-23:35.
- C. Felix hears Paul's case and decides to put off a decision—Acts 24:1-27.
- D. Accusations are brought against Paul, however the authorities find nothing that deserves death or imprisonment—Acts 25:1-26:32.
- E. The governor grants Paul's appeal to Caesar and sends him to Rome—Acts 27:1-28:10.
- F. Paul arrives in Rome and for two years proclaims the gospel to all who came to him—Acts 28:11-28:31.

Application

Paul's life provides a picture of gospel-centered ministry in action. Throughout Acts 13 – 28, we see the power of the Holy Spirit enabling Paul to proclaim the gospel with resolution in the face of persecution, compassion for the lost, and an ability to clearly articulate the gospel message. Paul's life reminds us to:

- ❑ Always be prepared to give an account (Read 1 Peter 3:15)

Just as Paul was ready and willing to share the gospel in all circumstances, we too are called to be prepared to give an account of the hope we have in Christ. (References: Acts 13:15-16, Acts 17:2-3, Acts 17:19-20, Acts 19:1-4, Acts 24:10, Acts 26:1)

- ❑ Encourage one another (Read Hebrews 10:24)

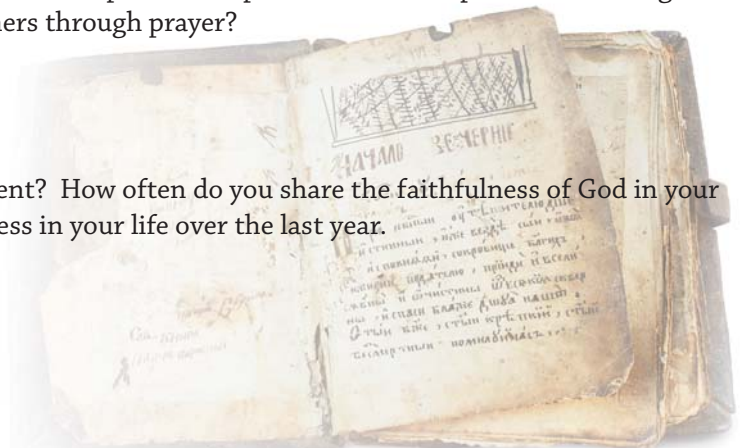
Paul encouraged the people to whom he ministered. We are called to encourage one another regularly. (References: Acts 14:21-22, Acts 15:41, Acts 27:34-36)

- ❑ Be encouraged by the faithfulness of God (Read John 16:33)

The book of Acts describes accounts in which Paul encourages fellow believers by sharing how God is at work in the lives of those he has been in contact with. We also read of Paul himself being encouraged when brothers in Christ greet him in Rome. When we hear of God's faithfulness in the lives of others, may we be encouraged by God's great grace and mercy! (References: Acts 15:12, Acts 21:19-20, Acts 28:15)

Questions

1. How do you prepare yourself to give an account of the hope we have in Christ? What circumstance do you find most comfortable to share the gospel? Why are you comfortable? What circumstance do you find it most difficult to share the gospel? Why is it difficult?
2. How can we regularly encourage our brothers and sisters in Christ? In what ways do you encourage others? When someone is faced with a trial, how have you used personal experiences and Scripture to encourage them to persevere? How can we encourage others through prayer?
3. Why is the faithfulness of God an encouragement? How often do you share the faithfulness of God in your life with others? Make a list of God's faithfulness in your life over the last year.



Condemnation

Romans 1:1-3:21



I. SALVATION BY FAITH ALONE—Romans 1.

A. There is a shift from Gentiles being disallowed in the faith, to being heirs in Jesus Christ—Romans 1:1-7.

- 1:7—Those that are God’s people are called by Him personally.
- 1:5—Salvation is by faith alone, and this is how the Gentiles are redeemed.

B. They are not to be quiet about their faith, but “spread it all over the world”—Romans 1:8-17.

- 1:14—Paul realizes his evangelizing and discipling work is all encompassing.
- 1:16—Caring for all people allows Paul to witness to all people.
- 1:17—Paul realizes that he does not know who will come to faith, but he needs to be faithful to preach (Habakkuk 2:4).

C. God delivers them over—Romans 1:18-32.

- 1:20—No one has an excuse before God.
- 1:21—The perversion of man seems to have no potential end.
- 1:24—God has given them over to every type of wickedness, including homosexual practices.
- 1:25—They replace God with their own gods, which includes their desires.
- 1:32—Although they know what to do, they love sin more than the redemption and eternal life found in Christ.

II. EXAMINE OUR LIVES—Romans 2.

A. Paul’s conclusion is instead of passing judgment to examine their own lives—Romans 2:1-16.

- 2:7—No human is without sin, and no one has nay escape from repetitive decisions to sin without Christ.
- 2:10—Following Christ does lead to a changed life, and the reward for a changed life is “glory and honor for those that do good.”

B. Personal conviction—Romans 2:17-29.

- 2:27—The purpose of conviction is to change our own lives, inner circumcision rather than outer.
- 2:29—The relationship with God is personal. It begins with heart change that pleases God.

III. NO OUTER ACTIONS CAN SAVE US—Romans 3.

A. Apart from justification (Christ’s imputed righteousness apart from law), all people are equally condemned—Romans 3:1-31.

- 3:1-8—Our unfaithfulness does not nullify God’s faithfulness.
- 3:9-21—No one has any advantage before God.
- 3:20—There is none righteous. The Holy Spirit shows us how to change through the Bible.

Application

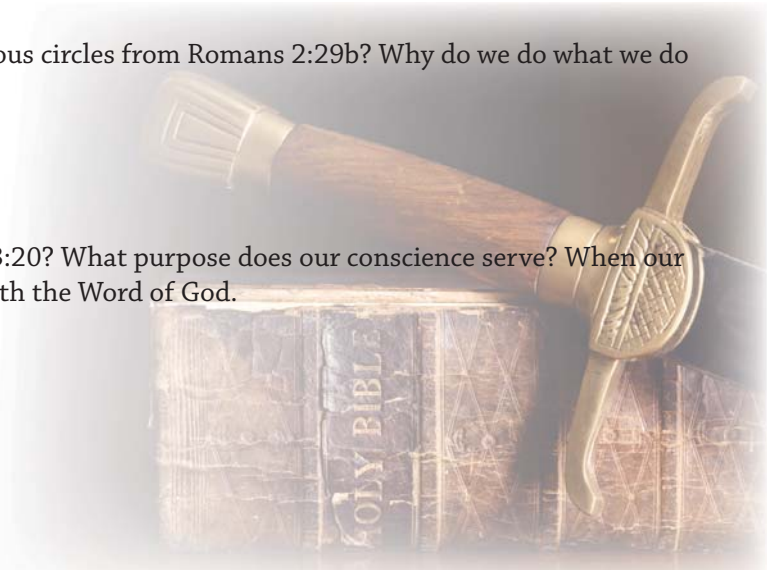
A right understanding of the doctrine of condemnation helps us grow in necessary fear of God. Without fear of God there is no wisdom (Job 28:28, Proverbs 1:7).

Condemnation seems to be a polarizing topic, but William Lane Craig gives insight to objections they might have. In his book *On Guard* he discusses God's desire to see everyone come to salvation (2 Peter 3:9). So why must people be condemned for eternity? He refers to Ezekiel 18:32 where God says, "For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone, declares the Lord GOD; so turn, and live." Craig points to the fact that in a sense God doesn't "send anybody to hell...If we make a free and well-informed decision to reject Christ's sacrifice for our sin, then God has no choice but to give us what we deserve." God must destroy evil, and so, as these verses in Romans show, the godless will receive this wrath for their rejection of the only purifying agent.

When reading Romans 1, it is easy to feel a separation between ourselves and those that have darkened hearts. As Christians, we cannot forget the moment that Christ gave us freedom. Paul's point is that a Christian won't gloat because of other's darkness. We need to remember just how deep, sad, and lonely that darkness was. This is a shift in the mind from ignoring the lost, to caring enough to try and show them the light. This light is far greater than any earthly experience. God's attributes are why Romans 2-3 goes on to prove the point that every single individual could live in complete unrepentant sin, spend eternity in hell, and God would still be faithful. Our sin does not have any bearing on His faithfulness. The great news is that God loves us so much that He poured out his wrath on his Son so that those who believe and receive Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord are saved from condemnation. God provides change through the Holy Spirit, who shows us what the Scriptures say and empowers us in the victory over sin wrought by Christ's death, burial, and resurrection. This is the gospel of which Paul is not ashamed—Romans 1:16.

Questions

1. What is the conclusion Paul makes in Romans chapter 2 after talking about those with futile minds in Romans chapter 1? What way do you struggle viewing the Bible as application for other's lives instead of your own first?
2. What lesson can be learned by those in religious circles from Romans 2:29b? Why do we do what we do (In secret and in public)?
3. What purpose does the law serve—Romans 3:20? What purpose does our conscience serve? When our conscience convicts us, make sure it aligns with the Word of God.



Justification

Romans 3:21-5:21



I. JUSTIFICATION

- A. “Just as if I had never sinned” or peace with God is all about the grace of God made possible by faith alone and not by our works—Romans 3:21-3:28.
- 3:21-3:22—The righteousness of God is apart from the law through faith in Jesus Christ
 - 3:23-3:25—All have sinned and fallen short of God’s glory and can be justified by His grace with the sin debt paid by a gift made possible by the full payment through Christ’s blood, received by faith.
 - 3:25-3:26—God’s righteousness is shown by His forbearance, or patient restraint, and to reveal Him as just to justify those whose faith is in Jesus Christ.
 - 3:27-3:28—We cannot boast in our imputed righteousness for it is by faith not works of the law
- B. Abraham is a prime example of being justified by faith. The beauty for us is that his faith was what God said was credited to him for righteousness. We see then that this righteousness is available to us all—Romans 3:29-4:25.
- 3:29-3:31—God is God of both Jews and Gentiles who through faith will justify the circumcised and uncircumcised.
 - 4:1-4:8—Abraham was not justified by works but “believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness”.
 - 4:9-4:12—The blessing of God’s righteousness by faith is for both circumcised (Jew) and uncircumcised (Gentile) even as Abraham was justified by faith while uncircumcised.
 - 4:13-4:17—The promise to make Abraham and his offspring “heir of the world” was not through the law but through faith.
 - 4:18-4:25—Abraham believed God’s promise in hope despite his age and Sarah’s being barren. He believed God was good for His promise. Not for Abraham’s sake only but for our sakes also.
- C. We can have peace with God through our faith. We can rejoice in our suffering because of the hope and promise of God—Romans 5:1-5
- 5:1—Through faith we are justified and have peace with God through Jesus Christ our Lord.
 - 5:2—Through Jesus Christ we stand in the grace of God and rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.
 - 5:3-5:5—We also rejoice in our suffering for Jesus Christ, as it produces perseverance (endurance), godly character, and hope (assurance).
- D. The curse of death resulting from one man’s sin and the deliverance from the punishment of sin made possible by one man’s obedience is available to us by faith, Praise the Lord! Romans 5:6-5:21.
- 5:6-5:8—For though one would scarcely be willing to die for a good person Christ died for use while we were still unrepentant sinners.
 - 5:9-5:11—We are justified by His blood and saved from the wrath of God. We are reconciled by His death while enemies, shall be saved by His life (resurrection), and we rejoice in God through Jesus Christ.
 - 5:12-5:21—By one man’s (Adam) trespass, sin came into the world and the death of all men through sin because all have sinned. By one Man’s (Jesus Christ) obedience many more have the grace of God and can be made righteous.

Application

- ❑ Hallelujah God's righteousness is available to all who through faith believe the gospel of Jesus Christ.
- ❑ Jesus Christ satisfied the sin debt through His blood on the cross so that God could be just and the justifier of all who have faith in Jesus Christ.
- ❑ Like Abraham we have the opportunity to, by faith, believe God and have our faith accounted as righteousness. Not by the works of the law by which no one can be justified but solely by faith in Jesus Christ.
- ❑ By faith we can have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Not only that but by persevering through tribulations and trials we can build godly character and have hope. Not empty wishful hope, but assurance in the love of God through His Holy Spirit.
- ❑ Imagine that all of the sin in the world – murder, drunkenness, envy, lust, hatred, malice, greed, death – all of the destruction – hurricanes, tornadoes, floods, blizzards, tsunamis – all are a result of one man and one sin.
- ❑ Likewise, praise the Lord, the grace of God – the ability by faith to be reconciled to the almighty, righteous, Holy God of the universe – to have peace with God – is made possible by one Man and one act of obedience.

Questions

1. What is the purpose of the Law?
 - Was there sin before the law?
 - Is my sin a result of the law?
2. By what is a man justified?
 - Do I earn my salvation by keeping the law?
 - Are my works counted to me as righteousness?
3. Why do we glory in tribulations?
 - Does God like to see us suffer?
 - Is perseverance necessary for sanctification?



Discipleship Defined

Romans 6-16



Raffi Wright

- I. LIFE IN THE SPIRIT—Romans 8
 - A. Words of encouragement—Romans 8:1-2.
 - B. Christians are led by the Spirit of God as opposed to the Flesh—Romans 8:3-17.
 - C. The glorification of our Bodies—Romans 8:18-25.
 - D. The Called of God—Romans 8:26-31.
 - E. If God is for us, who can be against us—Romans 8:31-38?
- II. CHILDREN OF THE PROMISE THROUGH FAITH IN CHRIST—Romans 9
 - A. Sorrow and unceasing pain for Jews who reject the gospel message—Romans 9:1-5.
 - B. A proper perspective of the true Israel verses Israel of the flesh—Romans 9:6-13.
 - C. A rhetorical question regarding God making sovereign choices between individuals and nations—Romans 9:19-29.
 - D. Jew and Gentile contrasted in a heart wrenching way for Paul—Romans 9:30-33.
- III. THE WORD OF FAITH—Romans 10
 - A. The state of the Jew (Paul's kinsmen according to the flesh)—Romans 10:1-7.
 - B. The need for the verbal communication and preaching of God's Good news—Romans 10:8-15.
 - C. The gospel message fell on deaf ears—Romans 10:16-21.
- IV. A REMNANT OF ISRAEL—Romans 11
 - A. God has not rejected all the Jews—Romans 11:1-10.
 - B. The results of the hard hearted Jews who rejected the Messiah—Romans 11:11-16.
 - C. Illustration of the olive trees—Romans 11:16-21.
 - D. A call to Reasoning—Romans 11:25-27.
 - E. All are under sin and in need of God's Mercy—Romans 11:28-32.
- V. LIVING SACRIFICES—Romans 12
 - A. The Christian is a "living Sacrifice" to God—Romans 12:1-2.
 - B. Exhortations Against Self Conceit—Romans 12:3-8.
 - C. Love of truth embodies the Christians' duties—Romans 12:9-21.
- VI. SUBMISSION TO AUTHORITIES—Romans 13
 - A. The Christian is to be subject to existing Civil Government—Romans 13:1-2.
 - B. The Christian's relationship to his "neighbor"—Romans 13:8-10.
 - C. Christians are to grow in holiness recognizing that our salvation is near—Romans 13:11-14.
- VII. THE WEAK AND THE STRONG—Romans 14
 - A. Receiving the weak in Faith—Romans 14:1-8.
 - B. Let us not destroy one whom Christ died for—Romans 14:9-16.
 - C. Purpose of not pressing liberties—Romans 14:17-23.
- VIII. UNITY AMONG BELIEVERS—Romans 15
 - A. A Call to Bear Others Weaknesses—Romans 15:1-4.
 - B. A Call for Unity—Romans 15:5-13.
 - C. Paul's reason for writing the epistle to the Romans—Romans 15:14-21.
 - D. Paul's intentions to visit Rome after discharging his duties to the needy saints in Jerusalem—Romans 15:22-29.
 - E. A prayer request—Romans 15:30-33.
- IX. COMMENDATIONS AND GREETINGS—Romans 16
 - A. Phoebe of the church in Cenchreae (first of five churches mentioned in Romans 16)—Romans 16:1-2.
 - B. Additional salutations are directed toward saints that were already in Rome—Romans 16:3-14.
 - C. The fourth and fifth churches Mentioned by Paul—Romans 16:14-16.
 - D. Paul delivers a Commandment from God that the purity of the Church may continue—Romans 16:17-20.
 - E. Paul sends greetings from Christians that are with him—Romans 16:21-24.
 - F. The Farewell Statement—Romans 16:25-27.

Application

The apostle Paul draws a conclusion to all that has been said to this point in the book of Romans. Man has sinned and due the punishment thereof (Rom. 3:23; 6:23). God, in His rich mercy and grace; however, provides a way of escape for man called justification (cf. Rom. 3:24-26). Jesus is the propitiatory sacrifice for man's sins and thereby has paid the high price for our iniquities (i.e., redeemed us) (Rom. 3:25; 5:8). Those who gain access into this grace have been justified by obedience to Christ's commandments (Rom. 5:1ff; 6:16ff). Said justification does not cause one to be immune from sin (chapter 7). Once justified; however, there is now "no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 8:1). Romans 8 is a chapter of encouragement.

Romans 9 teaches us that it is not natural children that are God's children, but rather children of the promise. The promise comes through faith in Christ not by works of the Law. He uses the example of the Israelites, who pursued righteousness by the law without obtaining it, and Gentiles, who pursued it by faith and obtained righteousness through Jesus Christ. Chapter 9 is a sobering call that faith in Christ alone saves us. Romans 10 teaches the word of faith. By confessing with our mouth that Jesus Christ is Lord and by believing this in our hearts, we are saved—nothing more, nothing less. Christ is the end of the law so we can be justified and made righteous by faith in Jesus alone. Faith comes by hearing this gospel message and responding to it. Paul encourages us that "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." Romans 11 discusses that, although Israel as a whole rejected Jesus as the Messiah, there is still a remnant chosen by grace. Their dismissal of Jesus has blessed the world because this salvation message was then opened to the Gentiles. However, they have not fallen beyond recovery, and in the end Israel will be saved through faith. God's plan includes bestowing mercy upon all mankind. Romans 12 encourages us to be living sacrifices in view of the mercy we have received in Christ Jesus. We do this through renewing our minds to the truth of God's word, serving and blessing the body of Christ through our gifts and above all by loving and being devoted to one another. Romans 12 is a call to live a life of peace, faithfully serving the Lord in all things and overcoming the evil of the world by faith.

Romans 13 is a charge to clothe ourselves with Christ Jesus and live as His children in this present world. We are to submit to authorities and to pay respect where it is due. We are to wake up and serve the Lord out of love by showing others the light of the gospel. Romans 14 encourages us to consider everything we do as if we are doing it for the Lord. It is a call to do what leads to peace and mutual edification within the body of Christ. We are not to condemn or look down on those who are weaker in faith, but be fully convinced of what is acceptable in our own minds, as everything that does not come from faith is sin. Romans 15 stresses unity within the body of believers. We are to take the encouragement from the scriptures and Christ as our example in how we live accepting one another. Paul reminds us that we are competent ministers of the gospel taking in and internalizing the amazing grace that was covered in the previous chapters. Now it is our job to share it with others. Romans 16 is Paul's final farewell and instruction to the believers in Rome. He is affectionate toward them and gives final coaching to watch out for false doctrines and teachings and those who would cause division among them. He reminds them that Satan will soon be crushed under their feet and that His gospel is able to hold them until the day of Jesus.

Questions

1. Who is unable to please God? Why?
2. In what ways does the Spirit of God transform people? What evidence of the Holy Spirit's control can people see in your life?
3. What part do our thoughts and our words have in our response to salvation?
4. What promise is given to people who believe and confess that Jesus is Lord?
5. How does God's righteousness motivate us to godly behavior?
6. What aspects of God's character are shown through his plan of salvation?
7. Why did people think that God must have rejected the Israelites?
8. How do people try to earn God's grace? Why can we be confident that God's grace is for all who will receive it?

Paul to Corinth 1

1 Corinthians



- I. INTRODUCTION—1 Corinthians 1:1-9
- II. DIVISIONS IN THE CHURCH—1 Corinthians 1:10, 4:21
 - A. The fact of the divisions—1 Corinthians 1:10-17.
 - B. The causes of the divisions—1 Corinthians 1:18, 4:13.
 - 1:18, 3:4—A wrong conception of the Christian message.
 - 3:5, 4:5—A wrong conception of Apostles and ministers.
 - 4:6-13—A wrong conception of the Church.
 - C. Exhortation to end the divisions—1 Corinthians 4:14-21.
- III. MORAL AND ETHICAL DISORDERS IN THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH—1 Corinthians 5-6
 - A. Laxity in church discipline—1 Corinthians 5.
 - B. Lawsuits before non-Christian judges—1 Corinthians 6:1-11.
 - C. Sexual immorality—1 Corinthians 6:12-20.
- IV. INSTRUCTION ON MARRIAGE—1 Corinthians 7
 - A. General principles—1 Corinthians 7:1-7.
 - B. The problems of the married—1 Corinthians 7:8-24.
 - C. The problems of the unmarried—1 Corinthians 7:25-40.
- V. INSTRUCTION ON QUESTIONABLE PRACTICES—1 Corinthians 8:1, 11:1
 - A. The principles involved—1 Corinthians 8.
 - B. The principles illustrated—1 Corinthians 9.
 - C. A warning from the history of Israel—1 Corinthians 10:1-22.
 - D. The principles applied—1 Corinthians 10:23, 11:1.
- VI. INSTRUCTION ON PUBLIC WORSHIP—1 Corinthians 22:1, 14:40.
 - A. Propriety in roles—1 Corinthians 11:2-16.
 - B. The Lord's Supper—1 Corinthians 11:17-34.
 - C. Spiritual gifts—1 Corinthians 12-14.
 - 12:1-3—The test of the gifts.
 - 12:4-11—The unity of the gifts
 - 12:12-31a—The diversity of the gifts.
 - 12:31b, 13:13—The necessity of exercising the gifts in love.
 - 14:1-25—The superiority of prophecy over tongues.
 - 14:26-40—Rules governing public worship.
- VII. INSTRUCTIONS ON THE RESURRECTION—1 Corinthians 15
 - A. The power of the resurrection—1 Corinthians 15:1-34.
 - B. The raising of certain objections—1 Corinthians 15:35-57.
 - C. The final—1 Corinthians 15:58.
- VIII. CONCLUSION: PRACTICAL AND PERSONAL MATTERS—1 Corinthians 16

Application

The book of 1st Corinthians is a letter from Paul. The Apostle Paul wrote it about 56 A.D. The key personalities of this book are the Apostle Paul, Timothy and also Chloe's household. Paul's purpose in writing this letter to the church in Corinth was to address and correct the immorality and divisions that had arisen among them.

Chapters 1-4, Paul received reports of problems in the church in Corinth and therefore addresses their problems and disorders, *there are quarrels among you*—1 Corinthians 1:11. Paul asks believers to *consider your calling*—1 Corinthians 1:26-30. He then declares three times that God *has chosen* them and *because of Him you are in Christ Jesus*. This truth is joyful and relieving to believers that God is in control and is the orchestrator of our lives.

In chapters 5-11, Paul exposes all of the immorality that was occurring in the church at Corinth. These include sexual immorality, issues of marriage, and lawsuits with other believers. *Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God*—1 Corinthians 6:9. Paul warns believers to be careful, *For you have been bought with a price*—1 Corinthians 6:20. This is a great place to stop and examine our life, my life.

In chapters 12-14, he clears up some of the confusion about practices of worship. He corrects difficult doctrines that had caused divisions. Some of these differences were the role of women in worship, the use of spiritual gifts, and observing the Lord's Supper. *For God is not a God of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints*—1 Corinthians 14:33.

Chapters 15-16 consist of Paul dealing with the topic of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. This is the topic that is *of first importance* to Paul. It is here we find the most important information on planet Earth, the Gospel of Jesus Christ in verses 1-4. *Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures*—1 Corinthians 15:1-4.

Questions

1. How does "the word of the cross" (i.e., the wisdom and power of God) impact my life and my conversations—1 Corinthians 2:6-10a? How frequently do I reflect on the saving and sustaining power of the cross? When others seek my counsel how do I naturally bring up the cross in conversation? In all honesty, is the cross of Christ my only hope and source of confidence, or do I trust in other things (e.g., gifts, resources, experience)?
2. How have I neglected the person and work of the Holy Spirit—1 Corinthians 2:10b-13? Have I sought comprehension and insight from the Holy Spirit in my Bible study? Have I asked the Holy Spirit to reveal His will for my vocation and family life? What has happened when I have obediently pursued God through the Holy Spirit? What has He shown me from His Word? How has He directed me in my personal circumstances?
3. While I will never know the mind of God, I have been given "the mind of Christ"—1 Corinthians 2:16. How can I cultivate this? Read Philippians 2:5. In what ways do I need to grow in exemplifying Jesus Christ? Where am I proving myself faithful? Where do I struggle? Who can help me progress to the next level of spiritual maturity?

Paul to Corinth 2

2 Corinthians



Josh Jones

- I. A GREETING FROM TIMOTHY AND PAUL, THEN AN EXHORTATION—2 Corinthians 1-2
 - A. Paul exhorts the Corinthians with a reason for suffering, to comfort others—2 Corinthians 1:3-5.
 - 1:5—Paul gives examples of how God has shown Himself faithful in times of peril. He points out that trials are for our benefit, and also help us minister to others in similar circumstances.
 - B. Confrontation—2 Corinthians 1:12-2:11.
 - 1:12-24—Paul explains that he wanted to visit but to spare another painful visit, he references a letter written out of much affliction and anguish to let them know of his abundant love for them.
 - 2:1-5—Paul both went to Corinth, and wrote a letter to confront sinners there. It is not only right to lovingly confront one another, it is our obligation (Galatians 6:1). We know from Matthew 7:3-5 to examine our own lives first, and from Ephesians 4:15 to speak truth in love.
 - 2:5-11—Paul instructs them to forgive the sorrowful sinner within the church.
- II. FREEDOM, HOPE, AND LIGHT—2 Corinthians 3-4
 - A. Paul calls the Corinthians his letter of recommendation, and elaborates that if Moses' face shone at the glory of the ten commandments, should there not be much more glory from the ministry of the Spirit.
 - 3:17—Where the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty (freedom from sinning, Romans 6).
 - B. 2 Corinthians 4 proclaims the light of the gospel, but that some have had minds blinded by the god of this world.
 - 4:7-9—Christians have the treasure of hope in Christ. Paul encourage them that the current affliction is preparing them for eternal glory without equal.
- III. IF THE BODY IS DESTROYED, WE HAVE A HEAVENLY DWELLING—2 Corinthians 5-6
 - A. Compelled by the love of Christ, Paul continues to preach the gospel—2 Corinthians 5:14.
 - B. Anyone in Christ is a new creation, given the ministry of reconciliation as Christ's ambassador—2 Corinthians 5:17-20.
 - 6:2—Today is the day of salvation.
 - Paul gives a potent reminder to be separate from the world and not unequally yoked with unbelievers.
- IV. STRIVING FOR HOLINESS IN REPENTANCE—2 Corinthians 7
 - A. We need cleansing from every defilement, bringing holiness to completion in the fear of God—2 Corinthians 7:1.
 - This is a reminder to the church to have no part of worldly ways (1 Thessalonians 5:22).
 - Paul defends himself that he wronged no one, but was afflicted, presumably because of the letter referenced in vs. 8.
 - B. Paul rejoices because of the repentance shown as a result of the letter, and relates how Titus was refreshed by their change of heart—2 Corinthians 7:10-16.
- V. MUCH INSTRUCTION ON GIVING—2 Corinthians 8-9
 - A. He who sows sparingly will reap sparingly, and bountifully will reap bountifully. God loves a cheerful giver—2 Corinthians 9:6-7.
- VI. THE SPIRITUAL BATTLE—2 Corinthians 10-11
 - A. Paul uses strong words to encourage us that we are indeed in a battle—2 Corinthians 10:3-6.
 - If we aren't engaged in the battle, then we are allowing Satan to win. We need daily the armor of God (Ephesians 6:11).
 - 10:17—Paul defends his letters but ultimately says that the one who boasts should boast in the Lord.
 - B. Paul warns against false teachers—2 Corinthians 11.
 - The Corinthians and us need to be wary against those who preach another Jesus or gospel than Scripture.
- VII. HUMILITY, WEAKNESS, STRENGTH, AND SELF-EXAMINATION—2 Corinthians 12-13
 - A. Paul expounds on his thorn in the flesh, which God gave him to keep him humble.
 - 12:9-10—When he is weak, then he is strong because God's power is made perfect in weakness.
 - B. Paul closes the book by addressing conflicts in the church, instructing them that each charge must be established by 2-3 witnesses and by telling them to examine themselves to see whether they are truly in the faith—2 Corinthians 13.
 - Paul ends with a final word of encouragement toward restoration, comforting one another, agreeing with one another, and living in peace.

Application



The city of Corinth lies on the peninsula in the Mediterranean Sea which is now known as Greece. Paul visited Corinth on both his second (Acts 18:1) and third missionary journeys (Acts 20:1-3).

Corinth was a wealthy city, a center of trade with three harbors. It was also the home of a temple to the goddess Venus and sexual sin was rampant because of the temple prostitutes/priestesses. Paul founded church at Corinth on his second missionary journey. He wrote a letter to the church prior to first Corinthians referenced in I Corinthians 5:9-11. He then wrote the letter of I Corinthians to address issues of division in the church, immorality within the church, Freedom in Christ, how to worship including the Lord's supper, as well as the Resurrection. Based on the content of second Corinthians, we can conclude that there were false teachers in the church of Corinth who are attacking Paul. Second Corinthians is a defensive of Paul's apostolic ministry and authority and a call to give. These are that overarching themes within the book, however, there are many lessons that we can learn from careful study that relate to us today.

Questions

1. How easy it is for me, when I am in a trial to focus only on myself? We know based on James 1: 2-4 that trials are to make us complete Christians and to make us more like Christ. What difference does it make to know from 2 Corinthians 1:3-5 that trials have a ministry purpose?
2. In 2 Corinthians 5:17-20, we read of our ministry as new creations, the ministry of reconciliation. We are to do this because Christ who was sinless was made sinful so that we could know the righteousness of God (Hallelujah!) What an amazing thought to reflect on! It is so easy to get caught up in day-to-day life and forget this one simple truth: that Christ took on my sin, so that I could one day live in Heaven with the Creator of the universe! How can you ever have a bad day when contemplating that thought?
3. As 2 Corinthians 12:9-10 points out, it is in our weakness that God's strength is revealed. Thank God that He uses weak, imperfect people. He doesn't need strong men, He needs people who have died to themselves. In what ways do you need to die to yourself?

Paul to Galatia

Galatians



I. FALSEHOOD OR TRUTH—Galatians 1:1–2:14

- A. No other Gospel: A fearful warning about preaching a message contrary to God's Word—Galatians 1:1–10.
- B. Revelation to Paul: Seventeen years of education and sanctification, consulting God and not any man—Galatians 1:11–2:1
- C. Confirmation of message & mission: Paul to the Gentiles, Peter to the Jews—Galatians 2:2–10.
- D. Correction: Peter showing favoritism and walking in fear of man—Galatians 2:11–2:14.

II. LAW OR FAITH—Galatians 2:15–3:22

- A. Justification: A person is not justified by works but by faith in Jesus Christ. For if righteousness could be gained by the law, Christ died for nothing!—Galatians 2:15–21.
- B. Children of Abraham: Rely on faith and receive the Spirit of God by believing what we've heard—Galatians 3:1–9.
- C. Children of the curse: Rely on works and are condemned by what they've done—Galatians 3:10–14.
- D. The promise came 430 years before the law, the law does not undo the promise. It illustrates how great a need we have for the promise, fulfilled through Jesus—Galatians 3:15–22.

III. SLAVE OR HEIR—Galatians 3:23–4:31

- A. The law was our guardian: It was a boundary that kept us safe, yet imprisoned, until we were set free (became perfect/mature) by Christ, by becoming Abraham's seed and heir—Galatians 3:23–4:7.
- B. We were slaves to men: But now we are servants of God. How could we desire to become imprisoned again?—Galatians 4:8–11.
- C. Remain an heir: Be zealous always, provided the purpose is good. Do not become alienated from the truth and those who would speak it—Galatians 4:12–20.
- D. Hagar and Sarah: Two covenant promises, but figuratively only. Any can choose, regardless of descent, who they will serve, the king of slaves or the King of heirs in freedom—Galatians 4:21–31.

IV. BONDAGE OR FREEDOM—Galatians 5:1–6:18

- A. Freedom in Jesus: Do not be burdened again by slavery to the law. Faith shall express itself through loving others—Galatians 5:1–12.
- B. Living by the Spirit: Freedom has the responsibility of obedience, so as not to be imprisoned again. Be led and walk with the Spirit. Disobedience will not inherit the kingdom of God—Galatians 5:13–26.
- C. Serve others: In our freedom, we share His good Word by speaking and doing good unto others. Especially to those who belong to the family of believers—Galatians 6:1–10.
- D. We are new creations: Remember what is important. Be willing to suffer and bear the marks of the cross—Galatians 6:11–18.

Application

There are choices to make. A battle ground is present.

There are those who treasure the law:

- ☐ They are deceived into a false sense of salvation.
- ☐ They deceive others to put their faith in themselves and their ability to follow rules.
- ☐ They earn their way into grace.
- ☐ They ignore the plain warnings of Scripture.

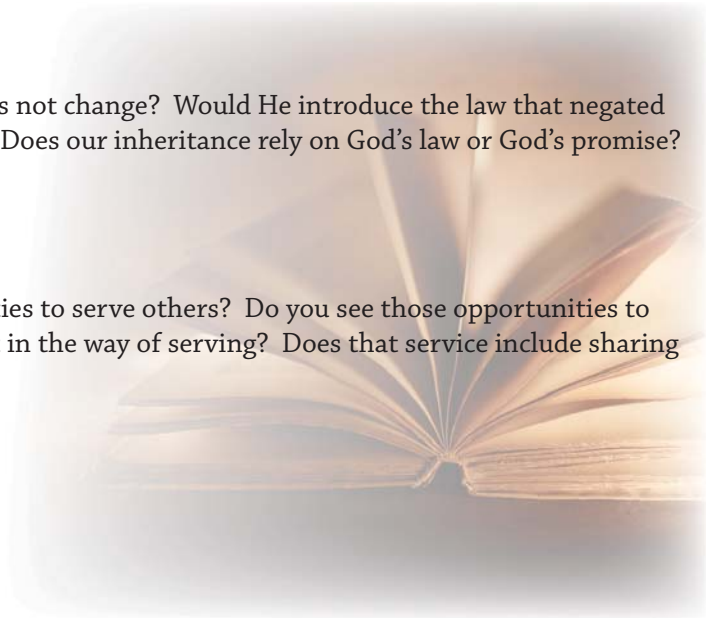
There are those who treasure freedom:

- ☐ They know that they are lost without Jesus.
- ☐ They encourage others to put their faith in God and His Holy Word.
- ☐ They confess their sin and receive forgiveness.
- ☐ They are fearful of a Mighty God.

Christ did not die for nothing. He became sin and was under a curse, being hung on a tree. He substituted His life for the death we so richly deserved, because of His great love for us. We have been bought at a high price and set free, for freedom's sake. Not to exercise our newfound freedom to indulge our sinful nature, but to serve others by following in Christ's example of laying down our lives. In gratitude and thankfulness we die to ourselves and live for Christ.

Questions

1. How are you tempted to earn your salvation by making good decisions and following the rules? By doing all that is required of you? To think that your good works make you good and right in God's sight? How does Romans 3:10-18 change the way you view James 2:10-13?
2. Do you believe that God is consistent, that He does not change? Would He introduce the law that negated the covenant promise He made 430 years before? Does our inheritance rely on God's law or God's promise?
3. How does living a life of freedom bring opportunities to serve others? Do you see those opportunities to serve as burdens or blessings? How does pride get in the way of serving? Does that service include sharing God's Word?



Paul to Ephesus & Colosse

Ephesians & Colossians

Josh Freeburg

I. EPHESIANS

- A. Christ is all sufficient—Ephesians 1:1-23.
 - 1:3-14—A thesis statement for the book, emphasizing our spiritual blessings in Christ, “in Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses.”
 - In the midst of the blessings, we read “according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.” One can almost imagine an early church reader stopping at that word, “purpose.”
 - 1:15-23—Our inheritance and the power of Christ
- B. Dead in sin but alive in Christ—Ephesians 2:1-22.
 - 2:1-10—Reminders of our sin and how “but for” the amazing grace and mercy of God we should stay dead in this sin (Romans 6:23, 3:23, Galatians 2:20).
 - 2:11-22—Brought Near to God.
- C. Revealed Mystery and Glorious Riches—Ephesians 3:1-21.
 - 3:1-6—Mystery and Revelation. Today “mystery” speaks to confusion and the unknown, Paul speaks of that which used to be unknown but is now clearly known. He brings clarity to the mystery of salvation through Jesus Christ.
 - 3:7-13—Confidence before God
 - 3:14-21—The Wonder of Salvation
- D. Application: In response to the blessings of God, how should we then walk?—Ephesians 4:1-32.
 - 4:1-16—A Call to Unity
 - 4:4-5—Humility leads to Gentleness, Gentleness to Patience, Patience progressing into Forbearing Love, which becomes Unity in the Spirit, Son, and Father. A clear progression, all requisite upon humility.
 - 4:17-32—Putting on the New Self
- E. Living Carefully—Ephesians 5:1-33.
 - 5:1-7—A High Calling, a High Standard: Lives and actions that evidence total devotion to God.
 - 5:8-20—Out of the Darkness, into the Light
 - 5:21-33—Husbands and Wives
- F. How Should We Then Stand—Ephesians 6:1-24.
 - 6:1-4—Parents and Children
 - 6:5-9—Masters and Slaves
 - 6:10-24—The Armor of God

II. COLOSSIANS

- A. Jesus and his Work—Colossians 1:1-2:3.
 - 1:1-8—Paul’s Greeting
 - 1:9-14—Paul’s Prayer
 - 1:15-18—The Supremacy of Jesus: Over creation and the church
 - 1:19-2:3—We escape our sinful lives by no deed of our own but by the work of Christ on the cross
- B. The Heresies—Colossians 2:4-23.
 - 2:4-8—Warning against False Teachers
 - 2:9-15—The Truth
 - 2:16-23—The Requirements of Truth: Defense against false teachers lies in being rooted (Jesus as the source of our life), built up (steadily growing in Christ), strengthened (to grow in the knowledge of our faith), and being thankful (The more thankful we are, the more we dwell on what Christ has done for us).
- C. Application: How Do We Live Like Jesus—Colossians 3:1-4:1.
 - 3:1-4—How to think like a Live Person
 - 3:5-10—How to think like a Dead Person
 - 3:11-17—The Character of Unity: Pray continually, live godly lives, speak the truth graciously.
 - 3:18-4:1—Living as Christ
- D. In Conclusion—Colossians 4:2-18.
 - 4:2-6—What is our Message?
 - 4:7-18—Who is our Jesus?

Application

Ephesians and Colossians are both written from prison. In Ephesians, unlike many of the epistles written to churches, Paul does not bring the spiritual faults of his readers. Paul instead reminds believers of the many blessings received from Christ and what our response to these blessings should be. The beauty of reading Ephesians is that around every corner is a blessing from Scripture. Paul jumps from topic to topic but weaved throughout is the clear challenge to believers. What is the standard of living that we set for ourselves? The imitation of Christ.

In explaining how to imitate Christ, Paul includes the relationships between Husband and Wives, Parents and Children, Slaves and Masters. Although there are clear lessons that are being made in regards to this relationship, following the theme of Ephesians we are called in submission to the Spirit, wives to husbands, children to parents, slaves to masters. None of these acts of submission are expected to be ordinary or easy. They go against our sinful nature and call for total reliance on the grace of God.

So how do we do this? Paul has already told us why we should live for Christ. He has told us what living for Christ will look like. The only question that remains is, How! The How is answered by a call to stand firm, a call to depend on him, a call to pray. Notice that in this allegory to warfare there is no mention of our strength but rather his strength. As John A. MacArthur states, "The cardinal reality presented in the book of Ephesians is that, as believers we are in Christ and are one with Him. His life is our life, His power is our power, His truth our truth, His way our way, and, as Paul goes on to say here, His strength is our strength."

The book of Colossians is a work of warning and of encouragement. It was written to combat a particular brand of heresy that had invaded the church at Colossae. Although we cannot be certain all that this heresy entailed, the clear message woven throughout is the total supremacy of Christ and that through him we can have victory over sin.

In Colossians 1:21-23, Paul makes reference to our sinful life that we have escaped by no great deed of our own but by the death of Christ. Christ then continues to work in us and through his work in us we will demonstrate the fruits of faithfulness. We can't add anything by what we do. Any attempt to self-justify only serves to diminish the faith that we have in Christ.

Questions

1. What is God's purpose? The epistle answers with a sweeping statement that leaves no ambiguity. To Unite All Things In Him. As MacArthur state, "History belongs to God, not to the puny plans of man or the perverse power of Satan. History is written and directed by its Creator who will see it through to the fulfillment of His own ultimate purpose –the summing up of all things in Christ." How would it impact your plans to keep this in mind?
2. In Ephesians 4:4-5, the progression of a godly walk is clear, but it is all requisite upon the most elusive characteristic of all, Humility. At the time this Epistle was written, an attitude of humility was considered antithetical to the ideals of the day. Pride was preeminent making the words of Paul that much more shocking. Scripture tells us that the characteristic of humility is the foundation of any true believer and that the antithesis of humility, Pride, was the first sin and the foundation of every sin after it. What pride have you confessed this week?
3. In Colossians 3, notice that we must put on compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other, as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all these put on Love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. Notice that this mention of love is a love of forgiveness. God forgave us even though we were not deserving of it in any way. It is that love of forgiveness that we are called to impart to others. In what ways will this love of forgiveness impact your relationships?

Paul to Philippi

Philippians



I. THE PERSON OF CHRIST

A. This letter opens with the Apostle Paul's personal expressions of greeting and gratitude for his fellow brothers and sisters in the church at Philippi—Philippians 1:1-11.

- 1:1-11—Paul takes the time to express his thanks and appreciation for “all the saints in Christ Jesus.” Paul acknowledges his great confidence in the Philippians church that their love and discernment would abound more.

B. Paul goes on to describe the personal circumstances that deeply influenced his current state of confidence in the Lord, even though he is imprisoned—Philippians 1:12-30.

- 1:12-1:18—Paul makes no excuses for inability to preach the word due to the hardship he suffers.
- 1:19-26—Paul continues to preach encouragement and hope, convinced that whether he lives or dies it is God's will that he continue to rejoice in the Lord.
- 1:27-1:30—Paul can be bold because he is assured of his place in eternity, and all those who believe in Jesus Christ, through suffering for the cause of Jesus Christ.

II. THE DEMONSTRATION OF CHRISTIAN LIFE

A. Strong Christian unity, and fellowship of the Spirit is emphasized to exhort the humility made complete by Jesus Christ, by which all need to model themselves after—Philippians 2:1-30.

- 2:1-4—Troublesome problems underlying the Philippian church are selfish ambition and rivalries.
- 2:5-18—The “kenosis” passage is the example of humility as Christ Himself observed, which is the benchmark that all believers must follow.
- 2:19-30—Timothy and Epaphroditus worked tirelessly for the spreading of the gospel, even coming close to the point of death. These men in the highest regard, as “brother workers” serving Christ.

III. THE REWARD OF CHRISTIAN LIFE

A. The prize of Christian life is safeguarding against false teaching. Paul emphasizes that continual sanctification must occur in the form of living a peaceable life, and the application of oneself in honor, purity, and good repute. He expresses his experience of living for Christ regardless of personal circumstances, to be content and trust God in everything—Philippians 3:1-4:23.

- 3:1-3:14—Paul gives a final exhortation to 1) rejoice in the Lord and 2) be on guard against false prophets that dilute/falsify Lordship salvation requirements.
- 3:15-21—Paul's exhortation regarding being a ‘citizen’ of heaven here on earth.
- 4:1-9—True peace can only be attained by the gentle and forbearing spirit that Christ Himself displayed to others. This is the willingness of one to surrender himself to his Christian brother in a sacrificial way.
- 4:10-23—There is no event in our lives that cannot be cause for rejoicing in the Lord, whether it be a trial or a triumph! we, in our humanness, cannot overcome any obstacle or our sin without the power of Christ, and the truth of His word, effective in our lives.

Application

Paul encourages the church at Philippi to push ahead and suffer for the cause of Christ, despite ANY SITUATION:

- ☐ As Christians, we need make NO EXCUSES to not routinely meditate on God's Word.
- ☐ We must be CONVICTED that we need to rejoice in suffering for the cause of Christ. As HE suffered, so should we expect to.
- ☐ We need to place our full TRUST in the promise of ETERNAL LIFE with Christ! This assurance enables us to SUFFER AND YET REJOICE. Heaven is our destination!

Christ's attributes and character are demonstrated to us through Scripture as the STANDARD TO WHICH WE ARE TO LIVE:

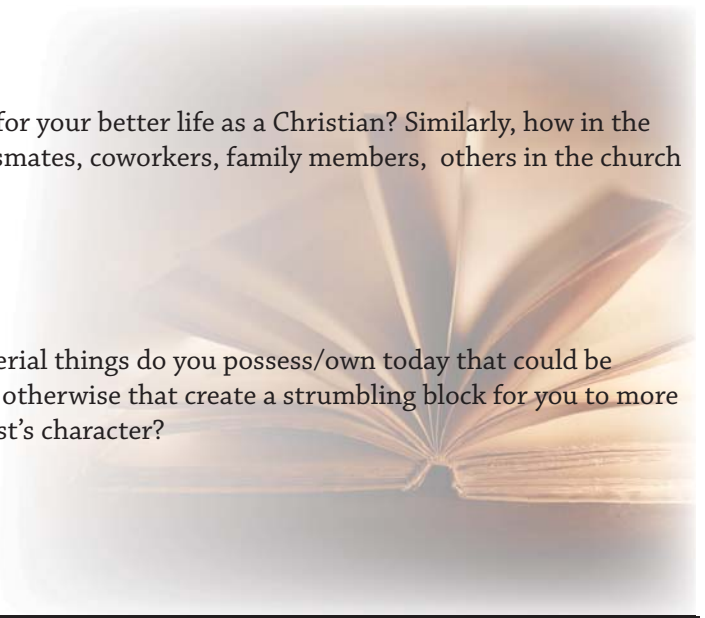
- ☐ Christ's HUMILITY was ultimately defined through the redemptive work of Jesus Christ.
- ☐ Jesus Christ provided the HOLY SPIRIT to enable lifelong patterning ourselves after Jesus Christ in behavior, speech, and thought.
- ☐ UNITY is the cornerstone of any church body - and we must remove our own selfish ambition to better love and serve our 'brother workers.'

The rewards of the Christian life are not earthly, material things - and as such have NO VALUE in eternity:

- ☐ We must DEFEND the truth of His Word, and be ever ON GUARD against false teaching that may lead us astray.
- ☐ We need to be always CONTENT and THANKFUL for the Lord's provision, surrendering ourselves to Him.
- ☐ Our lives are to be exemplified in SACRIFICIAL LOVE and SERVICE to the church and our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ. This leads to a PEACEABLE life.

Questions

1. As a Christian, you are assured of the promise of your eternal destination (heaven)! So, what holds you back from being bold for Christ with others, i.e., sharing the good news of salvation and hope? What are the ramifications of trying to protect 'your reputation' vs. the reputation and holiness of Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior?
2. In what ways do humility and unity work together for your better life as a Christian? Similarly, how in the lives of others you come in contact with (your classmates, coworkers, family members, others in the church body)?
3. What are your material or earthly 'idols'; what material things do you possess/own today that could be omitted in order to obtain a more peaceable life, or otherwise that create a stumbling block for you to more closely follow and pattern yourself after Jesus Christ's character?



Paul to Thessalonica

1-2 Thessalonians

Ron Martin

I. PURPOSE OF FIRST THESSALONIANS

- A. Paul, Timothy, and Silas visited Thessalonica and preached Jesus in the cities' synagogue. Some Jews and many God-fearing Greeks became Christians, forming the church there. Heavy opposition that included a riot forced Silas and Paul to leave the city, after just three weeks, but Timothy stayed on. Paul wrote 1st Thessalonians after Timothy came to him from Thessalonica. The Christians had many questions, so in the letter Paul is:
 - Expressing the joy that the writers felt and giving thanks to God for good news Timothy brought.
 - Encouraging the Thessalonians as they tried to live for the Lord in how much they loved and cared about them.
 - Answering the false things that the Jews and other people had said about Paul and his friends. These people said that Paul had come to make profit from those who believed his message. They said that the message was not from God, but Paul had made it up. They said that the fact that Paul had not come back showed that he did not really care about the Christians.
 - Explaining what would happen when Jesus came to earth again, regarding Christians who had died—1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11.
 - Teaching regarding sex, which was a common sin in that city—1 Thessalonians 4:4-8.

II. OUTLINE OF FIRST THESSALONIANS

- A. The Thanksgiving for the Thessalonians—1 Thessalonians 1
 - 1:1-4—The Grounds for the Thanksgiving and prayer to God.
 - 1:5-10—The Genuineness of the Grounds as they had accepted the good news about Jesus.
- B. The Defense of the Apostolic Actions and Absence—1 Thessalonians 2-3
 - 2:1-16—The Defense of the Apostolic Actions
 - 2:7-3:10—The Defense of the Apostolic Absence
 - 3:11-13—The Prayer for the Christians at Thessalonica
- C. The Exhortations to the Thessalonians—1 Thessalonians 4:1-5:22
 - 4:1-12—Primarily concerning Personal Life and how you ought to live
 - 4:13-5:11—Concerning the Coming of Christ and those who have died
 - 5:12-22—Primarily concerning Church Life and Christian duties
- D. The Concluding Prayer, Greetings, Blessings, and Benediction—1 Thessalonians 5:23-28

III. PURPOSE OF SECOND THESSALONIANS

- A. After the first letter, Paul and his friends received news from Thessalonica showing that the Thessalonians had not understood some of what was in the first letter, and still needed to learn:
 - 1:5-10—To expect persecution because they trust in the Lord Jesus. God has a purpose in allowing them to suffer and he will reward them—2 Thessalonians 1:5-10.
 - 2:1-12—Correct teaching about the return of Christ.
 - 3:6-13—What they should do to those who refuse to work. Some of the Thessalonian Christians were lazy. They had given up their work and depended on their friends to keep them and feed them. Paul had mentioned this subject in the first letter—1 Thessalonians 5:14.

IV. OUTLINE OF SECOND THESSALONIANS

- A. Encouragement to faithfulness in spite of persecution—2 Thessalonians 1:1-12.
 - 1:1-2—Salutation from Paul, Silas and Timothy.
 - 1:3-5—Thankfulness for their faithfulness.
 - 1:6-1—Assurance of judgment on their persecutors.
 - 1:11-12—prayer for their glorification.
- B. Explanations concerning the day of the Lord—2 Thessalonians 2:1-17.
 - 2:1-2—Correction of the false teaching that the day of the Lord had begun.
 - 2:3-12—Evidence that the day of the Lord had not begun.
 - 2:13-17—God's work in believers and the believers' response.
- C. Exhortation to continued faithfulness to God—2 Thessalonians 3:1-15.
 - 3:1-5—Desire for prayer, confidence and continued service for God
 - 3:6-15—Idleness condemned and practice of Church Discipline
- D. Benediction of grace and peace—2 Thessalonians 3:16-18.

Application

1st and 2nd Thessalonians are probably the earliest letters written by the apostle Paul, around AD 51. That is about 20 years after Jesus died and rose again to life. At the time of writing Thessalonica was the capital of the province of Macedonia and was an important communication and trade center, due to its position on the great Via Egnatia road stretching across Greece and on the road heading north to the Danube river.

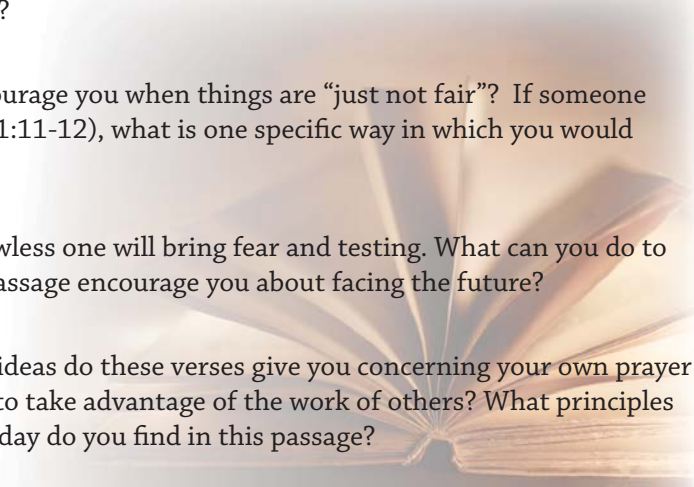
Paul writes of his pleasure in the good news passed on by Timothy of the Thessalonians continued faith and to encourage them more, particularly within their persecution. One of the major elements of teaching in Thessalonians is about the second coming of Jesus.

Paul describes the day all Christians, whether alive on earth or already having died, will meet Christ and go with him to the new resurrection earth. Another central theme of Thessalonians is the theology of the church. As John Stott says: "What stands out of Paul's vision of the church is its God-centered-ness. He does not think of it as a human institution, but as a divine society. No wonder he could be confident its stability!"

The letters of Thessalonians are a pastoral encouragement to those who converted from Pagan worship not to continue in their pagan practices. As Leon Morris says: "The position, then, would seem to be that Paul wrote 1 Thessalonians, but that it did not achieve all that he desired... Paul set himself the task of putting things in order, and 2 Thessalonians was the result... In this letter he carries on the work he began in the first, encouraging the faint-hearted, rebuking the slackers, dealing again with the return of the Lord. It is simply a second prescription for the same case, made after discovering that some certain stubborn symptoms had not yielded to the first treatment."

Paul loves the church in Thessalonica and describes his love as a mother loves her children. In love he encourages the Christians to grow more and more in their love as they wait for Christ to return and make all things new.

Questions

1. Read 1 Thessalonians 1:1. When we turn from idols to serve the living God what new foundations inspire our lives?
 2. Read 1 Thessalonians 4-5. Why and how should we all seek sexual purity (v3-8)? Are you wronging anyone sexually (adultery, pornography, immodesty)? What does it look like to pursuing intimacy in all our relationships and have a love for others taught by God (v9)?
 3. Read 2 Thessalonians 1. How can God's justice encourage you when things are "just not fair"? If someone were to pray for you as Paul did in 2 Thessalonians 1:11-12), what is one specific way in which you would want God to change your life?
 4. Read 2 Thessalonians 2. Even for Christians, the lawless one will bring fear and testing. What can you do to prepare yourself to withstand him? How can this passage encourage you about facing the future?
 5. Read 2 Thessalonians 3. What encouragement and ideas do these verses give you concerning your own prayer life? In what ways do lazy Christians still continue to take advantage of the work of others? What principles for discipline that could be applied in the church today do you find in this passage?
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Paul to Timothy

1-2 Timothy

Stephen Sementilli

1 TIMOTHY

- I. GREETING AND STANDING ON SOUND DOCTRINE—1 Timothy 1:3-11
 - A. Paul warns of false teachers and tells Timothy to stand on sound doctrine—1 Timothy 1:3-11.
- II. GRACE, MERCY, AND FIGHTING THE GOOD FIGHT OF FAITH—1 Timothy 1:12-20
 - A. Paul describes how God has shown him grace and mercy even though he was undeserving and charges Timothy to fight against false teaching—1 Timothy 1:12-1:20.
- III. PRAYING FOR ALL—1 Timothy 2
 - A. Paul tells Timothy to pray for all men, including those in authority—1 Timothy 2:1-4
 - B. Paul describes that it is proper for men to lead and for women be modest and show submission in the teaching of God's Word—1 Timothy 2:8-15.
- IV. REQUIREMENTS FOR LEADERS IN THE CHURCH—1 Timothy 3
 - A. Overseers must show spiritual maturity in the roles that God has given them in order to avoid pride and be able to stand against attacks of the devil—1 Timothy 3:1-7.
 - B. Likewise, Deacons must show that they live up to a high standard—1 Timothy 3:1-7.
- V. WARNING AGAINST APOSTASY—1 Timothy 4
 - A. Paul warns Timothy of a coming period of apostasy and encourages Timothy to stand on sound doctrine as he lives out his life faithful to Christ's commands—1 Timothy 4:1-16.
- VI. SHOW PROPER HONOR AND RESPECT—1 Timothy 5
 - A. Paul teaches Timothy that the Body of Christ is a family and that he is to show proper respect to older men and women the way he would parents and that he should treat younger men and women like brothers and sisters—1 Timothy 5:1-2

2 TIMOTHY

- I. PAUL ENCOURAGES TIMOTHY—2 Timothy 1-3
 - A. Paul reminds Timothy of his heritage and encourages Timothy to follow the example of his mother and grandmother—2 Timothy 1:3-7.
 - B. Paul commands Timothy to not be ashamed of the Gospel and to focus on eternity and to work diligently so he will not need to feel ashamed—2 Timothy 1:8-2:26.
 - C. False teachers will come in the last days. All Christians will be persecuted but God has given us the Holy Scriptures to provide what we need to endure—2 Timothy 3:1-13.
- II. PREACH THE WORD—2 Timothy 4
 - A. Timothy's calling is made clear. He is charged to preach the Word—2 Timothy 4:1-2.
 - B. Timothy's calling to preach the Word is not contingent on whether others want to listen. His responsibility is to fulfill his ministry—2 Timothy 4:3-5.

Application

Timothy was a young man that was called to preach God's word in an environment that could be hostile to the sound doctrine he was commanded to preach.

We are all called to share the Gospel. Timothy's example shows us:

- ☐ That even if we feel ill-equipped or unworthy we are not to be timid about the Word of God but to stand firm for the Gospel.
- ☐ That we shouldn't be surprised by the existence of false teachers, but we should practice discernment as to whether the teaching that we hear is consistent with God's Word.
- ☐ it is our responsibility as Christians to share the Gospel whether other want to listen or not.

Submission to authority means more than just doing what we are told. We are to:

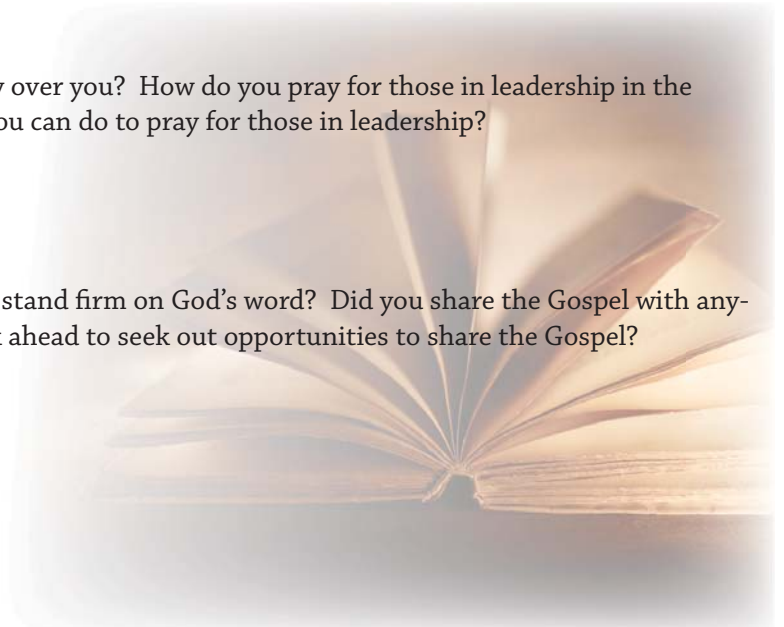
- ☐ Serve with a desire to please God and to truly see fellow believers as members of our family.
- ☐ Pray for ALL those in leadership. This includes both church leadership and the secular authorities in our lives.
- ☐ Increase our knowledge of the authorities in the various areas of our lives.

As true believers in Christ, we WILL be persecuted. As we are persecuted we are to:

- ☐ Preach God's word unashamedly and seek to glorify Christ through the persecution.

Questions

1. How have you guarded your heart and mind against false teachings this week? Did you wage war against false teaching in your life?
2. Did you pray this week for those in authority over you? How do you pray for those in leadership in the church? In the nation? Is there more that you can do to pray for those in leadership?
3. Did you take every opportunity this week to stand firm on God's word? Did you share the Gospel with anyone this week? What can you do in the week ahead to seek out opportunities to share the Gospel?



Paul to Titus

Titus



I. INTRODUCTION

- A. The letter was written to Titus a Greek convert (Galatians 2:3) who was planting Churches in Crete. It was written around 63 AD before Nero and his persecution and a year after Paul was put in a Roman prison.
- B. Titus 3:8—The theme of the book is how grace promotes good works

II. GOD'S GAME PLAN FOR THE CHURCH—Titus 1:5-16

- A. 1:5-9—Paul's reason for writing this was to put right what was not done. To strengthen the Church as it was in disarray. To prepare the Church for the trials to come.
 - How will things be straightened out? By appointing strong elder who are local, plural for encouragement and accountability, and qualified because they submit to Gods word, teaching God's word and nothing else. They will encourage with God's word and opposing those who contradict it.
 - When Gods word, good doctrine, is taught it will produce good works and fruit in those who obey it.
- B. 1:15-16—False teachers and those that follow them are detestable, disobedient and disqualified for any good work. 2 Timothy 3:16 says an approved workman correctly handles God's word.

III. SOUND TEACHING AND GODLY ROLES FOR BELIEVERS—Titus 2:1-10

- A. We are commanded again to teach sound doctrine. Sound doctrine requires conduct consistent with teaching professed. Correct doctrine will result in good behavior, good works. Contrast this with false teaching in Titus 1. Look how people are characterized as liars, evil beasts, and lazy gluttons. Right teaching produces a right life. Grace is not abused.
- B. Older men be mature and act like it.
- C. Older women are to be examples to the younger women. They will teach and encourage them to love their husbands, children, take care of the home, to be submissive to their husbands. How we live shows what we believe.
- D. Young men should be serious about spiritual things. They should set an example or pattern of God's work so it shows off what they believe.
- E. To slaves the teaching is that the freedom from the bondage of sin is more important than the freedom from any human bondage. God in his sovereignty puts us where we are for his will and purpose. For good works and for his glory.

IV. GRACE PROMOTES GODLY BEHAVIOR—Titus 2:11-3:14

- A. Grace is unmerited favor of freedom from the power of sin (Eph. 2:8-9). I am not a slave to sin but Righteousness. Grace is my positional sanctification...where I stand with God (forgiven) but it is also my progressive sanctification. How I now live my life and becoming more like Christ in my walk and good works. Our lives are motivated by how grace saved us. And our response to grace, love (John 14:15 and 14:21) is shown in obedience to God that produces good works.
- B. How we treat others shows what we believe about God to the world. We are called to submit to the rulers and situations God has put us in. We don't look for excuses or whine but are ready for every good work God has prepared for us to do.
- C. We were rebellious sinners focused on self. But we know that God saved us through his love, his Grace. Because of that we are motivated to devote ourselves to good works. "These are good and profitable for everyone." We avoid divisiveness as God's word unifies our relationship with Christ and other believers. We do not concentrate on ourselves as we once did but are new creatures in Christ. We obey sound teaching inwardly so that outwardly we do works for the body and as a minister of reconciliation For God's glory

Application

SETTING UP THE CHURCH

The Church at Crete is in disarray and Nero and persecution is coming. God will be strengthening the Church for trials by good biblical leadership and sound teaching. God will prepare us for what he wants us to accomplish (good works).

Paul is going address proper leadership in the Church. He describes himself slave of God and an Apostle. To set up strong leadership he uses his submissiveness to God and his role from God. To lead we must submit to God's authority and fulfill the roles God gives us.

When God's word is taught in a church there is growth and fruit to those that listen and obey. The rebellious either listen and repent or leave.

SOUND TEACHING AND ROLES

It may seem harsh that slaves are called to submit to their masters and not pursue freedom. Paul viewed himself as a slave to Christ. He endured hardship and prison. He did not pursue freedom or fairness. He pursued being a slave to righteousness.

Think of your role as an employee. We need to show our beliefs in God's word by the quality and joy of our work and conduct. Be submissive to our "masters" our boss and this will show off our faith in Christ. Our freedom from the bondage of sin is more important than our human freedom or rights.

God is in control of our lives. We are not. Trust God for your role, your situation you are in and concentrate on doing good works coming from the sound doctrine that is being taught by Pastors, elders, and the mature man and women that come along side us.

MOTIVATION OF GRACE

Titus 2:11—Our positional sanctification. Our right standing with God because of grace. The forgiveness over the penalty of sin and eternal life motivates us out of our love and thankfulness to obedience.

Titus 2:12—Our progressive sanctification. Because of God's grace the power of sin has no hold on us. This implores and teaches us to lead Godly lives.

Titus 2:13—Our potential sanctification. We should be motivated by our hope that we are going to live eternally in heaven and not here on earth.

Titus 2:14—Purification. We should always remember we are forgiven. We have been redeemed, reconciled and Christ has purified us. Our response should be an eagerness to do what is good.

Questions

1. In Titus 2:1-10 Titus is told what to teach to various groups or roles. This is immediately followed in Titus 2:11-13 by the teaching of "Grace". What is grace? How does God want us to apply our lives to Grace? Paul just taught on roles in the Church. How is the teaching of God's grace here significant?
2. Now look at Titus 2:15 -3:8. It teaches how the grace of God manifests outwardly in the lives of believers. How does the grace of God motivate you, do you think and dwell on it daily? What is your response to God's grace (John 14:21)? When we respond to God's grace correctly how does that impact other people's lives (Titus 3:8)? What is the relationship of grace with good works (Ephesians 2:8-10, 2 Corinthians 5:16-18)?
3. Look at the different roles in the Church that are described in Titus—apostle, elder, slave, older men and women, younger men and women. How do the roles you have in the body motivate you to good works? How do the roles others have motivate you to good works? How did Paul's roles motivate him? What role does good works play with unbelievers?

Paul to Philemon

Philemon



Scott Berchou

I. SALUTATION—Philemon 1-7

- A. From Paul and Timothy to Philemon, Apphia, Archippus, and the church in their house—Philemon 1-3.

II. THE PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING FOR PHILEMON—Philemon 4-7

- A. Paul's thankfulness, expressed in frequent prayers to God, for Philemon's love and faith toward Jesus and all the saints—Philemon 4-5.
- B. Paul prayed that the sharing of Philemon's faith might be effective through the acknowledgment of every good thing in Philemon. For example, the joy and comfort experienced by Paul from Philemon's love as Paul hears of how he refreshed the hearts of the saints—Philemon 6-7.
 - Tone—Praise.
 - Direction—Looking back.
 - Key: "I always thank my God as I remember you in my prayers" (verse 4).

III. THE PETITION OF PAUL FOR ONESIMUS—Philemon 8-17

- A. An appeal, not a command, although Paul had the authority to command what is fitting, he chose instead to make an appeal based upon: love itself, Paul's age, and Paul's imprisonment—Philemon 8-9.
- B. Paul plea concerns Onesimus, whom Paul is now sending back to Philemon. Paul's desire is that Philemon receive Onesimus as a brother in Christ—Philemon 10-17.
 - Tone—Plea.
 - Direction—Looking within.
 - Key: "I appeal to you for my son Onesimus, who became my son while I was in chains" (verse 10).

IV. THE PROMISE OF PAUL TO PHILEMON—Philemon 18-21

- A. Paul offers to repay Philemon for any wrong that Onesimus might have done—Philemon 18-20.
 - Of course, Philemon already owed Paul his own life.
 - By receiving Onesimus in this way, Philemon could give Paul joy and a refreshed heart in the Lord.
- B. Paul is confident in Philemon's obedience, and that Philemon could do even more than what Paul is asking—Philemon 21.
 - Tone—Promise.
 - Direction—Looking Beyond.
 - Key—"I, Paul, am writing this with my own hand. I will pay it back - not to mention that you owe my your very self" (verse 19).

V. CONCLUDING REMARKS—Philemon 22-25

- A. Request for lodging—Philemon 22.
- B. Greetings from others —Philemon 23-24.
- C. A closing prayer—Philemon 25.

Application

For more than two years during his third missionary journey, Paul ministered in Asia Minor among the people of Ephesus. This was a successful period for the apostle to the Gentiles, who saw many converts among both residents of Ephesus and visitors to the city. One of the visitors converted under Paul's teaching was a man named Philemon, a slaveowner from the nearby city of Colossae (Philemon 1:19). In the book Philemon, Paul addressed his "beloved brother" as a "fellow worker," a title given to those who served for time alongside Paul. (Gospel writers Mark and Luke also received this title later in the letter (1:1, 24). Clearly, a kinship existed between Paul and Philemon, one that would serve a significant purpose in light of the circumstance that brought about the letter. A slave named Onesimus had escaped from his owner, Philemon, and had run away from Colossae to Rome in the hope that he could disappear into that urban environment. Once in Rome, Onesimus, either by accident or by his own desire, came in contact with Paul, who promptly led the runaway slave to faith in Jesus Christ. Paul had already been planning to send a letter to the Colossian church by the hand of Tychicus. So in AD 60 or 61, from a prison cell in Rome, Paul wrote a personal letter to Philemon and sent Onesimus the slave back to Colossae.

The letter to Philemon reminds us that God's revelation to humanity is intensely personal. If one ever gets the impression that God does not care, nor has time for the trials and tribulations in a single household, Philemon stands as one piece of strong evidence to the contrary, revealing that lofty doctrines such as the love of God, forgiveness in Christ or the inherent dignity of humanity have real and pertinent impact in everyday life. The book of Philemon illustrates that principles like these can and should profoundly affect the lives of believers. Paul's message to Philemon was a simple one: based on the work of love and forgiveness that had been wrought in Philemon's heart by God, show the same to the escaped and now-believing slave Onesimus. The apostle's message would have had extra force behind it because he knew Philemon personally. Paul had explained the gospel to Philemon and had witnessed the profound result: new life blossoming in a once-dead heart—Philemon 1:19. Paul knew that conversion is nothing to trifle with, but that it should be honored and fostered. So Paul made a request. He wanted Philemon to forgive Onesimus, to accept the slave as a brother in Christ, and to consider sending Onesimus back to Paul, as the apostle found him useful in God's service—Philemon 1:11-14. Paul did not minimize Onesimus' sin. This was not some kind of cheap grace that Paul asked Philemon to offer. No, there was sacrifice required in this request, and because of that, Paul approached the topic with gentleness and care—Philemon 1:21. The letter presents in full color the beautiful and majestic transition from slavery to kinship that comes as a result of Christian love and forgiveness.

Questions

1. In what ways has forgiveness been a struggle for you since you accepted Christ's forgiveness?
2. What is a good example of this family's devotion to Christ and of their hospitality to the saints?
3. Why does Paul refer to himself as a prisoner of Christ Jesus?
4. Do you feel it easier to love some of the saints but not ALL of your brothers and sisters in Christ (vs. 5)?
5. What does Paul pray for on behalf of Philemon?
6. How would you respond to an order based on authority versus an appeal on the basis of love (vs. 8-9)?
7. How had becoming a Christian changed Onesimus?
8. How does Paul asking Philemon model Jesus interceding on your behalf to God (v. 17)?
9. To whose account are your sins and transgressions placed (vs. 18-19)?
10. What does Philemon's name mean? Did he live up to it?
11. Where else do we read of these men who accompany Paul in sending greetings to Philemon (vs. 23-24)?

Letter to the Hebrews

Hebrews

Bob and Ruth Froese

I. RECIPIENTS

- A. The writer of Hebrews addresses a people who are discouraged regarding their spiritual lives. They have endured enormous suffering well, but now they are backsliding under a second wave of persecution—Hebrews 10:32-36.
 - 12:2—AIM: To encourage them to persevere, to not give up, to run with patience the race set before them.

II. DATE AND AUTHOR OF THE LETTER TO THE HEBREWS

- A. The date written was probably just prior to 70 AD, when the Jerusalem temple was destroyed. The precise name of the author of Hebrews is unknown and has been debated for centuries.
 - 13:13—It is clear that the writer of Hebrews was a Hellenistic Jewish Christian
 - The author's literary style is more polished than any other NT writer.
 - He enjoyed a close relationship with his readers.

III. REASON FOR THE LETTER TO THE HEBREWS

- A. The main thrust of the epistle is that Christianity is superior to Judaism—Hebrews 7:1-11:40.
- B. They faced the perilous danger of apostasy, deliberate and permanent rejection of Jesus Christ—Hebrews 6:4-6.
 - These second and third generation Christians were lapsing back into their comfort zone of Judaism.
 - By reverting to the old, they faced the peril of deserting the new, rejecting faith in Jesus Christ.

IV. THREE IMPORTANT, FOUNDATIONAL TEACHINGS OF THE LETTER TO THE HEBREWS

- A. Jesus is superior—Hebrews 1-7.
 - 1:1-4—Jesus is superior in that He completed what was foretold by the prophets.
 - 2:1-16—Jesus is superior to the angels in both deity and humanity. He is Savior who sanctifies believers, and He is brother for we have the same Father.
 - 1:5-2:18—Jesus is our High Priest, who became flesh and blood to destroy Satan and deliver us from fear.
 - 3:1-6—Jesus is a better leader than Moses (who was regarded as the Jew's greatest leader ever).
 - 5:1-7:28—Jesus is a better Priest than Aaron, both in being sympathetic to human weakness and also in being Divinely called. Jesus like Melchizedek, Jesus is an eternal priest.
- B. Jesus Christ fulfilled a superior ministry—Hebrews 8-10.
 - 8:1-13—He presents a better covenant. The New Covenant provides a moral understanding of God's will, ability to obey it, intimate fellowship with God, personal knowledge of God, and eternal forgiveness of sins.
 - 9:1-12—He presents a better sanctuary. Israel's sanctuary was earthly, with limited access to God. Jesus' sanctuary is heavenly, with unlimited access to God.
 - 9:13-10:18—Christ's sacrifice secures redemption for believers, cleanses the conscience, and puts away our sin by His eternally effective work on the cross.
- C. Jesus lived a superior life, in the righteousness that is His alone, which He imputes onto Christians—Hebrews 10-13.
 - 10:19-25—Christians are to fellowship, pray, remain faithful, and unite together as a body.
 - 10:32-12:13—Christians are to persevere, to remain under trials that arise in life.
 - 12:14-17—Christians are to live a sanctified life of holiness.
 - 13:1-21—Christians are to serve through the local body, the church.

Application

The author of Hebrews gives five stern warnings to the readers. The warnings call to perseverance in faith.

1. **STAY ALERT!** Hebrew 2:1-4—In light of the teaching regarding Jesus being ‘better’ we must give greater attention to what is taught in Scripture lest we drift away. If every sin was dealt with righteously by God, how should we believe we will not be destroyed if we indeed do neglect so a great salvation.
2. **BE FAITHFUL!** Hebrews 3:7-4:16—Believers must be aware of the hardening of hearts that occurs through the deceitfulness of sin. We have a responsibility to one other in the body of Christ to hold one other accountable, understanding that one’s present state is conditional on their future state.
3. **PAY ATTENTION!** Hebrews 5:11-6:20—This warning brings apostasy (deliberately and permanently rejecting Jesus Christ) to light. Nothing can be done for those who have witnessed the power of God and rejected it. The aim of this warning is to arouse the readers to full attention, staying away from the slippery slope of apathy, not paying attention to what is taught, as if they have wax in their ears.
4. **STAY INVOLVED!** Hebrews 10:26-31—This warning is directly tied to the context of remaining actively involved in the church, the body of Christ, dispelling the idea that it can be ‘just Jesus and me’. Although it is a prevalent mindset that one can walk with Christ yet not be actively involved in the local church, Hebrews warns the readers that these should expect hell rather than heaven.
5. **REMEMBER, GOD WINS!** Hebrews 12:18-29—This warning reminds the readers how Christianity is better than Judaism. The author then cites seven elements that describe Christianity. The truth is that God is going to judge, and those who walk in the grace of Jesus Christ and serve God acceptably and with reverence will be the only ones who stand in the face of God’s judgment.

Questions

1. The top priority in the Christian life is learning to battle/fight the fight of faith, to persevere. We must rid the notion that before we were Christians we were fighting for faith/battling unbelief, BUT now that we’re Christians we can relax, the battle is over; I’m a believer; I’ve won the battle.’ That’s the wrong notion! It leaves you very vulnerable to the subtlety of unbelief. The readers of Hebrews were second and third generation Christians who were experiencing a second round of persecution. What would be the mindset that would lure them towards returning back to Judaism. Why are there so many warnings concerning being faithful and perseverance in the Christian faith? When you endure persecution because you trust in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, where is it that you turn?
2. It is a popular opinion today that someone can walk with God while not being an active part of a local church. What does the author of Hebrews teach in chapter 10:24-25 regarding the reasons for coming together as a local church? What is the following warning that clearly dispels the individual mindset in 10:26-31? What is the point the author is making when he summarizes this teaching that it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God (10:31)? Do you have a healthy fear of based on awe, appreciation and apprehension of Who God is?
3. Hebrews 12:1-2 contains the main thought: With perseverance, keep on putting forth the effort in the Christian life. Carry the torch, hold it high, keep your feet moving in GRACE!

James to the Jews

James

Stephen Sementilli

I. FAITH THROUGH TRIALS

A. James begins his letter by explaining the proper way for true Christians to face trials—James 1:2-17.

- 1:2-8—God’s children are called to be joyful as they face various trials with patience and faith. James tells us that we avoid doubt and instead ask God in faith for the wisdom in dealing with our trials.
- 1:13-17—Do not blame God for being tempted. It is our fleshly desires that draw us into temptation.

B. James tells us the qualities that we need as we face trials—James 1:19-25.

- 1:19-21—A learning and listening attitude along with patience, a good temper, and humility is the proper state of mind to be in when facing trials.
- 1:22-25—We are commanded to be “doers of the word, and not hearers only.”

II. DO NOT SHOW PARTIALITY

A. Showing favoritism is a sin.

- 2:9-10—James tells us that showing partiality is a sin against our neighbor. .

III. FAITH AND WORKS

A. Faith without works is dead

- 2:14-26—James explains that true faith drives believers to action.

IV. TAMING OUR TONGUES

A. Although our tongues are small we must control them.

- 3:2-5—James uses the example of a bit in a horse’s mouth and the rudder of a ship as small things that can control big things.

V. PRIDE VS. HUMILITY

A. Pride causes strife.

- 4:1-4—Pride and our desire for pleasure lead to conflict and sin.

B. Humility will draw us near to God.

- 4:7-10—Humility allows us to submit to God and resist the devil.
- 4:17—If you know to do good but don’t then it is sin.

VI. PATIENCE AND ENDURANCE

A. Be patient through suffering,

- 5:7-9—God will sustain us through our suffering and will remove the suffering when He returns.

VII. RESTORATION OF THOSE THAT WANDER FROM THE TRUTH

Application

Trials are a way for Christians to draw closer to God. However:

- ☐ Even though God means for us to rejoice in our trials, our sinful desires can rob us of our joy as we face trials.
- ☐ The enemy seeks to have us be impatient and complain during trials and tribulation to try and draw us away from Christ.
- ☐ Impatience and complaining leads to doubt and doubt causes believers to have an unstable faith.

Faith is meant to be put into action. James teach us:

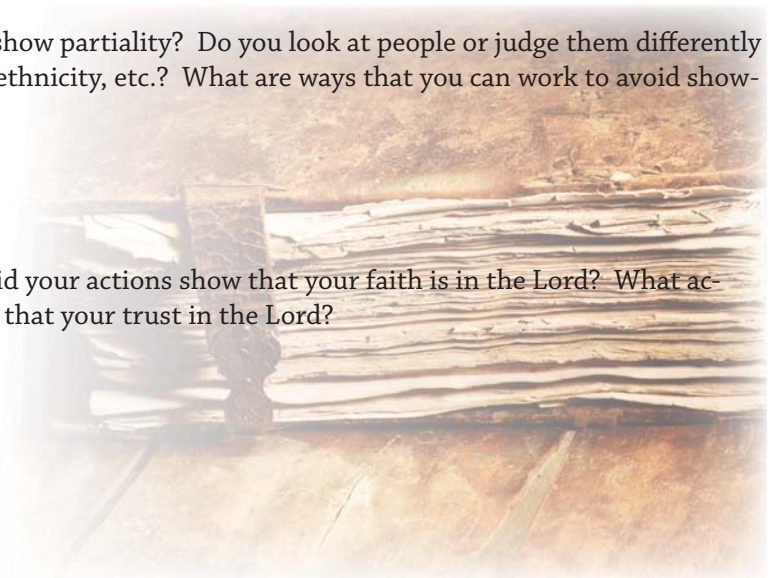
- ☐ That we need to do more than to just listen to God's Word. We must also be doers of God's Word if we are to grow in our relationship with God.
- ☐ True faith in God is visible through our actions.

Treating our fellow believers differently because of our personal biases is sinful. James tells us:

- ☐ The enemy uses the biases that we have in our flesh to show partiality between fellow believers based on wealth, ethnicity, educational achievement and many other measurements.

Questions

1. As you faced challenges and trials this past week, were you able to rejoice? What can you do to improve in your ability to rejoice during trials?
2. How do you look at other believers? Do you show partiality? Do you look at people or judge them differently because of their wealth, position, education, ethnicity, etc.? What are ways that you can work to avoid showing partially?
3. How did you live out your faith this week? Did your actions show that your faith is in the Lord? What actions can you take in the week ahead to show that your trust in the Lord?



Peter to the Dispersed

1-2 Peter

Mike Cervino

I. BELIEVER'S HOPE—1 Peter 1:1-12

- A. The letter greets all God's elect who put their faith in Christ that were scattered throughout Asia minor as a result of the great persecution—1 Peter 1:1-5.
- B. Praise to God for giving hope and security through Christ's death and resurrection, and that we would share His glory in heaven for eternity.
 - 1:5-12—Peter encourages the believers that he knows of the suffering that they were experiencing, and that if they persevered not only will it strengthen them, but it will result in glory to God.

II. BELIEVER'S DUTY IN CHRIST—1 Peter 1:13-25

- A. The command to live holy lives amid suffering separates Christians from the world, as a witness.
- B. Holiness keeps us unified with God and prepares us to endure trials by setting our hope on God's word rather than the world system like we did pre salvation.
- C. Since our souls have been purified by the unblemished blood of Christ we will love the brethren with sincerity out of reverence for God.

III. BELIEVER'S GROWTH IN CHRIST—1 Peter 2:1-25

- A. As we grow in Christ we must lay aside our old ways of living, meditate on and crave God's word, and offer spiritual sacrifices to God—1 Peter 2:1-10.
- B. The objective to live submissive holy lives different from the world glorifies while it silences the critics of the world who wrongfully accuses them—1 Peter 2:11-25.

IV. DUTIES FOR CHRISTIAN LIVING—1 Peter 3:1-22

- A. Peter describes the duties for Christian living as examples for husbands and wives as to shock the world with its counter cultural differences to offer a prescription of hope through Gods design—1 Peter 3:1-7.

V. SUFFERING—1 Peter 3:8-4:19

- A. Suffering for God—1 Peter 3:8-22.
 - As we strive to live out God's will for righteousness sake we will be blessed knowing that we are suffering for Christ's sake.
 - People who choose to harm you for doing good will recognize your reverence for the Lord then we can share the gospel.
- B. Believers are to be prepared to suffer unjustly and to face the abuse with Christ's attitude—1 Peter 4:1-11.
 - Since believers live out their lives for God they will no longer live in the flesh, because our desires are now to serve God and love others using our spiritual gifts.
- C. Considering trials and suffering as part of being a Christian we can praise God to have the privilege to suffer for his names sake and not be ashamed—1 Peter 4:12-19.

VI. ELDERS—1 Peter 5

- A. Peter commands elders to shepherd Gods flock with the motive of serving God and not for selfish gain with humility—1 Peter 5:1-5.
- B. Peter encourages elders to be watchful and alert of the cunning and craftiness of the devil and not to fall victim to sin—1 Peter 5:6-10.

VII. SECOND PETER—2 Peter 1-3

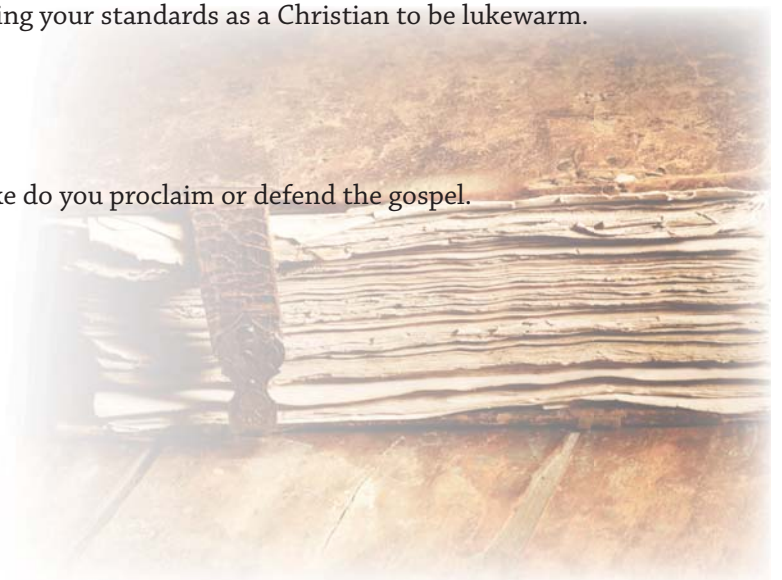
- A. Peter reminds believers that everything they need for living a Godly life is in his word—2 Peter 1.
- B. This chapter provides a warning to watch out for false prophets as they try to lead away believers with false doctrine—2 Peter 2.
- C. God promises that he will return and quickly so do not get carried away in the last days. But be on guard and be found blameless and he will fulfill his promises—2 Peter 3.

Application

- ☐ 2 Timothy 3:12 says all who live a Godly life in Christ will be persecuted.
- ☐ Put all your hope and faith in God and he will give you the courage to persevere (Proverbs 2:7-8).
- ☐ Hide His word in your heart so you might not sin against God. This is comforting (Psalm 119:11).
- ☐ Pray for supplication and protection (Psalm 18:1-3).
- ☐ Be thankful for the opportunity to be worthy to suffer for God.
- ☐ Submit to God and don't make any provision for the flesh (Romans 13:14).

Questions

1. Does your life reflect Jesus Christ in the areas of your relationships, submission to authorities, relationships.
2. Are you trying to avoid persecution by lowering your standards as a Christian to be lukewarm.
3. When your persecuted for righteousness sake do you proclaim or defend the gospel.
4. What are you resting your hope in?



John to the Beloved

1-3 John

Jeremy Hoffmann

I. Fellowship

- A. Unity is only possible because of Jesus Christ —1 John 1:1-4
- B. Fellowship with God and other believers is only possible after confession of sin —1 John 1:5-10.
 - God is faithful to forgive us when we confess sin
- C. Our obedience to God will show if we are really His followers—1 John 2:3-6.
 - God cannot be deceived and knows our hearts and motivations
- D. We cannot love both God and the world—1 John 2:15-17.
 - God will lead us to life, the world will lead us to death
- E. Our fellowship is based on the truth of God's Word—1 John 2:21-23.
- F. Followers of God never lose hope or give up—1 John 2:28-29.
 - As a result of our sins being forgiven, we will not fear or regret the coming of Christ

II. LOVE

- A. We are the children of God and will not be accepted by the world —John 3:1-6.
 - God's children will purify themselves by confessing their sin
- B. Jesus set the example of true sacrifice—1 John 3:16-20.
 - Love requires action and compassion
- C. Seeing God's love for us, we will be compelled to love others—1 John 4:7-12.
 - By loving others, we show them God and His love
- D. We cannot hate others and still love God—1 John 4:20-21.

III. TRUTH

- A. God loves us and provides salvation through Jesus—1 John 5:11-13.
- B. God hears our prayers and provides for our needs—1 John 5:14-15.

IV. ENCOURAGEMENT

- A. In order to obey, we must love and in order to love, we must obey—2 John 1:6.
- B. We show that we trust God when we are generous with others—3 John 1:5-8.

V. WARNING

- A. Beware of those who deny the truth of God's Word—2 John 1:7.
- B. Pride has no place in the church or God's kingdom—3 John 1:9-10.
- C. Follow Jesus as the perfect example and examine those who influence us—3 John 1:11.

Application

Confession of sin is required for unity with God:

- ☐ God is faithful to us through forgiveness of our sin
- ☐ We must be faithful to him through confession of our sin

God must be first in our lives:

- ☐ God gave His son for us
- ☐ We must give up the love of worldly things

We must remain in Him:

- ☐ God gave us Jesus even when we were His enemies
- ☐ We must be renewing our minds with God's word and never stray from the truth

Love must be shown by our actions:

- ☐ God showed his love by sending Jesus as a sacrifice for us
- ☐ We must love God by obeying Him and love others by showing them compassion

Questions

1. What keeps me from confessing my sin?

Am I arrogant, so I think my sin is not that bad (especially compared to others)?

Am I proud, so I am afraid of what others might think of me?

Do I feel that my sin is justified in my situation?

Do I simply enjoy the pleasure of sin more than the pleasure of God?

2. What do I put before God?

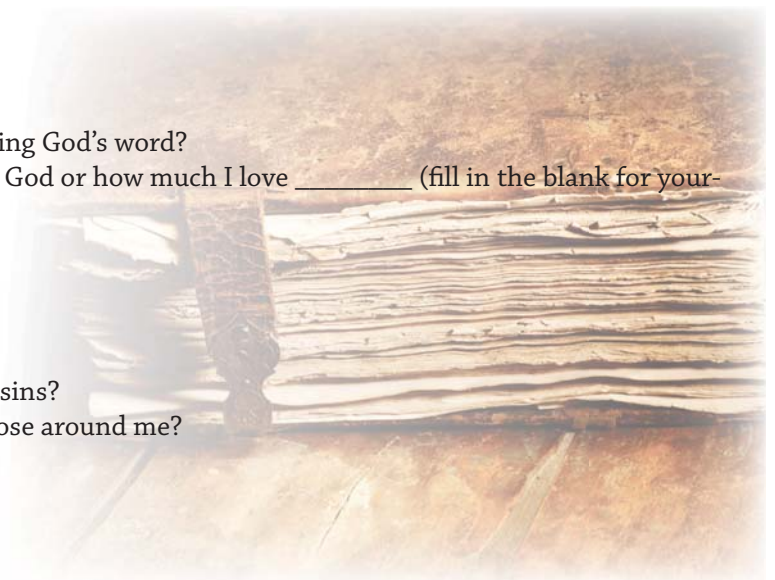
What do I prioritize before praying and reading God's word?

Do others around me know how much I love God or how much I love _____ (fill in the blank for yourself)?

3. Do I really love God and others?

Do I obey God and humbly confess all of my sins?

Do I share the joy that I have in God with those around me?



Jude to the Called

Jude



Josh Saeli

I. THE WARNING OF JUDGMENT

A. Jude warned the church of the false teachers—Jude 3-7.

- 3-4—Jude’s reason for writing this book was to defend the faith because of the rapid involvement of distorted teachers within churches.
- 5-7—Warnings from God about previous unbelievers and their eternal consequences.

B. Jude describes the characteristics of the false teachers—Jude 8-13.

- 8-10—The false teachers are described as blasphemers.
- 11—Jude references Cain and how the false teachers are “killing” the belief of others like Cain killed Abel.
- 12-13—Jude describes these men’s selfish behaviour as a great danger and explains how God has prepared a prison for them in deepest darkness.

C. The reality of judgement is known through Enoch’s warning—Jude 14-16.

- 14-15—Jude repeats Enoch’s warning to emphasise how bad the false teachers are in God’s sight.
- 16—These men forget that God in Jesus has rescued them and all they want to do is to satisfy their own wicked desires.

D. Our trust in Jesus Christ must be strengthening—Jude 17-23.

- 17-19—The warnings that the apostles said about the false teachers.
- 20-21—Jude explains that we are to be building ourselves up in the faith, praying diligently and waiting for the mercy of Jesus Christ.
- 22-23—Jude explains how we need to be helpful to those who doubt, rescue those who are in fire and care for those who refuse to turn to God.

E. Doxology—Jude 24-25.

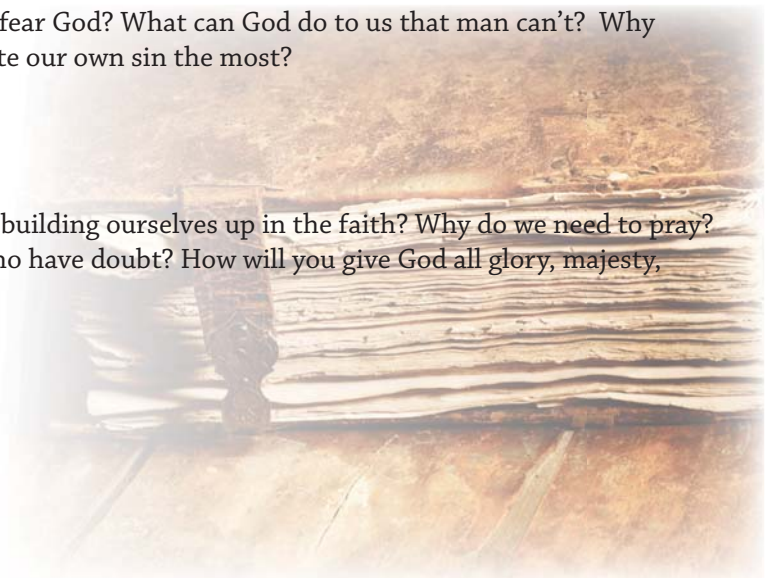
- 24—Jude ends this letter with hope and joy.
- 25—Christ is the only one who is able to keep you from stumbling away from the faith and no one comes to the father except through Christ (John 14:6).

Application

Within the Book of Jude, it becomes clear that the lives of sinners is in need of change to line up with the perfect word of God. We see the first point of application in the first verses of this book where is commands believers to defend the word of God. When Jude talks about some of the wicked people, he talks about how they abused the grace of God and made it an excuse for them to continue in sin. For we must be hating our sin and changing from it so that we are not abusing God's love and forgiveness. In the following verses, Jude talks about how God will punish the wicked. Jude says that those who go against God are destroyed in an eternal fire. We must be fearing God and daily reminding ourselves of his power. Our trust in Jesus Christ must be strengthening as we grow as believers in Christ. We must be building up one another in the faith and be in prayer. We must be eagerly waiting for God's mercy through Jesus Christ our Lord that brings us to eternal life in heaven. We are commanded to be helpful to those who are in doubt and refuse to turn to God. We must be giving God all glory, majesty, dominion, and authority for our whole life. We must be thankful and and joyful always because God had mercy on us when we didn't glorify Him.

Questions

1. As in Jude 1:3-4, this week, where do you see false teachers in the churches today? Where do we see people trying to tear the church apart from the inside?
2. In Jude 1:5-16, this week, why do we need to fear God? What can God do to us that man can't? Why does God hate our sin? Why must we then hate our own sin the most?
3. As in Jude 1:17-25, this week, how can we be building ourselves up in the faith? Why do we need to pray? What does it mean to have mercy on those who have doubt? How will you give God all glory, majesty, dominion, and authority this week?



Christ to His Church

Revelation 1-3



I. VISION OF THE RISEN CHRIST—Revelation 1

- A. John, exiled on Patmos, sees a vision of the Lord Jesus Christ, and Christ commissions him to write what he saw.
- 1:1-8—Introduction and greeting.
 - 1:9-18—In the vision, Christ is clothed in white, representing His holiness and purity. His eyes, like a flame of fire, speak to His piercing gaze knowing the depths of His Church. His feet, like fine brass, speak to Christ as Judge. His voice, the sound of many waters, is the voice of authority.
 - He stands in the midst of 7 golden lamp stands, holding seven stars in His right hand..
 - 1:19-20—John is to write what he saw, Jesus in the midst of His church (the seven lampstands), holding its leadership in the power of His right hand (the seven stars).
 - The things which are = the church age, addressed in Revelation 2-3.
 - The things which must take place after the church age = Revelation 6-18.

II. THE THINGS WHICH ARE: THE CHURCH AGE—Revelation 2-3

- A. Ephesus: Cold orthodoxy—Revelation 2:1-7.
- A danger to the church is having mechanics, but no passion for Christ. Jesus comes first, there can be no close second.
- B. Smyrna: Persecuted but not abandoned—Revelation 2:8-11.
- The name Smyrna means myrrh which gives off its sweet aroma when crushed. God holds His own through trials
- C. Pergamus: Compromising church—Revelation 2:12-17.
- Christianity is Jesus plus nothing. We cannot simply add the Lord to our lives. Call sin what it is and confess and repent.
- D. Thyatira: Tolerant and corrupt—Revelation 2:18-29
- Morality challenged by godless influence. A little leaven spoils the whole lump. Flee immorality.
- E. Sardis: Complacent and lifeless—Revelation 3:1-6.
- “Because we’ve always done it that way” will destroy a congregation. Jesus calls them dead. Christians only in name- the better question: are you biblical?
- F. Philadelphia: Faithful—Revelation 3:7-13.
- This is the true church, the one which acknowledges their sin; confesses- agrees with God; forsakes it and walks in God given repentance (2 Timothy 2:25). There is no rebuke for this church, and the promise to be kept from the hour of testing (The Tribulation) to come on those who dwell upon the earth (unbelievers).
- G. Laodicea: Lukewarm—Revelation 3:14-22.
- The warning that a Christian with one foot still in the world is no Christian at all. “I stand at the door and knock” is not an evangelical call. It is a rebuke that this type of church has left Jesus on the outside. They will be vomited from His mouth.

Application

Church fathers peg the writing of Revelation around A.D 93-96, while John was in exile on Patmos under Roman Emperor Domitian. The key to understanding the book is the quick outline/instructions given by Jesus to John in Revelation 1.

Jesus appears to John in a vision. In chapter 1 verse 19 John is told to write down three things, the things which he had seen. This is what John is writing in chapter 1 concerning his vision of Jesus Christ. Then he is told to write down the things which are. Those things are depicted in seven letters dictated by Jesus to John and these make up Revelation chapters 2 and 3. The seven churches selected make a literal mail route in Asia Minor. They were seven actual congregations of the first century. They also represented seven conditions of the church at large throughout the whole of church history.

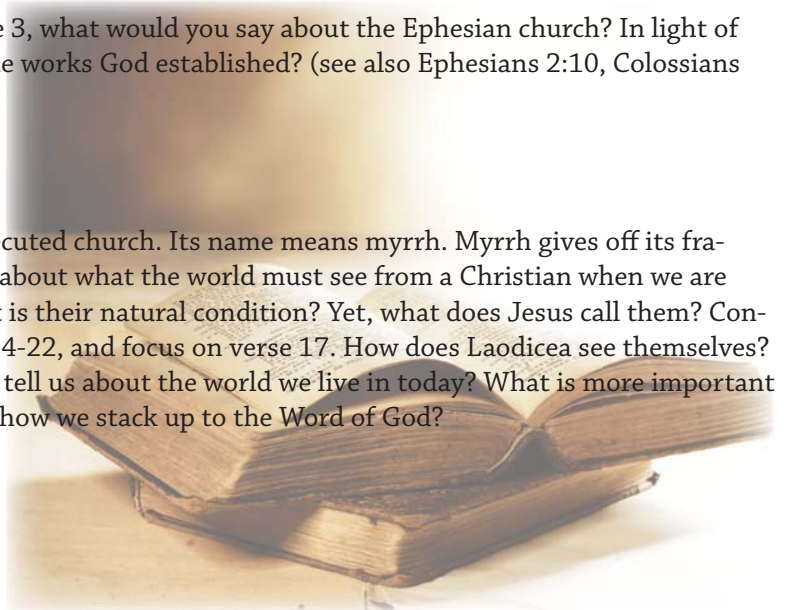
- ❑ APPLICATION POINT: In seeing Jesus' commendations and warnings in chapters 2-3, we need to apply our lives today as both individuals and congregations. Finally in 1:19 Jesus gives the third thing to write: the things which must take place after these things (that is after the church age has closed).

So John uses chapter one to describe his vision of Jesus. In chapters 2 and 3 he writes down the letters Jesus dictated. Chapters 4 through 22 are what is yet to come and is what must take place. It is covered in the next section.

- ❑ APPLICATION POINT: Look at 1:20. The 7 golden lampstands represent the 7 churches. The 7 stars in Jesus' right hand represent the 7 angels of these churches. That word-angel- in this context, is best translated as 'messenger,' and would be the 7 leading elders of the 7 congregations. Jesus does not bring doctrine in through the back door. He uses the authority He puts in place- authority that He holds in His right hand as ultimate authority.

Questions

1. What encouragement would the church draw in the vision? Hint: where is Jesus standing in Revelation 1:13? Now combine that with verse 20. Where is Jesus, then and today?
2. Read Revelation 2:1-7. If we stopped at verse 3, what would you say about the Ephesian church? In light of verse 4, how important is motive in doing the works God established? (see also Ephesians 2:10, Colossians 3:23)
3. Read Revelation 2: 8-12. Smyrna is the persecuted church. Its name means myrrh. Myrrh gives off its fragrance when crushed. What does this tell us about what the world must see from a Christian when we are suffering in any way? Look at verse 9a. What is their natural condition? Yet, what does Jesus call them? Contrast this with Laodicea. Read Revelation 3:14-22, and focus on verse 17. How does Laodicea see themselves? How does Jesus see them? What should this tell us about the world we live in today? What is more important to us: worldly success and public opinion, or how we stack up to the Word of God?



Endtime Revelation

Revelation 4-22



I. THE THRONE ROOM OF HEAVEN—Revelation 4-5

- A. John is called up to heaven “in the spirit” and is given revelation of future events, beginning the third part of the Revelation 1:19 reference given by Jesus, the things that must take place, after the church age.
 - 4:1-11—Worship is depicted in heaven. God’s holiness and worthiness are proclaimed by the cherubim and the redeemed church.
 - 5:1-14—Jesus, the Lamb, is the only One worthy to open the scroll, representing the title deed to the earth.
 - Four living creatures and 24 elders worship God as Creator and Redeemer.

II. THE TRIBULATION—Revelation 6-18- 3

- A. Jesus opens the first six seals of the scroll, releasing judgment on earth—Revelation 6.
 - 6:1-2—White horse: the false christ, conqueror/deceiver.
 - 6:3-4—Red horse: war.
 - 6:5-6—Black horse: famine.
 - 6:7-8—Pale horse: death and Hades.
 - 6:9-11—Tribulation martyrs seek God’s vengeance.
 - 6:12-17—Super-natural disasters.
- B. Jewish evangelists (144,000), multitude saved out of the Great Tribulation—Revelation 7.
- C. The seventh seal releases seven trumpet judgments—Revelation 8:1-11:19.
 - 8:1-7—Trumpet 1: Destruction of one third of earth’s greenery.
 - 8:8-9— Trumpet 2: One third of the sea turned to blood.
 - 8:10-11— Trumpet 3: One third of the fresh water turned bitter.
 - 8:12— Trumpet 4: One third of the sun, moon, and stars go dark.
 - 8:13-9:12—Trumpet 5: Locust demons from the bottomless pit.
 - 9:13-21—Trumpet 6: Demon force kills one third of mankind.
 - 10:1-11:14—Interlude between trumpets 6 and 7.
 - 10:1-7—Mighty angel holds the scroll.
 - 10:8-11—John commanded to prophesy warning.
 - 11:1-14—The two witnesses prophesy judgment and offer salvation.
 - 11:15-19—Trumpet 7: Proclaims the power of God’s Kingdom
- D. Satan cast from heaven and loosed on the earth—Revelation 12.
 - 12:1-6—Vision of Israel, Satan’s rebellion.
 - 12:7-12—Satan thrown from heaven for good.
 - 12:13-17—Satan targets Israel and all who come to Christ during the Tribulation.
- E. The Antichrist (beast from the sea) and the False Prophet (beast from the earth)—Revelation 13.
- F. Three Great Angels—Revelation 14.
 - 14:6-7—First Angel proclaims the gospel for all to hear.
 - 14:8—Second angel proclaims Babylon (kingdom of antichrist) will fall.
 - 14:9—Third angel warns of judgment to all who follow antichrist, blessing for those who come to Christ.
 - 14:14-20—The reaping of the wicked by Christ, slaughter at Armageddon
- G. Seven bowls of God’s wrath poured out on the earth—Revelation 15-16.
 - 15—Prelude to seven bowls of God’s wrath
 - 16:1-21—Seven bowls: 1) Cancerous sores on mankind 2) Sea turned to blood 3) Fresh waters turned to blood 4) sun severely scorches mankind 5) Painful darkness covers the antichrist’s kingdom 6) Euphrates dries up, armies gather at Armageddon 7) Major earthquake.
- H. Vision of scarlet woman on a scarlet beast—Revelation 17.
- I. Foretelling the fall of Babylon, the system/kingdom of Antichrist—Revelation 18.

III. THE PHYSICAL RETURN OF CHRIST AND THE MARRIAGE SUPPER OF THE LAMB—Revelation 19

IV. THE THOUSAND YEAR MILLENNIAL REIGN OF JESUS CHRIST ON EARTH—Revelation 20:1-10

V. THE GREAT WHITE THRONE JUDGMENT—Revelation 20:11-15

VI. NEW HEAVEN AND NEW EARTH: THE ETERNAL STATE—Revelation 21-22

Application

Revelation (Greek apokalupsis) means unveiling or disclosure. Jesus Christ reveals spiritual truth to the aging apostle John, while John was exiled on the island of Patmos. In a word, Revelation reveals the glory of Jesus Christ.

- ❑ APPLICATION POINT: The last time the world at large saw Jesus Christ, He was on a cross. The next time they see Him, He will return as conquering King and Judge. He is both Savior and Lord. No one 'makes' Him Lord and Savior: God the Father did (Acts 2:36). True believers acknowledge that He is both Lord and Savior.

Theologians date the writing around A.D.93-96 while Rome's Emperor was Domitian (A.D.81-96). The church was under heavy persecution.

- ❑ APPLICATION POINT: In giving the Revelation to John and subsequently His church, Jesus gives comfort and encouragement to His own then and throughout this Church-age- for He is coming back. It also shows that God is sovereign and ever in control.

The broad strokes of the chapters can be broken down thusly: In chapters 4-5 we see worship in heaven. Note the ministry of the angels. Also note the 24 elders (12 tribes of Israel/12 apostles, the redeemed). More appropriately they represent the church (white garments, golden crowns, singing the song of the redeemed (5:8-10).

- ❑ APPLICATION POINT: the church is in heaven before the Tribulation hits the earth (also see Revelation 3:10).

In chapters 6-18, we see the Tribulation (the final 3 ½ years are called "The Great Tribulation.") Chapter 19 reveals the physical return of Jesus Christ- no longer the suffering servant. Chapter 20:1-10 explains the 1000 year millennial reign of Jesus Christ on earth, and chapter 20:11-15 the Great White Throne Judgment. In Chapters 21-22 we read of the hope of the New Heaven; New Earth: the eternal state.

Questions

1. In Revelation 4:1, John is brought to heaven "in the Spirit." He is told that he will be shown "things which must take place after this." "This" is the church age. Think about the phrase 'must take place.' What is coming is God's wrath against unbelievers and wickedness. There have been so many works of fiction concerning the end times and avoiding Armageddon. Read Romans 1:18-32. Why must God's wrath take place?
2. Read Revelation 4:8 and Isaiah 6:1-8. What attribute of God is stressed in heaven? Why? The world rejects God. Why? The Tribulation will last 7 years. Does God still offer repentance? Read Revelation 7:9-17. What is the reaction of the wicked? See Revelation 6:15-16; 9:6, 20-21; 16:9,11,21.
3. Read Revelation 19:20. Who is captured and where are they sent? Now read Revelation 20:10. Who is captured and where is he sent? Who else was there when that person was cast there? Were they alive or dead? What does that tell you about eternity for the wicked? How does this drive you to live today? (Read Matthew 7:21-23).

