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THE STORY OF



Scripture

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# Story of Scripture Outline

## Introduction

### I. Introduction: Purpose of the class

1. The Bible is one book from start to finish.
  - a. The author is God written by humans
    - i. Verbal plenary inspiration: God's thoughts expressed by human authors with the superintendence by the Holy Spirit.
    - ii. **Definition:** The act of God by which He superintended (guided) the human authors of the 66 books of the Bible so that using their own individual personalities they composed and recorded without error His revelation to man in the words of the original.<sup>1</sup>
    - iii. **"The words of God written in the words of men"**<sup>2</sup>
    - iv. Inerrant, without error in everything that it affirms.
  - b. It is in total agreement from start to finish.
2. The Bible is about Jesus – Christocentric Hermeneutics/Interpretation
  - a. *"And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, Jesus explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself."* **Luke 24:27** NIV
  - b. Trinitarian in nature
  - c. Jesus and the apostles, early church relied on OT.
3. Old Testament in the New Testament
  - a. Almost 2/3 of the Bible is Old Testament
  - b. As many as 2500 quotes and allusions from OT to NT

### II. Structure of the Bible - 5-12-5-5-12<sup>3</sup>

1. Structure of the Old Testament:
  - a. 5 – Pentateuch  
Gen, Exodus, Lev, Numbers, Deuteronomy
  - b. 12 – History  
Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1,2 Sam, 1,2 Kings, 1,2 Chron, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther
  - c. 5 – Poetry  
Job, Psalms, Prov, Eccl, Song of Songs
  - d. 5 – Major Prophets – large books

<sup>1</sup> The Chicago Statement on Inerrancy 1978, Chicago Statement on Hermeneutic, 1982

<sup>2</sup> Dr. D. Akin, Pres SEBTS

<sup>3</sup> Dr Mark Yarbrough, Pres, DTS



- Isa, Jer., Lam, Ezra., Dan
- e. 12 – Minor Prophets – small books (because of size only)  
Hos, Joe, Amo, Oba, Jon, Mic, Nah, Hab, Zep, Hag, Zech., Mal

2. All of the books of Poetry, Major Prophets and Minor Prophets drop into the books of History.
- Pentateuch and history are in some order
  - Poetry and prophets are not in chronological order.

### Old Testament – Book of the Law

### III. The Bible is one story from start to finish – **Creation, Fall, Redemption, Re-creation.**

- Redemption of mankind. The story of Jesus from start to finish
- Genesis – “In the beginning, God”
  - Moses wrote Gen so that the Israelites would remember and understand.
    - Don’t care if you believe new earth, old earth, 7 literal days, etc.
    - What is important is that God is from eternity to eternity, created everything from nothing by his word, and is still actively in control of all of his creation.
  - Gen 1:1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. 2 Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.*
  - John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was with God in the beginning. 3 Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. 4 In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. 5 The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.*
  - Gen 1,2 is a picture of creation and shalom. (Peace, but much more)
    - God spoke and it was good, it was good, it was good. Then with Adam, God breathed life into him and it was very good.
    - God walked (dwelled) with Adam and Eve.
      - To dwell is also translated to “tabernacle.”
      - The divide between heaven and earth doesn’t seem to be all that great. God desires to be with people.
    - Gen 3** - Man has a sin problem– penalty for sin is death.
      - Adam and Eve really wanted to become gods.

2. Satan proposed the basic question: who has the right to rule – God or Satan?
  3. (**Rom 6:23** *For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*)
  4. Blood alone covers sin, first sacrifice - done by God.
  5. God has a solution – a redeemer, the Seed
- iv. God has a solution to the sin problem.
1. **Gen 3:15** *And I will put enmity between you (the Devil) and the woman, and between your offspring (or seed) and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.”*
  2. First promise of a deliverer - i.e. Adamic covenant.
- e. Gen 4 – Cain and Able – magnification of the sin problem
- f. Gen 5 – Genealogy – they lived and they died, etc. except for Enoch.
- g. Rebellion theme in Gen – Adam, before the flood, before Babel.
- h. Gen 6 – 9 – Noah and the flood because the planet is saturated with sin and the wages of sin is death.
- i.
- Gen 6:9** *This is the account of Noah and his family. Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked faithfully with God.*
- 10** *Noah had three sons: Shem, Ham and Japheth. 11* *Now the earth was corrupt in God’s sight and was full of violence. 12* *God saw how corrupt the earth had become, for all the people on earth had corrupted their ways.<sup>4</sup>*
- i. (Methuselah, Lamech)
  - ii. Gen 6:18 – God makes a covenant with Noah. (First time the word is used in the Bible)
  - iii. **God always has a remnant!**
  - iv. Noahic Covenant – no destruction by water – rainbow is the sign.
- j. Gen 10, 11 – Another genealogy post flood and the fall back into disobedience. **What are they told to do?** Multiply and replenish the earth. **What did they do?** Stay and build up themselves.
- i. Gen 11 – Babel, they want to make their name great.
    1. **Gen 11:3** *They said to each other, “Come, let’s make bricks and bake them thoroughly.” They used brick instead of stone, and tar for mortar. 4* *Then they said, “Come, let us build ourselves a city, with a tower that reaches to the heavens, so that we*

<sup>4</sup> *The New International Version.* (2011). (Ge 6:9–12). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

*may make a name for ourselves; otherwise we will be scattered over the face of the whole earth.”*

2. God confused the languages and scattered them.
  - ii. Gen 12 - God wants to make Abram's name great.
- k. Focus goes to Abram and his line leading to Jesus.
  - i. Story slows down, the plot starts to develop.
  - ii. A Covenant God
3. Covenant timeline – A covenant is a contract. (See attached Covenants doc.)
  - a. Definition: A legal term denoting a formal and legally binding declaration – a statement, a fact – of benefits to be given by one party to another, with or without conditions attached.
  - b. Types of covenants
    - i. Conditional – both parties have responsibilities to fulfill.
    - ii. Unconditional – faithfulness is God's, not ours. We would always fail.
    - iii. Some believe that all covenants are conditional. While the covenant itself may be unconditional, individuals living within that covenant may not receive the blessings because of sin.
  - c. God will always fulfill his part of the Covenant because of his Covenant Love.
  - d. Adamic Covenant (Gen 3), Noahic Covenant (Gen 6), Abrahamic Covenant (Gen 12, 15), Mosaic Covenant (Ex 20), Palestinian Covenant (Deut 28-30), Davidic Covenant (2 Sam 7), New Covenant (Jeremiah 31).
4. **Gen 12:1-3 – Abrahamic Covenant** (Confirmed in Gen 15.)
  - a. **Abrahamic Covenant is key to scripture.** Unconditional covenant to bless the earth and bring Christ
    1. A people
    2. A land
    3. A worldwide blessing.

*Gen 12:1* The LORD had said to Abram, “Go from your country, your people and your father’s household to the land I will show you. **2**“I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. **3**I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.”



- b. Unconditional covenant - God will fulfill his agreement and, eventually, bring the Messiah to bless the earth and
- c. What did Abraham (and his son, grandson) actually receive? A small start of a people but they never owned the land. By the time of the journey into Egypt they numbered 70 people.
- d. Gen 15 – God tells Abraham that his people will be enslaved in Egypt for 400 years before they can claim the land.
- e. Early example of justification by faith: *Gen 15:6* *Abram believed the LORD, and he credited it to him as righteousness.* (Rom 4:3, 9, 22, 23; Gal 3:6; Jas 2:23; Ps 106:31)
- f. Examples of Christ – sacrifice of Isaac, meeting with Melchizedek, example of salvation by faith alone before circumcision or the Law – faith in whom? The Seed.
- g. Gen 12-50 – Generations of Abraham, Jewish patriarchs.
  - i. Abraham, Sarah, Ishmael (Hagar), Isaac (12-24),
    - 1. Isaac means “laughter”
    - 2. Ishmael means “God hears.” God blessed him even though he was not the son of promise.
    - 3. Gen 25:9 – Abraham buried by Ishmael and Isaac.
  - ii. Isaac, Rebecca, Jacob and Esau (25-26),
    - 1. Jacob (cheater, deceiver or supplanter)
    - 2. Esau, Jacob’s twins, with Esau oldest – Jacob cheats him for the birthright and blessings.
  - iii. Jacob (27-35),
    - 1. “Deceiver” is deceived by Laban must marry Leah and then work for Rachel.
    - 2. 12 children by two wives and two concubines.
    - 3. Rachel’s sons, Joseph and Benjamin his favorites.
  - iv. Joseph (36-50)
    - 1. Pampered and arrogant – Daddy’s favorite.
    - 2. Brothers sell him into slavery instead of killing him.
    - 3. Excels in Potiphar’s household but refuses to compromise.
    - 4. Imprisoned, interprets dreams for prisoners and then Pharaoh.
    - 5. Put in charge of famine preparation and relief.
    - 6. Encounters brothers and finally forgives them.
    - 7. Jacob and family move to Egypt (70 persons) live for 440 years as prophesied to Abraham.

*Gen 50:24* Then Joseph said to his brothers, “I am about to die. But God will surely come to your aid and take you up out of this land to the land he promised on oath to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.” *25* And Joseph made the Israelites swear an oath and said, “God will surely come to your aid, and then you must carry my bones up from this place.”<sup>5</sup>

- h. **Looking at the people in Genesis, do you see a pattern?** We begin to see that God doesn’t just use perfect people. He uses very imperfect people that continually fail him, sin and need to repent. God is faithful. He will bring about his solution to man’s sin problem.
- i. Abrahamic covenant is re-established with Isaac and Jacob and referred to all through the Bible as such.

## 5. Exodus to Deuteronomy

a. **Exodus** - Moses leads the people out of Egypt and gives the Law

- i. From good – Gen 50 – to bad – Exodus 1.
  - 1. Israel has multiplied – They are a people! (Estimated at near 1 million.)
  - 2. New Pharaoh doesn’t know Joseph. 9Ex 1:80
  - 3. Fear of an uprising if there is war.
  - 4. Israel is enslaved.
- ii. Moses was prepared by God for his assignment.
  - 1. 40 years in Pharaoh’s palace, finest education available but knew his origins.
  - 2. 40 years in the wilderness tending someone else’s sheep, learning to live without the luxuries that he was accustomed to.
  - 3. 40 years leading Israel using his knowledge, experience and spiritual growth to fulfill God’s mission.
- iii. To be a nation, the people must have:
  - 1. Land
  - 2. Law
- iv. What did they have? – only a lot of people.
- v. Ex 12 – Passover; Ex 20 – 10 Comm;
- vi. **Passover and the entire Exodus narrative is a picture of God’s plan of salvation – redemption – faith in a Covenant God.**
- vii. **Mosaic Covenant**

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<sup>5</sup> *The New International Version*. (2011). (Ge 50:24–26). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

1. Set the rules and commandments for successful living in the land. Ex 20-23 gives details laws.
  - a. Civil Laws
  - b. Religious Laws
  - c. Moral Laws
2. The civil or Magistrate laws dealt with the legal system much the same as ours does today. The religious laws covered the roles of the priests, the sacrifices, feast days, and other religious obligations. The moral laws, starting with the 10 Commandments, dealt with how to live lives as God wants us to.
3. Why was the Law given? (Gal lesson #8, pgs. 4-6)

**Gal 3:19** *Why, then, was the law given at all? It was added because of transgressions until the Seed to whom the promise referred had come. The law was given through angels and entrusted to a mediator.*

There are multiple interpretations of the phrase “because of transgressions.” Constable breaks them into primarily four:

*First*, some take it to mean, “to restrain transgressions.” This seems legitimate since all law has a restraining effect.

*Second*, some understand the phrase to mean, “to reveal transgressions.” This seems valid in view of other statements that Paul made (cf. Rom. 3:20; 4:15; 5:13).

*Third*, it may mean, “to provoke transgressions.” This, too, seems legitimate. A “Do not touch! Wet paint!” sign on a bench tempts people to touch the bench to see if the paint really is wet.

*Fourth*, some have understood that Paul meant, “to awaken a conviction of transgressions.” This seems less likely in this context since Paul showed more concern with the objective facts of salvation history than he did with the subjective development of faith in the individual.<sup>6</sup>

4. Ex 24 – Covenant confirmed
  - a. Conditional
  - b. The people agreed to the covenant.
- viii. Instructions for the Tabernacle – a place where God can dwell with his people (limited because of sin.)

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<sup>6</sup> Constable’s Notes, Gal 3:19

- ix. What was Israel's function? To be a nation of priests. To be a guide for pagan nations to come to God.
- b. Leviticus – Sacrificial system given to the Levites
  - i. What one word could you use to describe Leviticus? Blood
  - ii. A Holy God cannot tolerate sin.
  - iii. God stipulates that the penalty for sin is death.
  - iv. God is willing to accept a temporary substitute for sin.
  - v. God's grace allows judgement to be postponed until sin is dealt with in totality in Christ.
  - vi. Understand that "purity" does not simply refer to sinless. To the Israelites, ritual purity was extremely important. Without ritual purity, you were an outcast.
- c. Numbers – 2 census, one of those that refused to go into the land and the second at the end of the wondering for those that entered.
  - i. 1<sup>st</sup> census of all those over 20 years of age was only 14 months out of Egypt – ready to go into the land of promise.
  - ii. Num 13 – spies and refused to go into the land – take another lap (Yarbrough)
  - iii. 2<sup>nd</sup> census – Num 26
  - iv. God did not abandon Israel. Their clothes, shoes did not wear out, they were fed daily. God still loved and cared for them even in their rebellion and during their punishment.
- d. Deuteronomy – 2<sup>nd</sup> giving of the Law to the new generation - reiteration.
  - i. Deut 5 – 10 Commandments
  - ii. Journey continues for 40 years until the disobedient generation dies.
  - iii. **Deut 28-30** - blessings and curses –
    - 1. crops and kids – prosperity.
    - 2. confusion and calamity - conquered.
  - iv. Predicts and explains the cycle of disobedience, calamity, repentance and prosperity. Back to disobedience, etc.
  - v. Understanding Deut 28 explains everything that happens in the rest of Israel's history. They live by or die by the Covenants.
  - vi. **Deut 30** promises restoration and forgiveness with repentance. (Moses speaking.)

*Deut 30:11* Now what I am commanding you today is not too difficult for you or beyond your reach. *12* It is not up in heaven, so that you have to ask, “Who will ascend into heaven to get it and proclaim it to us so we may obey it?” *13* Nor is it beyond the sea, so that you have to ask, “Who will cross the sea to get it and proclaim it to us so we may obey it?” *14* No, the word is very near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart so you may obey it.

*15* See, I set before you today life and prosperity, death and destruction. *16* For I command you today to love the LORD your God, to walk in obedience to him, and to keep his commands, decrees and laws; then you will live and increase, and the LORD your God will bless you in the land you are entering to possess.

*17* But if your heart turns away and you are not obedient, and if you are drawn away to bow down to other gods and worship them, *18* I declare to you this day that you will certainly be destroyed. You will not live long in the land you are crossing the Jordan to enter and possess.

*19* This day I call the heavens and the earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live *20* and that you may love the LORD your God, listen to his voice, and hold fast to him. For the LORD is your life, and he will give you many years in the land he swore to give to your fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

vii. Pentateuch lays the groundwork for the entire Bible.

### **Food for thought:**

1. Is it really important that one believes that the Bible is the inspired word of God and not just a very good and helpful book for living one's life?
2. Is there really such a thing as original sin? Why are we being punished for what Adam and Eve did?
3. Explain the Abrahamic Covenant. Why is that important to us today?
4. It sure seems that the heroes of the Bible certainly were flawed. Is that a comfort? How can God use such imperfect and rebellious people?
5. How does understanding Deut 28-30 help in viewing the rest of the Old Testament?
6. If Israel were the chosen people, how do we as Gentiles fit into God's plan?



# Introduction

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**The Bible is one continuous story from start to finish.** It's message centers on the promise of a Savior, Jesus Christ, to redeem a fallen humanity. So, yes, it truly is all about Him. It is in agreement from beginning to end.

The study will encompass the entirety of the Bible showing that it is Christocentric. We will cover the structure and continuity of scripture. We will see that there is a continual story line from beginning to end revealing God's plan and grace.

**Old Testament in the New Testament.** Almost 2/3 of the Bible is Old Testament and as many as 2500 quotes and allusions from the Old Testament are in the New Testament.

**“And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, Jesus explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.”**

*Luke 24:27 NIV*





# Covenants

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Before we delve into specific Scriptures, we need to define and understand this key element of the culture from the very beginning to the time of Christ and on until the Lord returns—covenants.

What is a covenant? The Hebrew word for covenant is **Berit**. The Greek is **Diatheke**. According to Strong's Concordance, **berit**, occurs 284 times in the Old Testament. The equivalent Greek word, **diatheke**, occurs 33 times in the New Testament. Obviously, we need to understand the definition and significance of covenants.

A formal definition is as follows:

*COVENANT—a contract or agreement between two parties. In the Old Testament the Hebrew word berith is always thus translated. Berith is derived from a root which means “to cut,” and hence a covenant is a “cutting,” with reference to the cutting or dividing of animals into two parts, and the contracting parties passing between them, in making a covenant (Gen. 15; Jer. 34:18, 19). The corresponding word in the New Testament Greek is diatheke*

The historically assumed procedure in the Near East in making or cutting a covenant required that the parties divide an animal in half. One portion was burnt as an offering to God or, in many cases, the gods of the particular people. The other half was consumed at a meal for the participants. The “cutting” aspect of the covenant ritual is clearly described in Genesis 15.

In its most basic form, a covenant is a legal term connoting a formal and legally binding declaration of benefits to be given by one party to another, with or without conditions attached. Biblically, it is used as a contract between individuals (Abraham and Abimelech, Gen 21:22-32), between nations (Solomon and Hiram, 1 Kings 5) and, most importantly, between God and both individuals and nations, particularly Israel.

There is considerable archeological evidence of covenants during all these time periods, primarily between national leaders, especially the Hittites. Some covenants or treaties were made with equals. In parity covenants, the principals would often refer to one another as “brothers.”

There were also agreements between unequal parties – a powerful king's treaty with a lesser king or vassal. The lesser was submissive to the greater. These are known as Suzerain/Vassal Covenants. In exchange for protection and



acceptance into the larger kingdom, vassals paid taxes, promised non-aggression with other vassals and swore complete obedience to the greater king. Israel had a Suzerain/Vassal treaty with the Gibeonites in Joshua 9 and 10. Usually, once a year the vassal would come before the king to pay taxes and swear allegiance. In other words, they renewed the covenant.

God's covenants with humankind are a form of either Royal Decrees or Suzerain/Vassal covenants.

Royal decrees are grants from a king to a subject. They are unconditional.

Suzerain/Vassal covenants carried conditions by which both sides agree. God is supreme and humans usually must abide by the conditions of the covenant. The responsibilities of both parties are spelled out and there are often consequences for breaking the contract.

**When God makes a pact or covenant with humans, there is one basic truth that must be accepted— God cannot break the agreement.**

When God makes a pact or covenant with humans, there is one basic truth that must be accepted – God cannot break the agreement. He cannot go back on His word. Only we can fail to live up to our side of the bargain. If and when we fail, however, God can enforce the conditions of the agreement or choose to forgive.

As we look at several passages in the Old Testament, we will see that there are two kinds of covenant, conditional and unconditional. There are differing theological opinions as to the existence of unconditional covenants. This stretches even to the question of eternal security or whether one is unconditionally saved. (You can make up your own mind on that one. I personally feel very secure in my salvation.)

We will see, as we go through this study, that some covenants are absolutely conditional. God has requirements and conditions that must be met. Others are more clearly unconditional. God made a covenant with Noah and all of his dependents never to destroy the earth again with water.

*Gen 9:8 Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him:*

*9 “I now establish my covenant with you and with your descendants after you*

*10 and with every living creature that was with you—the birds, the livestock and all the wild animals, all those that living creature on earth.*

11 I establish my covenant with you: Never again will all life be destroyed by the waters of a flood; never again will there be a flood to destroy the earth.”  
12 And God said, “This is the sign of the covenant I am making between me and you and every living creature with you, a covenant for all generations to come:  
13 I have set my rainbow in the clouds, and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and the earth.  
14 Whenever I bring clouds over the earth and the rainbow appears in the clouds,  
15 I will remember my covenant between me and you and all living creatures of every kind. Never again will the waters become a flood to destroy all life.  
16 Whenever the rainbow appears in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and all living creatures of every kind on the earth.”  
17 So God said to Noah, “This is the sign of the covenant I have established between me and all life on the earth.”

That was unconditional and is still in force to this day. Note also that this is a covenant with all living creatures, not just humankind. We still see the sign of the rainbow. Absolutely nothing is required on our part. He did not say that the earth would not be destroyed, just not by water. (2 Pet 3:10)

However, the first time the word covenant is used in Scripture is in **Gen 6:17-18**.

17 I am going to bring floodwaters on the earth to destroy all life under the heavens, every creature that has the breath of life in it. Everything on earth will perish.  
18 But I will establish my covenant with you, and you will enter the ark— you and your sons and your wife and your sons’ wives with you.

God confirms His covenant with Noah to save him and his family from the flood. The terms are not discussed, but Noah was required to believe God and obey the explicit instructions to build the Ark, take the animals and enter with his family on God’s command. This appears to be a different covenant than the rainbow but are tied together through the events.

Again, we go back to the problem, sin. Noah and his family were saved by grace. He was a sinner – that becomes very obvious as we read about his life. His descendants were sinners. Look at what occurs shortly after the flood. The Tower of Babel was a human attempt to make their name great instead of making God’s name great. Sin has consequences – death. Only God can provide the solution.

Understanding what covenants are and the importance they held to the Jewish nation opens up a lot of Scripture. The Jews were well aware of the Mosaic or Sinai Covenant and the concept of Blessings and Curses that came with obedience and disobedience to that covenant. They were also mindful of the delivering King/Messiah. This was the Davidic Covenant and the promise of particularly true in the time of Christ.



They wanted independence from Rome. Most importantly, they were ever conscious of the promises to Abraham and that they were heirs to that covenant.

God had a plan from the beginning of time. He chose to make sacred covenants with mere human beings. He set his plan in motion and built one covenant on the previous covenant up to the final sacrifice, resurrection and ascension of Christ Jesus. No covenant was set aside. Some aspects are still to be fulfilled. But, in the end, God's will be done.





Excerpt from  
“Prophets for Our Time: Habakkuk and Zephaniah”  
*Historical Background – 600 BC*

In order to better understand and interpret the writings of these two prophets, we need to understand the historical and cultural context of the times in which they lived. Both lived in Judah and their message was to them. Jeremiah and Nahum also prophesied in the same time period.

The 10 tribes of the Northern Kingdom (Israel) had already gone into Assyrian captivity when taken in 722 BC. The Southern Kingdom, consisting of Judah and Benjamin and referred together as Judah, managed to survive. During the century after the fall of Israel, mostly evil kings ruled Judah bringing in idolatry and completely abandoning the worship of the true God.

Hezekiah was king of Judah during the deportation of Israel and did much to keep Judah from falling to the Assyrians. Unlike his father, Ahaz, Hezekiah listened to the prophets Amos and Hosea and instituted religious reforms shortly after becoming king. Because of his prayer and leadership, Judah withstood long sieges and God intervened by destroying much of the Assyrian army. Hezekiah had a long reign, 715-686 BC, and was even given an additional 15 years of life after a serious illness because of his prayer to God. His reign is recorded in 2 Kings 18 - 20; 2 Chron 29 - 32; and Isaiah 36-39.<sup>1</sup>

As often was the case, Hezekiah's son, Manasseh, did not follow in his father's ways and became one of the most corrupt rulers of the kingdom. He reigned from 687-642, the longest of any of Judah's kings, taking the throne probably as a co-regent with his ill father at age 12.

2 Kings 21:4-16 presented Manasseh as the worst of all the kings of Judah. (Sweeney, *I & II Kings*, pg. 426) Jeremiah 15:4 likewise places on him the responsibility for the doom proclaimed against Jerusalem. 2 Kings depicts Manasseh's misdeeds as a foil for Josiah's righteous behavior in the account of Josiah's religious reforms. Manasseh is singled out as having provoked God's anger and judgment (2 Kgs 23:12).<sup>2</sup> He was succeeded by his son, Amon, who lasted only 2 years before being assassinated by his court officials. During his short reign, he did nothing to correct his father's pagan influence on the nation.

<sup>1</sup> Elwell, W. A., & Beitzel, B. J. (1988). Hezekiah. In *Baker encyclopedia of the Bible* (Vol. 1, p. 974). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House.

<sup>2</sup> Kelly, W. L. (2016). Manasseh, King of Judah. In J. D. Barry, D. Bomar, D. R. Brown, R. Klippenstein, D. Mangum, C. Sinclair Wolcott, ... W. Widder (Eds.), *The Lexham Bible Dictionary*. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

Josiah, Amon's son, took the throne at the age of 8. He reigned from 640 to 609 and turned the people back to God. There was revival, at least to some extent, and the temple worship was restored. One must look at this revival as limited because much of it died out when Josiah was killed in battle with the Egyptians. It was during Josiah's time that the "Book of the Law" was discovered, a turning point for Josiah and, to some extent, the nation.<sup>3</sup>

Even though he was warned against it, Josiah decided to intervene against Pharaoh Neco II, when Neco moved to help the Assyrians against Babylon. The result was tragic for him and, ultimately, for the nation. Josiah was killed and, upon Neco's return, Josiah's son, Jehoahaz, was removed from his father's throne and deported to Egypt after a 3-month reign. Neco placed Jehoahaz's brother, Jehoiakim, on the throne as his vassal.

As Assyrian influence waned, Egyptian and Babylonian empires gained power. Babylon defeated the Assyrians and became the dominant force in the area. Egypt was their only remaining rival. Pharaoh Neco II was defeated by Nebuchadnezzar in 605 BC and Babylon took Judah as part of the spoils.

After Neco's defeat, Jehoiakim - in the 4th year of his reign - became a vassal of Nebuchadnezzar. There was considerable turmoil in Judah and the Babylonians did what they pleased. It was during this time that Daniel was probably taken into captivity along with others of the royal house. Jehoiakim continued to provoke the Babylonians and eventually the city of Jerusalem was put under siege. It is unclear whether Jehoiakim was killed or captured but Jehoiachin ascended to the throne.

Jehoiachin took power during the long siege of Jerusalem and, although he only reigned for 3 months, managed to do evil in the sight of the Lord. The city fell and he was deported to Babylon along with more of the nobles. He remained a prisoner in Babylon until after Nebuchadnezzar's death when he was released and allowed to live in the Babylonian court.

Nebuchadnezzar replaced Jehoiachin with Zedekiah, the last king of Judah. He was Nebuchadnezzar's vassal for 11 years and did evil in the sight of the Lord. Then he rebelled. Against the advice of Jeremiah and others, he made an alliance with Egypt. The result was disastrous. This rebellion brought about the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 BC and Judah went into Babylonian captivity for 70 years.

After an 18-month siege, Zedekiah and his army attempted to flee. Zedekiah was captured. He was forced to watch as the Babylonians killed his sons and then blinded

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<sup>3</sup> Mangum, D. (2016). Josiah, King of Judah. In J. D. Barry, D. Bomar, D. R. Brown, R. Klippenstein, D. Mangum, C. Sinclair Wolcott, ... W. Widder (Eds.), *The Lexham Bible Dictionary*. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

him before taking him to Babylon. Like all his brothers, Zedekiah did evil instead of following in his father, Josiah's, footsteps.<sup>4</sup>

The accounts of these kings can be found in 2 Kings 18-23 and 2 Chronicles 29-36 as well as references throughout the prophets.

This was the state of the world when Habakkuk and Zephaniah wrote. Again, exactly at what point is not absolutely clear. Assuming that they wrote near the end of Josiah's reign, there was nothing but turmoil and uncertainty. Many questions were raised. Was Assyria going to maintain power? Was Egypt to become the dominant force? Would Judah finally be completely free? No, God would tell the prophets that Babylon would rise to dominance.

The political and cultural atmosphere during Josiah's reign was one of prosperity and freedom. The nation had been a vassal of Assyria for almost 50 years but that had changed with Josiah. Assyria was on the decline. Josiah had broken off and actually expanded the territory. With more freedom from Assyria came prosperity. Everything was looking up. Josiah had instituted religious reform and it appeared, at least on the surface, that they were being blessed by God again.

In reading the books of Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, and Jeremiah, we can feel an undertone of religious hypocrisy. Even though the temple had been repaired and the priests were again learning about the law and putting it into effect, there must have been a subculture of idolatry. All of the prophets spoke against political and religious hypocrisy, graft and corruption.

As so often is the case, wealth and prosperity bring out the worst in people. Greed overshadows charity. Comfort brings about disinterest in worship and faith. Instead of praising God for blessings, we tend to praise ourselves for our own foresight and clever use of our talents and wisdom. We create new idols to replace the old ones. As has been demonstrated all through history, a godly generation rarely produces a godly generation. Faith erodes, especially in times of prosperity. Just as Hezekiah produced Manasseh, Josiah's sons immediately abandoned the faith of their father.

So it is in this background that the pre-exilic prophets gave their warnings. The people did not want to listen and turned a deaf ear to what God was telling them. They did not repent and soon would face the judgment and captivity that generations of Judeans had brought about.

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<sup>4</sup> Heyink, B. (2016). Zedekiah, King of Judah. In J. D. Barry, D. Bomar, D. R. Brown, R. Klippenstein, D. Mangum, C. Sinclair Wolcott, W. Widder (Eds.), *The Lexham Bible Dictionary*. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

# Old Testament

## *The Writings (the Prophets)*

### 1. History

- a. Joshua – into the land (but not all), conquest, twice the covenant is renewed (Jos 24). They will always fail.



1 [https://stbarnabasbible.files.wordpress.com/2013/03/12\\_tribes\\_of\\_israel\\_map.png](https://stbarnabasbible.files.wordpress.com/2013/03/12_tribes_of_israel_map.png)

- i. 12 tribes divide the Promise Land
    - 1. Leah is the mother of Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun.
    - 2. Rachel is the mother of Joseph and Benjamin.
    - 3. Bilhah is the mother of Dan and Naphtali.
    - 4. Zilpah is the mother of Gad and Asher.
  - ii. Levi does not get a portion; they are supported by the rest.
- Num 18:20* The LORD said to Aaron, “You will have no inheritance in their land, nor will you have any share among them; I am your share and your inheritance among the Israelites.
- iii. Joseph’s inheritance is divided between Ephraim and Manasseh (Josh 12:22; Josh 16-17)
- b. Judges – cycle of Deut 28-30 over and over and over.
    - i. 2nd generation in the land “did not know the Lord.” (Judges 2:6-10)
    - ii. “Everyone did what was right in their own eyes.” (Judges 21:25)
    - iii. Baal worship is continual.
    - iv. Blessing followed by idolatry followed by chaos followed by repentance and the rising up of a Judge (deliverer) followed by blessing. Then it starts all over again.
  - c. Ruth fits into Judges
    - i. Famine in Israel so they go to Moab -seriously?
    - ii. Naomi is bitter – lost everything except Ruth.
    - iii. Boaz – “redeemer kinsman or guardian-redeemer”.
    - iv. Picture of Christ’s redemption of all sinners.
  - d. 1, 2 Samuel
    - i. 1 Sam 8 – request for a king, center of the Samuel corpus
    - ii. Rise of the kings, Saul (1 Sam), David (2 Sam), Solomon (1 Kings). Only three kings to rule all of Israel.
    - iii. **Davidic Covenant** - promise of eternal King. (**2 Sam 7**) (1 Chron 17:1-14)

**2 Sam 7:8** “Now then, tell my servant David, ‘This is what the LORD Almighty says: I took you from the pasture, from tending the flock, and appointed you ruler over my people Israel. 9 I have been with you wherever you have gone, and I have cut off all your enemies from before you. Now I will make your name great, like the names of the greatest men on earth. 10 And I will provide a place for my people Israel and will plant them so that they can have a home of their own and no longer be disturbed. Wicked people will not oppress them anymore, as they did at the beginning 11 and have done ever since the time I appointed leaders over my people Israel. I will also give you rest from all your enemies.

“The LORD declares to you that the LORD himself will establish a house for you: 12 When your days are over and you rest with your ancestors, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, your own flesh and blood, and I will establish his kingdom. 13 He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. 14 I will be his father, and he will be my son. When he does wrong, I will punish him with a rod wielded by men, with floggings inflicted by human hands. 15 But my love will never be taken away from him, as I took it away from Saul, whom I removed from before you. 16 Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever.”

- iv. David wanted to build God a Temple (house) but God will do much more for David:
  - 1. House (vs11) - Temple
  - 2. Seed (vs12) - Jesus
  - 3. Kingdom (vs13) – eternal king who will **reign forever**
  - 4. The prophets also attested to the Davidic Messiah, the One who would rule over all and forever on His throne (Isa. 9:1–7; 11:1–5; Jer. 30:4–11; Ezek. 34:23–24; 37:24–25; Amos 9:11–15)<sup>3</sup>.
  
- e. Kings and Chronicles – Kings from royal viewpoint, Chronicles from priestly viewpoint.

<sup>3</sup> Merrill, E. H. (1985). 2 Samuel. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 1, p. 464). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

- i. Solomon and end of United Kingdom - 1 Kings 1-11:7
  1. Wisest person that ever lived.
  2. Failed miserably because of his own self-importance and passions.
  3. He did things specifically forbidden in the Law – foreign wives, multiple chariots and horses (reliance on his own might instead of God).
- ii. Divided kingdom and exiles. – 1 Kings 12-2 Kings 25
  1. Israel – Northern 10 tribes
    - a. Israel had no good kings, not one.
    - b. Went into exile 722 BC
  2. Judah (Benjamin)
    - a. A few good kings, Uzziah, Hezekiah, Josiah.
    - b. Total exile and destruction of Jerusalem in 586 BC
- iii. Elijah and Elisha
  1. Elijah 1 Kings 17-19
  2. Elisha 1 Kings 19 – 2 Kings 13 (dead body revived when laid on Elisha's grave).
- iv. God is still committed to His covenant even in the midst of judgement. The unconditional covenant will be fulfilled even though individuals may not see the benefits.
- f. Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther – Return to the land.
  - i. Temple is rebuilt but without the glory.
  - ii. Esther never mentions God by name.

## 2. Types of genre in Scripture<sup>4</sup>

- a. Different genres need to be read and interpreted differently. Poetry must be recognized as such.
- b. Narrative – telling a story from the author's perspective and for his purposes. (Historical books.)
- c. Poetry – figurative language, repetition, metaphors, etc. (Psalms, a lot of prophesy and psalms incorporated in other books.)
- d. Wisdom – wise sayings and instruction. (Proverbs, Job though also poetic, Ecclesiastes, Book of Wisdom, Sirach in apocrypha.)

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.biblegateway.com/blog/2016/03/the-many-genres-of-scripture>, Mel Lawrenz, 2016

- e. Prophecy – imagery of future warnings. Also incorporates poetry and apocalyptic genres.
- f. Gospels – similar to narrative, but with underlying proclamations. Has some aspects of other genre.
- g. Parables – pointed stories with a central message. Used by rabbis and especially Jesus.
- h. Epistles – Letters written to a specific audience for a specific purpose. Universal truths versus conditional situation.
- i. Apocalypse – prophecy but with extremes of symbolic language and imagery. (Revelation, Daniel, many intertestamental writings.)

### 3. Poetry

- a. Psalms
  - i. Traditionally the book has been divided into five sections corresponding to the five books of Moses, each section ending with a doxology (Book 1, Psalms 1–41; Book 2, Psalms 42–72; Book 3, Psalms 73–89; Book 4, Psalms 90–106; Book 5, Psalms 107–150).
  - ii. Psalms were written over 1000 years starting with Moses
  - iii. David wrote about ½ of the 150 psalms.
  - iv. Classifications vary, but the cannot be too strictly adapted. Give it some leeway.
  - v. Classifications most common are as such:
    - 1. hymns (145–150)
    - 2. laments (38–39) – times of distress
    - 3. songs of thanksgiving (30–32)
    - 4. royal psalms (2; 110) – for or to the king
    - 5. enthronement psalms (96, 98) – celebrate Yahweh’s kingship
    - 6. penitential psalms (32; 38; 51) - repentance
    - 7. wisdom or didactic psalms (19; 119)<sup>5</sup> – proverbs in poetic style
- b. When reading and interpreting psalms always bear in mind that they are poetry and use metaphors and similes.

<sup>5</sup> Fuller, R. with Fleming David M. (2003). Psalms, Book Of. In C. Brand, C. Draper, A. England, S. Bond, E. R. Clendenen, & T. C. Butler (Eds.), *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary* (p. 1343). Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers.

- c. Christ is woven throughout the Psalms. (Psalm 110 most quoted in NT and is clearly Messianic.) Sometimes you have to look more carefully. It may be typology or shadows.
- d. Psalms are quoted or alluded to throughout the NT.

## Psalm 2

*1 Why do the nations conspire  
and the peoples plot in vain?  
2 The kings of the earth rise up  
and the rulers band together  
against the LORD and against his anointed, saying,  
3 "Let us break their chains  
and throw off their shackles."  
4 The One enthroned in heaven laughs;  
the Lord scoffs at them.  
5 He rebukes them in his anger  
and terrifies them in his wrath, saying,  
6 "I have installed my king  
on Zion, my holy mountain."  
7 I will proclaim the LORD's decree:  
He said to me, "You are my son;  
today I have become your father.  
8 Ask me,  
and I will make the nations your inheritance,  
the ends of the earth your possession.  
9 You will break them with a rod of iron;  
you will dash them to pieces like pottery."  
10 Therefore, you kings, be wise;  
be warned, you rulers of the earth.  
11 Serve the LORD with fear  
and celebrate his rule with trembling.  
12 Kiss his son, or he will be angry  
and your way will lead to your destruction,  
for his wrath can flare up in a moment.  
Blessed are all who take refuge in him.*

## Philippians 2

5 *In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:*

6 *Who, being in very nature God,  
did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage;*

7 *rather, he made himself nothing  
by taking the very nature of a servant,  
being made in human likeness.*

8 *And being found in appearance as a man,  
he humbled himself  
by becoming obedient to death—  
even death on a cross!*

9 *Therefore God exalted him to the highest place  
and gave him the name that is above every name,*

10 *that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,  
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,*

11 *and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord,  
to the glory of God the Father.*

- e. Proverbs – standards of living well, not promises.
- f. Job, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon.

### 4. Prophets

- i. Purpose of prophecy
  1. Warn the people – believer and unbelievers
  2. Encourage believers
  3. Spur believers to action
  4. Give glory to God

*2 Chron 36:15 The LORD, the God of their ancestors, sent word to them (Judah) through his messengers again and again, because he had pity on his people and on his dwelling place. 16 But they mocked God's messengers, despised his words and scoffed at his prophets until the wrath of the LORD was aroused against his people and there was no remedy. 17 He brought up against them the king of the Babylonians, who killed their young men with the sword in the sanctuary, and did not spare young men or young women, the elderly or the infirm. God gave them all into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar. 18 He carried to Babylon all the articles from the*

temple of God, both large and small, and the treasures of the LORD's temple and the treasures of the king and his officials. 19 They set fire to God's temple and broke down the wall of Jerusalem; they burned all the palaces and destroyed everything of value there. 20 He carried into exile to Babylon the remnant, who escaped from the sword, and they became servants to him and his successors until the kingdom of Persia came to power. 21 The land enjoyed its sabbath rests; all the time of its desolation it rested, until the seventy years were completed in fulfillment of the word of the LORD spoken by Jeremiah. 22 In the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, in order to fulfill the word of the LORD spoken by Jeremiah, the LORD moved the heart of Cyrus king of Persia to make a proclamation throughout his realm and also to put it in writing:

23 "This is what Cyrus king of Persia says:

"The LORD, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth and he has appointed me to build a temple for him at Jerusalem in Judah. Any of his people among you may go up and may the LORD their God be with them."

- ii. Structure of the Prophets – major/minor (Size only)
- iii. Pre-exilic, exilic, post-exilic
  - 1. Pre-exilic
    - a. Israel
      - i. Hosea
      - ii. Amos
      - iii. Jonah (to Nineveh)
    - b. Judah
      - i. Isaiah
      - ii. Jeremiah
      - iii. Micah
      - iv. Nahum
      - v. Habakkuk
      - vi. Zephaniah
    - c. Concerning others (questionable dates)
      - i. Joel (to Judah)
      - ii. Obadiah (Edom)

2. Exilic
  - a. Ezekiel
  - b. Daniel
  - c. Part of Jeremiah
3. Post-exilic
  - a. Haggai
  - b. Zechariah
  - c. Malachi
  - iv. Judgement, repent.
  - v. Always gives hope and shows God's faithfulness.
  - vi. God's unconditional promises will still be fulfilled.

5. **New Covenant** – Jeremiah 31:31-34 (Ezk, 36:24-28, 37:14; Joel 2:28-29)

*Jeremiah 31:31 "The days are coming," declares the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and with the people of Judah.*

*32 It will not be like the covenant I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they broke my covenant, though I was a husband to them," declares the LORD.*

*33 "This is the covenant I will make with the people of Israel after that time," declares the LORD.*

*"I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people.*

*34 No longer will they teach their neighbor, or say to one another, 'Know the LORD,' because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest," declares the LORD.*

*"For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more."*

- a. Three components to the New Covenant
  - i. I will be your God
  - ii. You will be my people
  - iii. I will live among you (tabernacle)

*John 1:14* The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

- b. The Holy Spirit would dwell in every believer all the time.

Food for Thought:

- ⌘ We keep seeing that a godly generation that loves the Lord and tries to do what is right so often produces a generation that does not. Why?
- ⌘ Israel continually feel back into sin, especially idolatry worshiping the gods of their neighbors. What gods do we worship today in our society? What about in the Christian community?
- ⌘ Why is it important to identify genre when reading and studying the Bible?
- ⌘ There were a lot of miracles in the Bible, both the Old Testament and New. Can't we explain a lot of those through science and not have to believe that they were supernatural? What possible difference does it make?
- ⌘ What does the New Covenant really mean to us today?

Notes \_\_\_\_\_  
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Prophet *	Prophesied	Kings Who Ruled During Prophet's Time	Approximate Date (BC)	Prophet's Place of Birth
<b>Elijah</b>	To Israel	Ahab, Ahaziah, Joram	870-845	Tishbe
<b>Elisha</b>	To Israel	Joram, Jehu, Jehoahaz	845-800	Abel Meholah
<b>Isaiah</b>	To Judah	Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah, Manasseh	760-673	Jerusalem
<b>Jeremiah</b>	To Judah	Manasseh, Amon, Josiah, Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, Zedekiah	650-582	Anathoth
<b>Ezekiel</b>	To Exiles in Babylon	Josiah, Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, Zedekiah, Babylonian Exile	620-570	Jerusalem
<b>Daniel</b>	To Exiles in Babylon	Josiah, Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, Zedekiah, Babylonian Exile	620-540	Judah (Jerusalem?)
<b>Hosea</b>	To Israel	Jeroboam II, Zechariah, Shallum, Menahem, Pekahiah, Pekah, Hoshea	758-725	Israel
<b>Joel</b>	To Judah	Governor Ezra	450	Jerusalem
<b>Amos</b>	To Israel	Jeroboam II	765-754	Tekoa**
<b>Obadiah</b>	Concerning Edom	Zedekiah	590	Jerusalem
<b>Jonah</b>	To Nineveh	Jeroboam II	781	Gath Hepher**
<b>Micah</b>	To Judah	Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah, Manasseh	738-698	Moresheh-gath**
<b>Nahum</b>	Concerning Nineveh	Manasseh, Amon, Josiah	658-615	Elkosh**
<b>Habakkuk</b>	To Judah	Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin	608-598	Unknown
<b>Zephaniah</b>	To Judah	Amon, Josiah	640-626	Unknown
<b>Haggai</b>	To Judah	Governor Zerubbabel	520	Jerusalem
<b>Zechariah</b>	To Judah	Governor Zerubbabel	522-509	Jerusalem
<b>Malachi</b>	To Judah	Governor Zerubbabel	465	Jerusalem

#### IV. Intertestamental Period – God was silent or was he?

1. End of Malachi to birth of Jesus – approx. 440 years
2. Greek Empire (Daniel’s prophecies) - 334 - 167 B.C.
  - a. Some have returned to Jerusalem, not all.
  - b. Greek influences that changed the world
    - i. Greek ideas and culture (Hellenization).
    - ii. Greek cities and colonies established
    - iii. Greek language established “worldwide”.
  - c. 5 generals split up the empire when Alexander dies.
    - i. 2 divided up Europe
    - ii. Ptolemy (Egypt), Antigonus (Asia Minor and N Syria), Seleucia (Babylon/Syria)
      1. Contention over Palestine was continual
2. Beginning of the sale of the High Priest position

*He (Antiochus) allowed his troops to kill many of the Jews and determined to put an end to the Jewish religion. He sacrificed a pig on the altar of the temple. Parents were forbidden to circumcise their children, the Sabbath was not to be observed, and all copies of the law were to be burned. It was a capital offense to be found with a copy of the law. The zeal of Antiochus to destroy Judaism was a major factor in its salvation.<sup>1</sup>*

3. Maccabean period (Independence period) 166-135 BC
  - a. Gained independence for the 1st time since Solomon.
  - b. Seleucid officer required Jews to offer sacrifices to Zeus.
    - i. When a Jew stepped up to make such an offering, Mattathias, a priest, killed him and the officials.
    - ii. Mattathias and his 5 sons thus started a rebellion.
    - iii. Judas, 3rd son, became leader and was nicknamed Maccabeus, the hammerer.
  - c. Simon, last son, was King and also made himself High Priest.
  - d. Hasmonaean dynasty – expanded the territory, destroyed the Samaritan temple, conquered the Idumeans (Herod the Great)

<sup>1</sup> Harrop, C. (2003). *Intertestamental History and Literature*. In C. Brand, C. Draper, A. England, S. Bond, E. R. Clendenen, & T. C. Butler (Eds.), *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary* (p. 830). Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers.

- e. After civil war, eventually they asked Rome (Pompey) to help them – lost independence.
4. Roman Empire – 63 BC through NT period.
- a. conquers Jerusalem - 63 B.C.
  - b. Roman influences
    - i. Civilization expanded
    - ii. Roads and cities built
    - iii. Pax Romanus – Roman peace throughout the world
  - c. Herod the Great – 37 BC
    - i. Jewish Idumean but not accepted by the Jews as truly Hebrew.
    - ii. Tremendous builder including the Temple
    - iii. Vicious, cruel, extremely jealous and fearful of losing power. Executed his own son and possibly his mother and her 2 sons.
    - iv. Was king when Jesus was born and killed the male children in Bethlehem
    - v. Divided his kingdom amongst his 3 sons as tetrarchs (“ruler of a fourth”).
      - 1. Antipas ruled Galilee and Perea
      - 2. Philip was tetrarch of Gentile territory NE of the Sea of Galilee.
      - 3. Archelaus got Judea and Samaria. He was poor ruler and finally removed. Rome then brought in the procurators to govern Judea (Pontus Pilot, Festus, Felix)
  - d. Jerusalem destroyed in 70 AD after rebellion.
5. Major Jewish influences during this time
- a. Temple was not what it used to be and was corrupt – God’s presence was not there as with the Tabernacle or Solomon’s Temple.
  - b. Diaspora – only a few returned, many settled though out the Empire.
  - c. Synagogues – developed to substitute for proper Temple worship

- d. Rabbis (teachers), reading of the Torah, establishing the Mishna, oral tradition.
  - e. Rise of the Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes, Zealots.
  - f. LXX (Septuagint) translates the Heb scriptures to Gk.
6. *“It was because of God’s work through the Diaspora of the Jewish people that a believing Gentile populace existed and was primed for the coming of the Jewish Messiah.”* Dr Darrel Bock
7. God had used Israel’s judgment and exile to spread His people to all places – Worldwide blessing. God-fearers may have outnumbered Jews.
8. God had moved kings and kingdoms into position for the coming of His Son.
9. **God is in control.**
- a. Common language – Greek spoken worldwide.
  - b. Road system – Roman roads made travel easier.
  - c. Stable government and peace – Roman rule, Pax Romanus
  - d. Common currency
  - e. Diaspora - Jewish people touched the lives of all around them in some way.
  - f. Synagogues throughout the world – influence of a totally different theological system than pagan worship of the time.
    - i. Introduced a monotheistic concept to a polytheistic environment.
    - ii. All laying the groundwork for a belief in one God versus polytheistic worship
  - g. People were expecting the Messiah, just didn’t understand who was really going to be. Maybe 2 Messiahs? Lot of apocalyptic literature and belief, expectation of the end times and the coming of the kingdom. (Daniel’s prophecy.)
  - h. **Jesus’ birth was at the perfect time.**



## V. Structure of the New Testament – 4-1-21-1

1. Structure of New Testament
  - a. 4 Gospels,
  - b. 1 history,
  - c. 21 letters,
  - d. 1 prophecy
2. Examples of Covenant Promises in the NT
  - a. Abraham's name occurs 69 times in the NT
    - i. Luke 1:69-75 – Zachariah's song. Ref: Davidic and Abrahamic
    - ii. Acts 3:22-26 – Abrahamic
    - iii. Acts 4:13-18 – Abrahamic
  - b. "Covenant" occurs 30 times in the NT
    - i. Rom. 11:25-27 – New covenant
    - ii. 2 Cor 3:14-16 – Old and New reference
    - ii. Gal 3:15-18 – Abrahamic, Mosaic, New (shows Abrahamic was unconditional.)
    - iv. Entire Book of Hebrews – New covenant vs old.
3. Structure parallels much the same as the Old.
  - a. 4 - Gospels
    - i. Matthew, Mark, Luke - Synoptic Gospels
      1. Two present genealogies of Jesus – Matt and Luke - while Mark (and John) start with John the Baptist
      2. Common thread. Synoptic means similar, or same viewpoint. It literally means "with the same eye". This causes unity and "problems" in reconciling different views and purposes in the telling of the same incident.
      3. Jesus' story in the Synoptics is told from the earth up to heaven.
    - ii. John's Gospel
      1. Completely different from the Synoptics.
      2. Demonstrates the divinity of Christ from start to finish.

3. Story is from heaven down to earth.
- iii. Commonalities
1. All Gospels emphasis the Passion.
    - a. Jesus' early ministry is primarily divided between Galilee and Judea.
    - b. Jesus then turns to a more personal teaching period with his disciples.
      - i. Tensions are mounting, death threats.
      - ii. Jesus wants to prepare the 12 for is death and resurrection.
    - c. All close with the Passion Week narrative, crucifixion and resurrection.
  2. Events are not presented in chronological order
    - a. Authors presented the sayings and deeds of Jesus in literary, thematic form to suit their theological purposes: to persuade the reader to believe and strengthen those that already do.
    - b. Chronological Bible presentation is difficult.
    - c. Harmonies of the Gospels not much better but both can be helpful.
  3. Historical tradition and notations on oldest manuscripts verify authorship of all Gospels – 2 apostles and 2 close associates – as named.
  4. The 4 Gospels were commonly read in the community by the early to middle 2<sup>nd</sup> century and authoritative titles were added at that time to identify them from one another.
  5. Canon – you can trust your Bible?
    - a. What criteria was used to determine which books were in the Canon?
      - i. Apostolic association – all authors
      - ii. Theological consistency – one salvation
      - iii. Common usage in the church, in worship – recognized as such as early as the 2<sup>nd</sup> century
    - b. Why is the Canon closed? Why can't we have more inspired books in the Bible?

- c. Council of Nicaea (325 AD) only affirmed the canon, not establish it. It was already in place.
  - i. Dan Brown is wrong. (Darrell Bock, *Breaking the De Vince Code*, Thomas Nelson Pub, 2004)
  - ii. Constantine did not just take the books he liked and destroy the ones he didn't.
- b. Difficulties with the Synoptics
  - i. There are a great deal of similarities including exact wording even in narrative passages. Is this the Holy Spirit or use of common sources?
  - ii. Source theories of the synoptics
    - 1. Markan Primacy – Mark was probably written first and the other two used his material as one of their sources.
    - 2. 2 source, Mark, Q (unknown or lost written account or accounts) – written documents
    - 3. 4 source, Mark, Q + M and L – oral testimony used by Matthew and Luke respectively.
  - iii. No incompatibility with Holy Spirit inspiration and the use of other sources, oral or written.

*Luke 1:1* Since many have attempted to compile an account concerning the events that have been fulfilled among us, **2** just as those who were eyewitnesses and servants of the word from the beginning passed on to us, **3** it seemed best to me also—because I have followed all things carefully from the beginning—to write them down in orderly sequence for you, most excellent Theophilus, **4** so that you may know the certainty concerning the things about which you were taught.<sup>1</sup>

- iv. They sometimes view the same incident from difference angles and perspectives. Essential truths from different memories.

<sup>1</sup> Harris, W. H., III, Ritzema, E., Brannan, R., Mangum, D., Dunham, J., Reimer, J. A., & Wierenga, M. (Eds.). (2012). *The Lexham English Bible* (Lk 1:1–4). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

- v. Assuming that Mark was first and the other two had access to it, Matthew and Luke used redaction techniques – adding some information left out by the other or not stating something that one of the others may have mentioned.
  - 1. See Paul’s Damascus Road experience as recorded in Acts 9:1-31, Acts 22:6-21, Acts 26:4-18.
  - 2. The telling is not identical even with the same author and the same eyewitness. The account is presented to different audiences with slightly different purposes.
- vi. There is almost always a possible or logical explanation for difference in the accounts.

#### 4. Gospels

##### a. Synoptics

- i. Each Gospel has a different audience and purpose. Each gives a different picture of Christ. (Taken here in order of probably date written instead of our order in the Bible.)
  - 1. **Mark** – Suffering Servant. Gospel of action with a call to discipleship and servanthood in the context of rejection and suffering. Jesus came to die on the cross. That was His purpose. We are to follow in His path.<sup>2</sup>
    - a. Author: John Mark was close associate of both Peter and Paul, cousin to Barnabas (Acts 12)
      - i. Greek is ungrammatical
      - ii. Language is rough (fisherman)
      - iii. Authorship questions: was it a pseudonym?
        - 1. If you were using a pseudonym, would you say Mark or Peter?
        - 2. Referenced by 2<sup>nd</sup> century church fathers,
    - b. Audience: Gentile, probably to Rome
    - c. Date: Approx. 50-60 AD, not later than 70
    - d. Most scholars believe that Mark was written first with Matt and Luke building on it.
    - e. Shortest, most concise.

<sup>2</sup> Dr Darrell Bock, Jesus and the Gospels: How to Read the Gospels, Cyber-Center for Biblical Studies, 2015

- f. More action and much less teachings
- g. Favorite word is “immediately.”
- h. Mark groups passages
  - i. By literary forms: i.e. most of the controversy stories (2:1–3:6), parables (4:2–34), and miracle stories (4:35–5:20) are grouped together in blocks of material.<sup>3</sup>
  - ii. By summary statements – it is obvious when he moves to a new subject.
  - iii. Geographical location groupings
- i. Markan themes
  - i. Radical discipleship - Discipleship in a fallen, hostile world.
  - ii. Kingdom of God
    - 1. Kingdom is now and yet still to come
    - 2. Rejection of the Kingdom when rejecting Jesus and the disciples,
  - iii. Messiah.
    - 1. Shows Jesus authority by the miracles – authority over demons, sickness, nature, impurity and sin.
    - 2. Son of Man – Jesus favorite name for himself.
      - a. Visions of Ezekiel, other apocalyptic literature such as 1 Enoch, 4 Ezra.
      - b. Daniel 7:13-14 – “one like a son of man riding on the clouds” written in Aramaic
      - c. Understood as Messianic –
      - d.

*The phrase “one like a son of man,” denotes a human-looking figure who is given privileges normally reserved for God: authority, glory, sovereign power, the worship of men of every language, and an eternal kingdom (Dan 7:14).<sup>4</sup>*

<sup>3</sup> Puskas, C. B., & Crump, D. (2008). *An Introduction to the Gospels and Acts* (p. 73). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

<sup>4</sup> Hardin, L. T., & Brown, D. (2016). *Son of Man*. In J. D. Barry, D. Bomar, D. R. Brown, R. Klippenstein, D. Mangum, C. Sinclair Wolcott, ... W. Widder (Eds.), *The Lexham Bible Dictionary*. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

- j. Ending of Mark's Gospel
  - i. Mk 16:8 ends abruptly and caused concerns in scholars and scribes.
  - ii. Mark 16:9-20 was added later (5<sup>th</sup> century) and not part of the inspired autograph (original manuscripts).
  - iii. All good translations bracket it and notate it as a later addition.
  - iv. *Side note: never base theology on questionable or extremely difficult passages. This is a perfect example as is "baptize for the dead." (1 Cor 15:29)*
- 2. **Matthew** – To show Jesus as Messiah in a context of Jewish rejection. Jesus is the Messiah and Son of God, who fulfilled Jewish prophecy and who properly interprets the law for the church.<sup>5</sup>
  - a. Favorite of early Church Fathers - shaped the early church.
  - b. Writer was Matthew the Apostle,
    - i. aka Levi
    - ii. Tax collector and despised by Jews
    - iii. Earliest identification was with Papias (c. 125 AD)
  - c. Date: approx. 60-65 AD.
  - d. The Gospel was written to a largely Jewish Christian audience and is the most Jewish of the Gospels.
  - e. Possibly originally written in Hebrew (Aramaic) but not likely.
    - i. no Hebrew manuscripts exist
    - ii. Papias refers to Matthews "oracles" or writings in Hebrew but he may not have been referring to the Gospel
    - iii. GK grammar is good and all OT references are from the LXX further indicating a Greek original.
  - f. Genealogy starts with Abraham to show royal lineage. Demonstrates that all nations are welcome

<sup>5</sup> Dr Darrell Bock, Jesus and the Gospels: How to Read the Gospels, Cyber-Center for Biblical Studies, 2015

- with the inclusion in his bloodline of Tamar, Rahab, Ruth and Uriah's wife (Bathsheba, a possible Hittite.)
- g. Most quotes from the OT of the Gospels – 60+ direct quotes from LXX.
  - h. Prophetic fulfillment – Matthew takes great care to show actual prophetic fulfillment and fulfillment of OT types and shadows. Of those 2/3 were stated as “it was fulfilled” or similar language.

**TABLE 4.1. MATTHEW: PROPHETIC-FULFILLMENT CITATIONS**

Incident	Matthew	OT
Miraculous birth	1:22–23	Isa 7:14
Flight to Egypt	2:15	Hos 11:1
Massacre of the infants	2:17–18	Jer 31:15
Residence in Nazareth	2:23	Isa 11:1
Move to Capernaum	4:14–16	Isa 9:1–2
Healing ministry	8:17	Isa 53:4
Healing ministry	12:17–21	Isa 42:1–4
Teaching in parables	13:35	Ps 78:2
Entry into Jerusalem	21:4–5	Isa 62:11; Zech 9:9
The fate of Jesus' betrayer	27:9–10	Zech 11:12–13; Jer 19:32 <sup>6</sup>

- i. Matthew has more of Jesus teaching discourses than any other Gospel
- j. The Gospel is built around 5 discourses with narrative in between.
  - i. Ethics of the Kingdom – Matt 5-7 (Sermon on the Mount)

<sup>6</sup>Puskas, C. B., & Crump, D. (2008). *An Introduction to the Gospels and Acts* (p. 96). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

- ii. Mission of the Kingdom - (Discipleship) - Matt 10
  - iii. Growth of the Kingdom (7 Parables) – Matt 13
  - iv. Life of the Kingdom (community life, humility, forgiveness) - Matt 18
  - v. Future of the Kingdom (Olivet discourse) - Matt 23-25 (woes to Pharisees, destruction of Jerusalem and apocalyptic discourse.)
- k. Matthew versus Mark: how does Matthew compare to Mark.
- i. Matthew extends Mark’s narrative both backward with genealogy, birth narrative, early history before John the Baptist (Matt 1–2) and forward with the appearance of the resurrected Lord and the missionary charge. (Matt 28)
  - ii. Matthew rearranges thematically, abridges stylistically, clarifies ambiguities, and both omits and substitutes his traditional material (Mark, Q, M in a 4-source theory).
  - iii. He does so with the overriding religious concern of presenting Jesus as the Messiah and Son of God, who fulfills the Jewish Scriptures and properly interprets the law for the church.<sup>7</sup>
  - iv. 90% of Mark is incorporated into Matthew.
  - v. Thus Matthew used Mark’s Gospel with redactions as such: (Luke is similar.)
    - 1. Compression: shorten the account for the author’s purpose.
      - a. Jairus’s daughter and the woman
        - i. Mark 5:21-43
        - ii. Matt 9:18-26
      - b. Others: Matt 8-28-34/Mk 5:1-20; Matt 12:15-16/Mk 3:7-12; Matt 14:1-12/Mk 6:14-29.
    - 2. Clarification: clarifying and smoothing of an account in language, style.

<sup>7</sup> Puskas, C. B., & Crump, D. (2008). *An Introduction to the Gospels and Acts* (p. 88). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.



3. Omission and Substitution: leaving out material because it is not relevant to the author's purpose or substituting something, such as a different parable in a sequence, again for the author's purpose.
- l. Matthew demonstrates Jesus' authority.
  - i. Greater than Moses, the New Moses.
  - ii. Throughout Matthew, Jesus speaks and acts authoritatively:
    1. He interprets the law (5:17–48; 7:29).
    2. He demands radical obedience of His followers (4:18–22; 16:24–26; 19:16–30).
    3. He proclaims His role as the final judge (19:28).<sup>8</sup>
  - m. Matthew closes this Gospel with the Great Commission.

**Matt 28:18** Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. **19** Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, **20** and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”<sup>9</sup>

- i. Thus Jesus demonstrates his authority
  1. He is from God and is God.
  2. They have a job to do - go make disciples of all nations, not just to the Jews, but to the Gentiles as well.
  3. Baptize new followers in the name of the Trinity
  4. Everyone is to be taught to obey Jesus commands – “If you love me you will obey my commandments.” (John 14:15)
  5. Being God, he will always be with us.

<sup>8</sup> Cate, J. (2016). Matthew, Gospel of. In J. D. Barry, D. Bomar, D. R. Brown, R. Klippenstein, D. Mangum, C. Sinclair Wolcott, ... W. Widder (Eds.), *The Lexham Bible Dictionary*. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

<sup>9</sup> *The New International Version*. (2011). (Mt 28:17–20). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

3. **Luke** – Humanity of Jesus. To reassure its readers about the divine program of Jesus, that it is rooted in long standing promises of God, especially in its inclusion of Gentiles with the Jews in the kingdom.<sup>10</sup>
  - a. Luke 1 and Luke 2 (Acts) were originally together in two volumes but separated when the Gospels were grouped. It is extremely beneficial to read them as one work instead of two separate and unrelated books.
  - b. Author: Luke – accepted from earliest church fathers 2<sup>nd</sup> century
    - i. Close associate of Paul.
    - ii. undoubtedly knew Peter at the very least from Rome.
    - iii. Luke 2 (Acts) has long sections with “we” narratives indicating that Luke was accompanying them at those times.
  - c. Known as the Beloved Physician - Lot of medical terms in both Luke and Acts.
  - d. Written approx. 60 AD.
    - i. Acts was written in early 60s, thus Luke needed to be written before that.
    - ii. Possibly written in Rome.
    - iii. John Mark was also in Rome, so Luke could have used Mark’s Gospel as reference.
  - e. Audience were Gentiles
  - f. Greek is very eloquent and educated, unlike Mark. Highest literary style in the entire NT.
    - i. Lot of parallelism – early examples:
      1. birth of John, birth of Jesus – both miraculous.
      2. Mary’s song, Zachariah’s song
      3. Presented in the Temple as an infant, in the Temple as a young boy.
  - g. Longest of Gospels, 14% of NT, 27% when combined with Acts.

<sup>10</sup> Dr Darrell Bock, Jesus and the Gospels: How to Read the Gospels, Cyber-Center for Biblical Studies, 2015

h. 50% of Mark is incorporated into Luke

Notes

- i. Like Matthew, Luke uses redaction (before and after) on Mark.
  - i. Before: Luke emphasizes John the Baptist birth and some areas of the Nativity narrative emphasis are different.
  - ii. After: Luke records more appearances after the resurrection – Road to Emmaus, additional meetings with the disciples, the ascension.
- j. Luke is organized and methodic. He was an historian and worked very hard to present the facts as well as the theology.
- k. Luke’s genealogy starts with Jesus and goes backwards to Adam – showing his humanity – and is inserted between his baptism and his temptation – the beginning of his ministry, God in human flesh.
  - i. Genealogy differs from Matthews.
  - ii. Most probable explanation is Matthew traces the legal lineage through Joseph while Luke traces the physical lineage through Mary.
- l. Scholarly consensus is virtually universal that the Gospel of Luke is structured with 9:51 as the narrative’s turning point: “When the days drew near for him to be taken up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem” (ESV). The first half of the Gospel builds to this point. Starting here, with clear foreshadowing about the rest of the story, the author presents Jesus moving in a new direction.<sup>11</sup>
- m. Purpose of the Gospel: so the reader can have confidence in their faith.

*Luke 1:3 With this in mind, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, I too decided to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, 4 so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught.*<sup>12</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Huffman, D. S. (2016). *Luke, Gospel of*. In J. D. Barry, D. Bomar, D. R. Brown, R. Klippenstein, D. Mangum, C. Sinclair Wolcott, ... W. Widder (Eds.), *The Lexham Bible Dictionary*. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

<sup>12</sup> *The New International Version*. (2011). (Lk 1:3–4). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

- n. Emphasizes in Luke:
  - i. Salvation – for all not just the Jews or righteous
  - ii. Holy Spirit (more than others)
  - iii. Concern for the marginalized – “the first shall be last” – the poor, the hungry women, children, sick and lame (even lepers), and demon possessed.
  - iv. Discipleship – all followers, not just the 12. Luke emphasizes the cost of discipleship as well.
  - v. Prayer and its importance to Jesus and to us.
- o. Closes with the Great Commission and then the ascension. Luke 2 opens at the same place and time.
- p. Only one to record the ascension.

### Food for Thought

- ⌘ A lot of people have trouble accepting miracles. They think of the ancients as ignorant and superstitious instead of brilliant as we are. How do you answer when someone says that the demons the Bible says Jesus cast out was really just epilepsy or such?
- ⌘ How can studying the Gospels strengthen ones faith? Aren't they just narrative?
- ⌘ When you find what appears to be contradictions in Scripture, what do you do?
- ⌘ The Church cycles through the Gospels every year. Isn't it enough that we get a Gospel reading every Sunday before the sermon? Why do we need to read it for ourselves?
- ⌘ How do we see the Old Testament story line coming into the New Testament?

### Notes

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1. John's Gospel

- a. **John** – Divinity of Jesus. To show, through the seven signs and through an examination of Jesus' teaching about his departure and the coming of the Spirit, that Jesus is the Son of God and faith in His name saves.<sup>1</sup>
  - a. John the Apostle was author.
  - b. Approx. 80-90 AD, from either Ephesus or Patmos.
  - c. The Gospel of John is totally different from the Synoptic Gospels in form and in much of the content.
    - i. In many ways it's the most familiar and loved of the four.
    - ii. 80-90% of John is unique to the Gospels
      1. Only two miracles, feeding of the 5000 and walking on the water, common to the Synoptics.
      2. Parts of the Passion in common.
    - iii. It emphasizes the deity of Christ from the very beginning (Jn 1:1)
    - iv. John probably relied on Christians being familiar with the Synoptics and focused on areas that they had not. He leaves out much from the Synoptics that are important to their viewpoint but not necessarily for John such as:
      1. Jesus baptism
      2. Breaking of the bread and cup at the Last Supper – but records the washing of feet.
      3. Centrality of the Kingdom of God – only conversationally with Nicodemus
      4. Records few healings, parables, miracles in public
    - v. John presents more individual

<sup>1</sup> Dr Darrell Bock, Jesus and the Gospels: How to Read the Gospels, Cyber-Center for Biblical Studies, 2015



- iii. Healing the paralytic at the Pool of Bethesda (Jn 5:1-15)
- iv. Feeding the 5000 (Jn 6:5-14) (also in Mt 14:15-21, Mk 6:35-44, Lk 9:13-17)
- v. Walking on the water (Jn 6:16-21) (also in Mt 14:22-33, Mk 6:47-52)
- vi. Healing the man born blind (Jn 9:1-7)
- vii. Raising Lazarus from the dead (Jn 11:11-45)
- viii. Since John doesn't use parables as the Synoptics do, some refer to the 7 signs as enacted parables with additional meanings and lessons.

TABLE: THE SEVEN SIGNS

<i>Sign</i>	<i>Historical significance</i>	<i>Literary/symbolic significance</i>
1. Turning water into wine (2:1-11)	Revelation of power/glory; disciples begin to believe	Jesus brings abundant life, replacing/fulfilling OT traditions
2. Healing the official's son (4:46-54)	Jesus has power to heal the sick	Critiques the quest for miracles and teaches about faith
3. Healing the lame man (5:1-15)	Power to heal and to work on the Sabbath	Sovereignly brings wholeness and confronts personal sin
4. Feeding the 5,000 (6:1-15)	Miraculous power to reproduce the works of Moses (e.g., manna)	The true manna/bread sent from heaven (see also 6:25-40)
5. Walking on water (6:16-21)	Divine power to control the elements	The Final Moses (Messiah), who controls/parts the sea
6. Healing the blind man (9:1-12)	Power to heal those infirm from birth	The True Light, who brings spiritual sight to the spiritually blind
7. Raising Lazarus (11:1-44)	Divine power to raise the dead	Previewing his own resurrection, Jesus brings eternal life for those who believe <sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Puskas, C. B., & Crump, D. (2008). *An Introduction to the Gospels and Acts* (p. 168). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

- e. Jesus' "I am" statements,
  - i. **John 8:58** "Very truly I tell you," Jesus answered, "before Abraham was born, I am!" **59** At this, they picked up stones to stone him, but Jesus hid himself, slipping away from the temple grounds.
  - ii. **John 6:35** Then Jesus declared, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.
  - iii. **John 8:12** When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."
  - iv. **John 10:7** Therefore Jesus said again, "Very truly I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep.  
**8** All who have come before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep have not listened to them.  
**9** I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. They will come in and go out, and find pasture.
  - v. **John 10:11** "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.
  - vi. **John 11:25** Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; **26** and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?"
  - vii. **John 15:5** "I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.
- f. Dialogues (extended) accompany the signs.
- g. After the raising of Lazarus, Jesus changed focus from his public ministry to preparing his disciples for his upcoming death and resurrection.

- i. John 1-11 – public ministry, 7 signs and dialogues.
- ii. John 12 – Jesus turns to face the cross and never looks back.
- iii. John 13-20 – upper room, Passion and resurrection.
- iv. John 21 – restoration of Peter

h. “Light and dark”, “life and death” are used extensively in the Gospel of John as well as 1 John.

**John 1:4** *In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. 5 The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.*

**John 8:12** *When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”*

**1 John 1:5** *This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. 6 If we claim to have fellowship with him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live out the truth. 7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.<sup>3</sup>*

- i. Added to the original - John 7:53-8:11 – “Woman caught in adultery.”
  - i. Not in earliest manuscripts
  - ii. Appears in different places in other manuscripts

<sup>3</sup> *The New International Version*. (2011). (1 Jn 1:5-7). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

- iii. Best story not actually in the Bible but has enough familiarity to be true or at least true to Jesus character.
- j. Jesus as Messiah is central
  - i. Jesus as the Logos (Word)
  - ii. Jesus as the Lamb of God – fulfills the sacrificial system’s purpose.
  - iii. Jesus as the Son of God; God is the Father –
  - iv. Jesus sends the Holy Spirit
  - v. He fulfills the OT prophesy and typology
  - vi. Jesus is the Redeemer of all who believe – he is the promised Seed.
- k. Key passages:
  - i. **Jn 3:16** *For in this way God loved the world, so that he gave his one and only Son, in order that everyone who believes in him will not perish but will have eternal life.*
  - ii. **Jn 14:6** *Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.*
- l. The peculiarities of this Gospel are the place it gives (1) to the mystical relation of the Son to the Father, and (2) of the Redeemer to believers; (3) the announcement of the Holy Ghost as the Comforter; (4) the prominence given to love as an element in the Christian character. It was obviously addressed primarily to Christians.<sup>4</sup>
- m. John’s Gospel, written much later than the Synoptics, illustrates the theological development over the 1<sup>st</sup> century: the progressive understanding of the reality of salvation by grace and true meaning of the Messiah and the Kingdom of God.

<sup>4</sup> Easton, M. G. (1893). In *Illustrated Bible Dictionary and Treasury of Biblical History, Biography, Geography, Doctrine, and Literature* (p. 383). New York: Harper & Brothers.

b. Summary of the Gospels

1. What got Jesus in trouble? His actions as much as his words. Everything was contrary to the norm established by the Sadducees and the Pharisees.

- a. Sabbath: Jesus claimed authority over the Sabbath

**Matt 12:7** *If you had known what these words mean, ‘I desire mercy, not sacrifice,’ you would not have condemned the innocent. 8 For the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath.” They knew what he was saying and what the implications were.*

**Matt 12:13** *Then he said to the man, “Stretch out your hand.” So he stretched it out and it was completely restored, just as sound as the other. 14 But the Pharisees went out and plotted how they might kill Jesus.*

- b. Forgiveness of sin: Jesus claimed to be able to forgive sins. Jesus forgave sins without the benefit of the Temple, the sacrifices or the priesthood.

**Matt 9:5** *Which is easier: to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Get up and walk’?*

- c. Claimed authority over purity and religious practices: piety was determined by ritual, completing the works of the Law both written and oral. God looks at the heart.

**Matt 12:6** *I tell you that something greater than the temple is here. 7 If you had known what these words mean, ‘I desire mercy, not sacrifice,’ you would not have condemned the innocent.*

- d. Claimed authority over the Temple: Jesus cleansed the Temple because it had become a “den of thieves”. Sadducees had become very rich from the Temple requirements.

**Matt 21:12** *Jesus entered the temple courts and drove out all who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves.*

- e. Claimed the authority to judge: Jesus had the final authority from God to judge, not the Jewish leadership and High Priest.

**John 5:24** *“Very truly I tell you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be judged but has crossed over from death to life. 25 Very truly I tell you, a time is*

coming and has now come when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live. **26** For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself. **27** And he has given him authority to judge because he is the Son of Man.

2. The leadership had only two choices with Jesus: either accept that he was Messiah or charge him with blasphemy. Like all of humanity, we must accept him as Lord and Savior or reject him at our own peril.

3. The resurrection was vindication that Jesus was the Messiah, the Son of God. No other proof was necessary and never will be. While they tried to claim that he did not rise from the dead, they could never prove it. The Apostles and other disciples died claiming that Jesus rose from the dead. Not many will die for a lie only for the deepest held beliefs.

## 2. History – Acts of the Apostles (Acts of the Holy Spirit)

- a. Most of the Letters fall into the book of Acts – but not all.
  - 1. Paul’s Pastoral Epistles – 1,2 Timothy, Titus – probably after first imprisonment.
  - 2. John’s letters and Revelation are all after Acts.
  - 3. Peter’s letters were likely after Acts, about the same time as the Pastorals. Most likely written from Rome.
  - 4. Jude (James brother and half-brother to Jesus) theorized to have been written about the same time as 2 Peter and probably after Acts.
  - 5. Hebrews - not known exactly when it was written but probably before 70 A.D, no mention of the destruction of the temple. Since the author is unknown, it is difficult to place a time.
  - 6. James date is also unknown but was probably very early. (James the half-brother of Jesus, head of the Jerusalem church.)
- b. Why is Acts important to modern day Christians? Knowing historical context makes the letters understandable and, therefore,



applicable to our everyday life.



c. **Acts – Luke part II**

1. Acts is really the Acts of the Holy Spirit more than the Apostles. There are constant reminders of the activity of the Holy Spirit guiding, directing and occasionally forbidding the actions of the Apostles.
2. Acts was written about 63-64 AD and probably in Rome.
3. Author was unquestionably Luke
  - a. It was written in conjunction with Luke's Gospel
  - b. Much of it reads like a travelogue, especially when Luke accompanied Paul and his other companions.
4. Acts highlights the rapid growth of the church.
  - a. Work of the Holy Spirit – great commission.
    - i. From a few thousand in 40 AD
    - ii. By end of 4th century ½ of Roman Empire - 30+ million due in part to Constantine and the acceptance of Christianity.
  - b. Sociological reasons for growth.
    - i. Greek language – common language helped missionaries.
    - ii. Pax Romana and road system – relative safety and ease of travel.
    - iii. Diaspora – synagogues, God-fearers – introduction of a monotheistic concept in a polytheistic environment.
    - iv. Compassion for the poor – Christians cared for the poor and those rejected by society, slaves as well as masters.
    - v. Compassion for the discarded – Common Roman practice to abandon unwanted infants to die. Christians rescued them and raised them as their own.
5. The King is departing for a while. The King's men have an assignment – The Great Commission.

a. Key verse – Acts 1:8 – outlines the book.

*Acts 1:8* But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”<sup>5</sup>

i. Jerusalem – Peter and Apostles’ ministry.

ii. Samaria – Phillip (probably an Elder, not the Apostle) evangelistic campaign in Samaria (outcast half-breeds).

iii. The world – Paul along with Barnabas, Silas and others to the end of the civilized world. Jesus’ command to reach the Gentiles as well as the Jews.

b. They don’t have to do it alone. They will receive a Helper, a Comforter: the Holy Spirit will dwell in them, not come and go as before. The Holy Spirit was given them enormous power.

6. Key passages

a. Acts 1:1-11 – King is coming back so Christians have a job to do.

b. Acts 2 – Pentecost –

i. Coming of the Holy Spirit – sign of the **New Covenant**.

ii. Peter’s first converts and the beginning of the Church.

iii. First missionaries to the rest of the Roman Empire as the new converts, pilgrims in Jerusalem for Pentecost, returned home.

iv. Acts 2:42-47 – picture of new church and how to lead brand new Christians.

v. Early church’s intent was not to leave the Jewish faith or the Temple, but to bring that faith into completion with recognition of Jesus as Messiah.

c. Acts 4- 8 - Persecution from without and problems from within.

<sup>5</sup> *The New International Version*. (2011). (Ac 1:8). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

- i. Persecution and pressure from the authorities escalated from Acts chapter 4.
- ii. Acts 5 – Ananias and Sapphira – showed the need for purity within the church. They were liars and hypocrites. It was not because they didn't give everything. That was never required.
- iii. Acts 6 – quarrelling within the church and deacons established – showed need for unity within the church.
- iv. Acts 7 - Steven stoned
- v. Act 8-9 - this is the turning point in the book.
  - 1. The church in Jerusalem put under tremendous pressure from Jewish leaders.
  - 2. Because of persecution, many were forced to leave Jerusalem and spread the Gospel as they had been instructed.
- d. Acts 9 – Saul's conversion on road to Damascus.
- e. Acts 10 – Peter and Cornelius – until then almost all Christians were Jews.
  - i. Cornelius was a Roman centurion and a God-fearer.
  - ii. His conversion and receipt of the Holy Spirit opened the door for Gentiles to be accepted into the church.
  - iii. Gentiles were still not completely accepted, thus the Judaizer's heresy in the early churches.
- f. Acts 12 – James, John's brother, was killed by Herod. Peter was imprisoned and miraculously saved. Persecution increased even more.
- g. Acts 13 -- 14 – the narrative shifts to Paul away from Peter and the Jerusalem church. Paul and Barnabas sent out from Antioch on their 1st missionary journey.
- h. Acts 15 – Jerusalem Council (48 AD) – in response to the Pharisaic Judaizers influence in the Jerusalem church and its spread to Gentile churches.

i. Leadership affirmed that Gentiles could become Christians without first becoming Jews.

- ii. They acknowledged that the ministry of Paul to the Gentiles was legitimate and acceptable. Paul officially became the Apostle to the Gentiles.
    - iii. Peter's encounter with Cornelius was used as further proof that Gentiles received the Holy Spirit just as the Jewish believers did.
  - i. Paul's journeys fill the rest of the book.
  - j. To help us follow Luke's argument, he gives us summary statements along the way. For example, in 6:7 he writes, "The word of God continued to spread. Disciples increased and a great many priests became obedient to the faith." He'll do something similar in 9:31, in 12:24, in 16:5, and in 19:20. In each of these places, we have some sort of summary statement that indicates that the word of God is continuing to grow.<sup>6</sup>
7. **Paul the Apostle – greatest missionary ever.**
- a. Jewish birth of tribe of Benjamin named Saul (King Saul?). Lived in in Tarsus and trained as a Pharisee (probably remained one). He was highly regarded and a rising star of the Pharisees. He held Roman citizenship.
  - b. Persecutor of Christians.
    - i. First mentioned in Acts 7 at the stoning of Steven.
    - ii. Responsible for the imprisonment and deaths of many Christians.
  - c. Gained fame and responsibility from the Sanhedrin to arrest Christians.
  - d. Road to Damascus
    - i. In approximately 35 AD, Paul dramatically encountered the Lord Jesus.
    - ii. Fearful Christians finally accept him as genuine

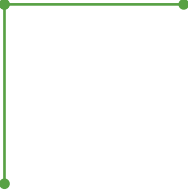
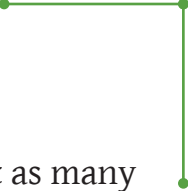
<sup>6</sup> Bock, D. L., Cardoza, F., Cohick, L. H., Evans, C. A., Goheen, M. W., James, F. A., III, ... Moo, D. J. (2016). NT176 The Gospel Message in the Early Church. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.



8. Paul's missionary journeys (47-61 AD)

<sup>7</sup>[https://www.conformingtojesus.com/images/webpages/pauls\\_journeys\\_map1.jpg](https://www.conformingtojesus.com/images/webpages/pauls_journeys_map1.jpg)

- a. First missionary Journey (Acts 13-14)
  - i. Paul and Barnabas traveled to Cyprus and into Galatia to make disciples and establish churches.
  - ii. They took John Mark, Barnabas' nephew, along but he left after Cyprus and caused later problems between Paul and Barnabas.
  - iii. Paul set the practice of first going to the local synagogue to preach Christ. If and when rejected, he turned to the Gentile population.
  - iv. At the end of this journey, when they were back in Antioch, the Judaizers arrive preaching circumcision and adherence to the Law as additional requirement for salvation. Acts 15:1
  - v. Paul went to Jerusalem for the Jerusalem Council to establish that Gentiles do not need to become Jews to be saved. Acts 15
- b. Second Missionary Journey (Acts 15-18:23)
  - i. After refusing to take John Mark along again, Barnabas and Paul split up. Barnabas took Mark and headed back to Cyprus and churches there to revisit. Acts 15:36-41.
  - ii. Paul and Silas are joined in Lystra by Timothy and soon after by Luke. Acts 16
  - iii. After a vision of a man of Macedonia, they traveled to Philippi and then established churches in Europe.
  - iv. They stayed in Corinth for 18 months to establish and strengthen the new church there.
  - v. Paul probably began writing to the churches there starting with 1 and 2 Thessalonians and Galatians.
  - vi. He met Priscilla and Aquila as well as Apollos in Corinth. He left Priscilla and Aquila in Ephesus possibly with Timothy.
  - vii. They returned to Antioch and left shortly afterwards on the 3rd journey.

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- c. Third Missionary Journey (Acts 18:23 - 21:17)
    - i. He retraced his prior journey and spent as many as 3 years in Ephesus. He and/or his followers spread the gospel to other cities in the area.

- ii. Probably wrote to Rome and the letters to Corinth and others during this time.
- d. Against the advice of his friends, Paul then returned to Jerusalem where he was arrested, spent 2 years in Caesarea under house arrest, claimed Roman citizen's right to trial before Caesar and was shipped to Rome. (c. 61 AD)

## 9. Paul's fate

- a. Acts ends with Paul still in prison without resolution.
- b. The most accepted theory is that Paul was imprisoned twice in Rome.
  - i. The first time, as recorded in Acts, was from 60 or 61 to approximately 63 AD. This was a house arrest. He probably wrote his Prison Epistles at this time. (The Prison Epistles are Colossians, Ephesians, Philippians, and Philemon.)
  - ii. After being acquitted, he possibly traveled to Spain as well as visiting some of his churches. Probably wrote at least some of his Pastoral Epistles (1 Timothy and Titus) during this time.
  - iii. He was re-arrested and imprisoned again, severely treated this time. Most likely wrote 2 Timothy as his final letter.
  - iv. He was executed by beheading in 66 or 67 AD.

## 10. Conclusion

- a. So the gospel message, as we see it stressed in Acts, is about this establishment, this reestablishment, of this relationship with God that has forgiveness of sins so that there is no guilt, has a cleansed vessel so that the vessel is clean, [and] has the presence of the Spirit within God's people so that they can live and walk with God. At its core, that's the gospel message according to Acts
- b. Why does Acts end so abruptly? Maybe because the job isn't done yet. We still have work to do.

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<sup>8</sup> Bock, D. L., Cardoza, F., Cohick, L. H., Evans, C. A., Goheen, M. W., James, F. A., III, ... Moo, D. J. (2016). *NT176 The Gospel Message in the Early Church*. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

3. Epistles (Letters) - 21 Letters included in the New Testament.
  - i. Purpose of the epistles – why they are included in the Canon.
    1. Answer questions
    2. Confront heresy
    3. Teach theology
    4. Teach application of theology
    5. Encourage and support especially during times of persecution.
  - ii. Format - Most were written in the standard Greco-Roman letter format of the time.
    1. Opening salutation: the name of the writer, name of the recipients and a greeting.
    2. Prayer, blessing and/or thanksgiving.
    3. Body of the letter: the occasion or reason for the letter.
    4. Final greeting and farewell: often included personal information, plans and greetings from others.
  - iii. Paul's Letters - overview
    1. Order in the Canon is by size - Romans, 1,2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1,2 Thessalonians, 1,2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon– largest to smallest.
    2. Subcategories
      - a. Churches or groups of churches – Romans, 1,2 Corinthians, Galatians, 1,2 Thessalonians
      - b. Prison epistles – Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Philemon
      - c. Pastoral epistles – 1, 2 Timothy and Titus
    3. These 13 epistles were written by Paul. There is little doubt or question among scholars, other than the normal skeptics who doubt and question anything that requires faith. They follow a general format and tone as well as naming Paul as author. Several indicate that he signed them in his own hand to combat any forgeries bearing his name.
    4. Most of Paul's letters are constructed such that the first half is doctrinal, and second half is application. They are either

orthodoxy or orthopraxy with most being a combination – they teach theology and application, usually in that order.

- a. **Orthodoxy** – Doctrine, what we believe. What makes us Christian.
    - i. Scripture – 2 Tim, 3:16; 2 Pet 1:21
    - ii. Trinity – Mat 28:19; 1 Cor 12:4-6; 2 Cor 13:14
    - iii. Jesus – Col 1:15-20; Col 2:9-10; 2 Cor 5:21
    - iv. Humanity - Rom 3:10-19; 1 Tim 5:6
    - v. Substitutionary Atonement - 1 Cor 15:1-3; 2 Cor 5:21
    - vi. Salvation – Eph 2:8-9
    - vii. Return of Christ – Rom 8:19-23: Act 1 – (belief differs on how or when, but the return is necessary)
  
  - b. **Orthopraxy** – Application, how we live. These are the characteristics of a committed follower of Christ.
    - i. Supreme and incomparable love for Jesus Christ
    - ii. Regular study and devotion to God’s Word – don’t stunt your spiritual growth
    - iii. Renunciation of ourselves as the authority and focus of our lives –live in a way that we know we’re not in charge
    - iv. A life of submission and sacrifice to the cross and to Christ
    - v. Allegiance to Christ’s compelling leadership
  
  - c. Recognition of God as the true owner of our possessions.
  - d. Reflection of Christ’s love in our attitudes and actions toward others.<sup>9</sup>
- iv. **Paul’s Epistles – by category**
1. **Churches**
    - a. Romans – Paul’s theological masterpiece on salvation by grace but also addresses conditions in the Roman churches.
      - i. Written from Corinth during his 2nd missionary journey in the mid to late 50’s AD.
      - ii. The recipients were the churches in Rome.

<sup>9</sup> Yarbrough, Mark, DTS, BE201 - Story of Scripture: Genesis to Revelation.

a

1. Probably a fairly large number of Christians with predominant Gentile congregation.
2. Though there had been approximately 13 Jewish synagogues in Rome, the expulsion of the Jews in 49 or 50 AD left the Christians meetings to house churches. By the time of the writing, the Jews had been allowed to return.
- iii. According to C.L. Quarles, Paul had several reasons for writing Romans:
  1. To remind Roman believers of some of the fundamental truths of the gospel.
  2. To address problems in the churches, especially unity between the Jewish and Gentile believers.
  3. To introduce himself to the Roman Christians most of whom did not know him personally.<sup>10</sup>
- iv. Theme of the epistle is Romans 1:16-17.

**Rom 1:16** *For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile. 17 For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed—a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, e just as it is written: “The righteous will live by faith.”*


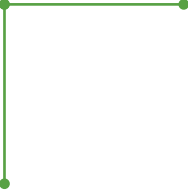
- v. Turning point of the letter is Romans 12 where Paul moved into the application phase.

**Rom 12:1** *Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. 2 Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will*

- vi. Transformed living.
  1. Transformed living will impact relationships within the church and in the world.

<sup>10</sup> Quarles, C. L. (2003). Romans, Letter to The. In C. Brand, C. Draper, A. England, S. Bond, E. R. Clendenen, & T. C. Butler (Eds.), Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary (p. 1410). Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers.

2. Transformed living is vital in light of Christ return and in acceptance of both stronger and weaker Christians.
- b. 1,2 Corinthians
- i. Corinth was a mess.
    1. Very influential, crossroad city
    2. Culturally diverse, extremely pagan and known for its immorality, especially sexual immorality.
    3. Paul spent 18 months there during his 2nd missionary journey (c. 51-52 AD). He left Aquila and Priscilla there as well as Apollos to help teach the church.
  - ii. 1 Corinthians
    1. This letter was in response to troubling reports for several sources as well as to answer questions asked in a letter to Paul.
    2. Paul dealt with four issues in this letter.
      - a. Divisions in the church. (1 Cor 1-4)
      - b. Immorality. (5-6)
      - c. Doctrinal and ethical questions and practices. (7-14)
      - d. Defense of the doctrine of the resurrection. (15-16)
  - iii. 2 Corinthians
    1. 2 Corinthians was written later. Paul had actually written the congregation again, but this 1 letter is not recorded. Paul stated that he regretted the sever tone
    2. Paul also made an additional visit to Corinth that was extremely painful for him. He sent Timothy there to try to mend some of the fences, but to no avail.
    3. Titus, however, brought back a much better report.
    4. The reason for this letter is to defend apostolic



authority and teaching and his authority in particular. Paul also wanted to prepare them for his upcoming visit so it would go better than the last.

c. Galatians

- i. the letter was written to the “churches of Galatia.”  
Gal 1:2
- ii. There is a question as to who the churches are, southern Galatia (cities where Paul visited on his 1st mission) or ethnic Galatia in the north.
  1. If southern Galatia, the letter was very early and even possibly Paul’s first. (I agree with the southern theory and feel the letter was written before the Jerusalem Council in about 48-49 AD.)
  2. If ethnic, northern Galatia it would have been written later, mid-50s.
- iii. Galatians is Paul’s most intense letter. He is upset, angry, disappointed and puzzled by what is happening. After his salutation and greeting, Paul omits the normal thanksgiving and blessing. He is angry and the tone is obvious to the reader.
- iv. The purpose of the letter was to counter the Judaizers claim: the Jewish law was binding on all Christian. Along with Romans, Paul presented a firm argument that justification was by grace alone without any meritorious effort on our part.

d. 1,2 Thessalonians

- i. Thessalonica
  1. Thessalonica was a major port city in Macedonia founded by the Greeks in the 3rd century BC.
  2. It was a free city during Roman times and highly valued because of its strategic location. In addition to the harbor and waterways, it was located on the Egnatian Way, a major highway in the area.
  3. Imperial worship was dominant in the city.
  4. Even with continuous persecution, the Christians in Thessalonica spread the gospel throughout the



region. Paul was forced to flee to Berea where the persecutors followed him.

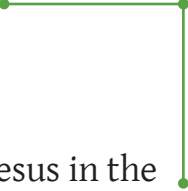
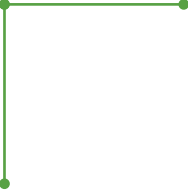
- ii. 1 Thessalonians
  1. This was one of the earliest of Paul's letters. After receiving a good report from Timothy, (Acts 18:1-5; 1 Thess 3:6) Paul still needed to correct some errors that had crept into their theology.
  2. The letter was probably written from Corinth in the early 50s.
  3. Even with the problems, Paul was very pleased and thankful for these Christians. His exhortations were to live holy lives, love one another, not believe in false doctrines of the return of Christ or the Day of the Lord having already come. They needed to do this even through suffering and persecution. In other words, 1st Thessalonians emphasizes faith, love, and hope<sup>11</sup>
- iii. 2 Thessalonians
  1. Written shortly after 1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians, Paul needed to clarify some misunderstanding about the second advent.
  2. Perhaps we can say that there are four great teachings in this letter:
    - (1) the greatness of God,
    - (2) the wonder of salvation in Christ,
    - (3) the second coming, and
    - (4) the importance of life and work each day.<sup>12</sup>
  3. As with many eschatological teaching, no one knows when Christ will return. Our job is not to try to determine when, but to live and work as though it will be tomorrow.

<sup>11</sup> Kuo, J. C. (2016). *Thessalonians, First Letter to the*. In J. D. Barry, D. Bomar, D. R. Brown, R. Klippenstein, D. Mangum, C. Sinclair Wolcott, ... W. Widder (Eds.), *The Lexham Bible Dictionary*. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

<sup>12</sup> Morris, L. (2003). *Thessalonians, Second Letter to the*. In C. Brand, C. Draper, A. England, S. Bond, E. R. Clendenen, & T. C. Butler (Eds.), *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary* (p. 1589). Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers.

2. Prison epistles

- a. These four letters were all written during Paul's first Roman imprisonment in 60 to 63 AD. (Some scholars disagree as to the Roman imprisonment and claim possible Caesarean and even Ephesian prisons as the location, but Rome is probable.)
  - i. Paul made mention of his imprisonment in each of these letters making it clear as to the time period.
  - ii. Ephesians, Colossians and Philemon were probably written at about the same time. They all mention the same companions and Tychicus is the letter carrier for Ephesians and Colossians and probably was with Onesimus taking the letter to Philemon.
  - iii. Some of these letters could well have been circular with more than one church as the intended recipient. They were to be shared and read amongst them.
  - iv. Philippians is different and Epaphroditus was the courier.
  - v. It is clear from all of these letters that Paul used his imprisonment to full advantage, preaching and teaching all that came to him including his constant guards. His converts were many.
- b. Ephesians
  - i. Ephesus was the 3rd largest city in the Roman empire with an estimated population of 250,000 in the 1st century located in Asia Minor.
    1. It was a major crossroads with a diverse population as well as a major commercial port.
    2. Artemis (Diana), a goddess of fertility, was the principle deity worshipped in Ephesus though there were upward to 50 different gods and goddesses there.
    3. During his 3rd missionary journey, Paul spent up to 3 years in Ephesus.
  - ii. The letter to the Ephesians was probably circular



intended for several churches as some early manuscripts do not have the reference to Ephesus in the opening verses.

- iii. Ephesians and Colossians are closely related in content, overlapping themes and structure.
- iv. Structure of the epistle.
  - 1. Key verse

*Eph 2:8 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—9 not by works, so that no one can boast. 10 For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.<sup>13</sup>*

- 2. The letter is broken as usual with Paul in two parts, theological and practical.
    - a. Eph 2-3 emphasize the new life in Christ they received by grace through faith for all, both Jew and Gentile. This is reconciliation with God in Christ.
    - b. Eph 4-6 emphasized how the new life in Christ must be lived out by walking in unity, love, light, wisdom and in relationships.
  - 3. Paul ends the application portion of this letter with a description of the spiritual battle that we all engaged in and a description of the armor needed to succeed. (Eph 6:10-20)
- c. Philippians
  - i. Philippi, the city
    - 1. Philippi was a Roman colony, enjoying the full benefit of such. They paid limited taxes, the populace were Roman citizens with all of their rights, and they took great pride in their resemblance to Rome, even modeling the city after the capital. Many soldiers retired there with land grants for their service to the Emperor.
    - 2. Paul first went to Philippi early in his 2nd missionary journey. (Acts 16) No mention of a synagogue, so there was a limited number of Jews.

3. After gaining several Gentile converts and establishing his first European home church, Paul was forced to leave the city. The young church thrived until the 7th century when Philippi was invaded and began to decline.
4. The congregation was beloved by Paul as is evident in the letter.
- ii. The letter to the Philippians
  1. The first thing that is evident in this letter is its warm, personal nature even though Paul was imprisoned, and the Philippians are being persecuted. Their mutual love and respect is obvious.
  2. Because of the civic pride of the Philippian residents in general, Paul took great care in telling the church that their citizenship was not here but in heaven.
- iii. Structure of the epistle.
  1. After his normal salutation and blessing, Paul reviewed his circumstances.
  2. Paul's exhortations (1:27-2:18)
    - a. The church was exhorted to stand firm, be united, follow the example of Christ and to be light in a dark world.
  3. Paul's companions (2:19-30)
    - a. Timothy
    - b. Epaphroditus
  4. Paul's warnings (3:1-4:1)
    - a. Against legalism
    - b. Against lawlessness
  5. Paul then concluded the letter with thanksgiving.
- iv. Though the letter has many memorable verses, the hymn in chapter 2 is a highlight. It is an early creed and paints a vivid picture of Christ as savior.
- d. Colossians

- i. Colossae
  1. Colossae, located on the Lycus River in Asia Minor, was a thriving commercial center in the 5th century BC. Not unlike many modern small town, a major trade route bypassed the city and made Laodicea the dominant center in the area.
  2. Paul probably had not been to Colossae and the greetings at the end of the letter all seem to be from others.
  3. Since Laodicea, only 11 miles away, is mentioned and Paul requested that they share the letter with them, Colossae was affiliated with the larger churches there.
- ii. The Letter to the Colossians
  1. Comparing the greetings and salutations, Colossians was written about the same time as Ephesians and the other prison epistles. The same messengers carried most of them.
  2. Typical of Paul's letters, Colossians is half doctrine (1-2) and half application (3-4).
  3. Doctrine
    - a. The supremacy of Christ. (1:15-20) (This is possibly a hymn used by the early church.)

**Col 1:15** *The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. 16 For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. 17 He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. 18 And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. 19 For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, 20 and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.*<sup>14</sup>

- b. False teachings
  - i. A specific heresy is not identified and

<sup>14</sup> *The New International Version*. (2011). (Col 1:15-20). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

- could be one or more of several, including Gnosticism and Judaizers. Or Paul could be warning against false teaching in general.
- ii. Christ must be seen as the foundation of our salvation, and we can be confident in him.
- c. Application
  - i. Christ must be the center of all of life.
  - ii. Christ must control all relationships whether family or otherwise.
  - iii. If Christ is supreme, all Christians need to live in that reality.

**Col 2:6** *So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, 7 rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.<sup>15</sup> Also see Eph 3:17.*

- e. Philemon
  - i. The letter to Philemon is a personal correspondence from Paul to an old friend and colleague living in Colossae.
  - ii. Philemon was undoubtedly wealthy and generous. He hosted the church in his home and Paul had been a guest there. He owned slaves. One such slave was Onesimus who had run away to Rome where he had been converted and was of great value to Paul during his imprisonment.
  - iii. The short letter is in standard format for the times with an appeal to Philemon for Onesimus.
    - 1. Onesimus's punishment for running away after possible theft was up to death.
    - 2. Paul appealed to Philemon to accept his slave back as a brother in Christ and someone of

<sup>15</sup> *The New International Version*. (2011). (Col 2:6-7). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

valuable to Paul.

- iv. While this letter is indeed personal, it carried application not only to the recipients, but to the church as well. Christian love and devotion should traverse barriers of race, status or position. Forgiveness must triumph over personal justice.

3. **Pastoral epistles** – Paul’s letters to two young, trusted fellow servants, Timothy and Titus, charged with leading problematic churches.

a. Timothy

- i. Timothy was Paul’s spiritual son and steady partner in ministry since the beginning of his 2nd missionary journey after a stop in Lystra.
- ii. Timothy was Jewish by his mother, Eunice, and grandmother, Lois. His father was Greek and is not mentioned in scripture.
- iii. He was sent by Paul on several missions to gather information or help young, struggling churches. He spent a great deal of time in Ephesus.

b. 1st Letter to Timothy

- i. Paul wrote the 1<sup>st</sup> letter to Timothy in 66 or 67 AD probably from Philippi or a nearby city. This was during the interval between his first and final imprisonment in Rome.
- ii. The epistle consists mainly, (1) of counsels to Timothy regarding the worship and organization of the Church, and the responsibilities resting on its several members; and (2) of exhortation to faithfulness in maintaining the truth amid surrounding errors.<sup>16</sup>
- iii. Sound teaching is a major emphasis of both this letter and the one to Titus. False teaching was becoming an issue in many of the churches. Paul feared that he would not be able to come to Ephesus and knew that he was coming toward the end of his life. His words

<sup>16</sup> Easton, M. G. (1893). In *Illustrated Bible Dictionary and Treasury of Biblical History, Biography, Geography, Doctrine, and Literature* (p. 669). New York: Harper & Brothers.

- of encouragement was vital to his young protégés.
- iv. 1 Timothy 3 gives the qualifications for church leadership that still hold great significance in the church today.
- v. Paul closes with the admonition to guard his heritage and faith.

**1 Tim 6:20** *Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to your care. Turn away from godless chatter and the opposing ideas of what is falsely called knowledge, 21 which some have professed and in so doing have departed from the faith.*

- c. 2nd Letter to Timothy
  - i. 2nd Timothy was written by Paul during his second imprisonment in Rome and was undoubtedly his last letter written sometimes in 66 - 67 AD. While there are a great deal of instructions for his young pastor, there is an obviously tender tone. Paul knew that he was going to die soon and wanted to see Timothy one more time.
  - ii. At the same time, Paul wanted to continue his work. He asked Timothy to bring John Mark, his scrolls, and especially his parchment. His request in verse 9, “Do your best to come to me quickly,” is almost plaintive.
  - iii. Paul gave Timothy his final charge in **4:1-2** *In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge: 2 Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction.*
  - iv. It was important that Timothy continued to preach the word because people would not always be receptive and would rather hear what they wanted, not what they needed.
- d. Titus

<sup>17</sup> *The New International Version*. (2011). (1 Ti 6:20–21). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

- i. Titus was a Gentile convert and trusted companion to Paul. He is mentioned multiple times in Paul's letters and accompanied Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem for the Jerusalem Council.
- ii. While Titus served in various places, tradition places him as the first bishop of Crete where Paul left him to complete the work in that church.

**Titus 1:5** *The reason I left you in Crete was that you might put in order what was left unfinished and appoint elders in every town, as I directed you.*<sup>18</sup>

e. Letter to Titus

- i. This pastoral epistle was written about the same time as 1<sup>st</sup> Timothy, with which it has many similarities.
- ii. Paul did not hold the Cretans in high regard.

**Titus 1:10** *For there are many rebellious people, full of meaningless talk and deception, especially those of the circumcision group.*

- iii. Titus was given detailed instructions for the appointing of the leadership for the church.
- iv. Next came instructions for various classification of the members and, though generic, highlighted the characteristic that they should exhibit.
- v. There are Trinitarian references in Titus. God the Father is referred to as Savior and the Holy Spirit is poured out through Jesus. (1:3; 2:10; 3:4; 3:6)

v. **General (catholic) Epistles** – the remaining letters not attributed to Paul are referred to as General or Catholic Epistles. The term catholic or universal was in use long before the Roman Catholic designation was established.

1. Hebrews -

a. Though not in a strict epistle format, Hebrews is included in the letters. The author calls his efforts a “word of exhortation.”

<sup>18</sup> The New International Version. (2011). (Tt 1:5). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

*Heb 13:22 Brothers and sisters, I urge you to bear with my word of exhortation, for in fact I have written to you quite briefly.*<sup>19</sup>

- b. Authorship is completely unknown, and opinions vary from scholar to scholar from the time of the church fathers. Paul was earlier credited with it's writing. The content and general usage in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century clearly place the book in our Canon. The author had extensive knowledge of Jewish Law and tradition.
- c. It was probably written from Rome in the mid to late 60s but undoubtedly before the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD.
- d. The letter was originally intended for Jewish Christian to keep them from reverting to Judaism in the face of persecution, but this is debated.
- e. As with Pauline epistles, the letter is divided by doctrine (1-10:18) and application (10:19-13:25). Application is, however, woven throughout the letter. The letter is often referred to as a commentary on Leviticus as it shows the true purpose and meaning of the Mosaic system in relation to Christ as Messiah, the fulfillment of the entire Old Testament.
- f. Structure – While there are a variety of ways to outline the letter, a very basic structure is as follows:
  - i. The first part of the book highlights the Pre-eminence of Christ. (1:4-4:13) The author persuasively argues that Jesus is “superior” to all – angels, Moses, Aaron and the entire Levitical order of priest.
  - ii. Next the author explains the Priesthood of Christ. (4:14-10:18) He is a priest of the order of Melchizedek – a permanent King and High Priest. Christ is also the perfect sacrifice once and for all.
  - iii. The author then turns to the Perseverance of Christians in the application section of the letter. (10:19-13:25) Using Old Testament heroes, Christians are encouraged to stand firm in the promise of their faith.

<sup>19</sup> *The New International Version*. (2011). (Heb 13:22). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

- g. “Hebrews is one of the most beautifully written, powerfully argued, and theologically profound writings in the New Testament” (Johnson, *Hebrews*, 1). It is also a challenging document to interpret. Many of the common introductory matters of a historical nature are unsettled. Yet its message is much clearer. It will continue to challenge contemporary readers with its rhetorically elegant, theologically stimulating, and sometimes unsettling message.<sup>20</sup>
- h. While Hebrews is complicated and theologically challenging, it’s value has never been questioned.

## 2. James

- a. James -There are three prominent James mentioned in the New Testament.
  - i. James the Apostle, son of Zebedee and brother to John. James was the first apostle to be martyred in about 44 AD and was not likely to be the author of this letter.
  - ii. James, son of Alphaeus, was also one of the twelve and possibly referred to as James the Younger.
  - iii. James, the “brother of the Lord”, was most likely Jesus’ half-brother. Paul recorded in 1 Corinthians 15:7 that Jesus appeared to James after his resurrection. While the siblings of Jesus were reluctant to believe and follow him, both James and Jude became believers. James was head of the Jerusalem church. According to church tradition, he was martyred either by stoning or being cast off the Temple in about 66 AD. He is the most likely author of this letter that bears his name. James was known for his piety and spent so much time on his knees in prayer that they looked like the knees of a camel.

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<sup>20</sup> Sweeney, J. P. (2016). *Hebrews, Letter to the*. In J. D. Barry, D. Bomar, D. R. Brown, R. Klippenstein, D. Mangum, C. Sinclair Wolcott, ... W. Widder (Eds.), *The Lexham Bible Dictionary*. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

- b. Epistle of James
  - i. Throughout church history, James has been misunderstood as promoting justification by works instead of justification by faith. Critics and scholars have pitted James against Paul for centuries.
    - 1. Careful study of both authors, however, clarifies this issue. Paul's focus was on initial salvation by faith, justification.
    - 2. James' focus is on sanctification or the continual development of a Christian over time. If your faith is genuine, it will show. "Orthodoxy of doctrine that does not produce a sanctified lifestyle is, in the final analysis, worthless."<sup>21</sup>
  - ii. The letter was written to the Jews of the dispersion, the diaspora, scattered across the Roman empire. While probably to all Jews, the main focus is to Christians.
  - iii. It was generally thought to have been written about 62 AD but could possibly been much earlier.
  - iv. The general content of the letter is a call to holiness. True Christians will behave and live as Christ did and taught. A Christian's faith will be evident to the world or that faith will be in question.
  - v. Outlines for James vary. It is written in a similar style to Proverbs and at first glance seems to wander from subject to subject. James transitions from one theme to another.
    - 1. One method of outlining is to look at the letter as sections of "Exhortations, Admonitions, and Advice"<sup>22</sup>. This method groups the topics in five sections of various subjects.

<sup>21</sup> Patterson, P. (2003). *James, Letter From*. In C. Brand, C. Draper, A. England, S. Bond, E. R. Clendenen, & T. C. Butler (Eds.), *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary* (p. 868). Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers.

<sup>22</sup> Sweeney, J. P. (2016). *James, Letter of*. In J. D. Barry, D. Bomar, D. R. Brown, R. Klippenstein, D. Mangum, C. Sinclair Wolcott, ... W. Widder (Eds.), *The Lexham Bible Dictionary*. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

2. A second outline groups everything under the results of “True Religion.”<sup>23</sup> This method also puts it into five similar groups ranging from living in persecution to the care of fellow Christians.

vi. While James can be difficult theologically, it is of great value for practical Christian living. These words will admonish us, strengthen us, direct us and give broader focus to how we live and present Christ to the world around us.

3. 1, 2 Peter

a. There is no reason to doubt the authorship of these two letters. The earliest references from church fathers attributed them to the Apostle Peter.

b. 1<sup>st</sup> Peter

i. The date is generally thought to be in the early 60s.

ii. The destination was for the churches in northern Asia

Minor, modern day Turkey.

iii. The purpose of this letter was to strengthen and encourage Christians living under great persecution, both from government and society.

iv. The letter reminds Christians that they have a new identity in Christ, a chosen people with holy status before God. He called for them to live in solidarity and hope – the trials of today will someday be replaced with the joy and glory of what will come.

v. Peter also reminds them to trust God.

*1 Pet 4:19 So then, those who suffer according to God’s will should commit themselves to their faithful Creator and continue to do good.*<sup>24</sup>

<sup>23</sup> Patterson, P. (2003). James, Letter From. In C. Brand, C. Draper, A. England, S. Bond, E. R. Clendenen, & T. C. Butler (Eds.), *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary* (p. 868). Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers.

<sup>24</sup> *The New International Version*. (2011). (1 Pe 4:19). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

- c. 2nd Peter
  - i. This letter was written after the first letter of Peter and shortly before his death in the mid-60s.
  - ii. Peter may have written this letter to a specific church that he had already communicated with, see 1 Pet 3:1-2.
  - iii. The two main themes addressed here are false teachers (2:1-22) and those that denied the second coming of Christ (3:1-18).
  - iv. Though disputed early, the letter is part of the Canon and valuable for Christians to both warn and spur to action as the Lord will come again.
- 4. 1, 2, 3 John
  - a. These three letters, though anonymous, and the book of Revelation are attributed to the Apostle John, author of the gospel bearing his name.
  - b. 1 John
    - i. Since it lacks the standard format of a letter, 1<sup>st</sup> John is more of a statement of faith.
    - ii. The date of this document is debated and could have been written before, during or after the gospel.
    - iii. A common thread divides the letter:
      - 1. God is light - “light and dark”

**1 John 1:5** *This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all.*

2. God is Love - “love one another”

**1 John 3:11** *For this is the message you heard from the beginning: We should love one another.*<sup>25</sup>

iv. There are warnings about heresy and false teachers within the church community. They, therefore, need to “test the spirits” before accepting new doctrine.

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<sup>25</sup> The New International Version. (2011). (1 Jn 3:11). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

- c. 2 John
    - i. This is the second shortest book in the New Testament, 13 verses.
    - ii. In letter format, “the Elder” addressed “the lady.” The lady is most likely reference to the church and not to an individual.
    - iii. the letter is built around two words, love and truth. Each is used 5 times in the short letter.
    - iv. An excellent outline is as follows:
      - 1. Love the Truth (1–3)
      - 2. Live the Truth (4–6)
      - 3. Look for the Truth (7–11)
      - 4. Long for the Truth (12–13)<sup>26</sup>
  - d. 3 John
    - i. Though it has 14 verses, Third John is not only the shortest book in the New Testament but in the entire Bible by word count. (2 John has 245 word while 3 John has 219 in the Greek.)
    - ii. John identifies himself as the elder and addressed the letter to a valued and probably wealthy Christian, Gaius.
    - iii. As with 2 John, truth (5 times) and love (3 times) are key words.
    - iv. The purpose of this letter is in anticipation of visitors and perhaps John himself to the church. Gaius is commendable and is requested to welcome them. Diotrephes, a self-styled leader, is conceited. And Demetrius, probably the bearer of the letter, is a consistent and trustworthy Christian.
    - v. The letter illustrates the conflict and power struggles that occurred even in the early church.
5. Jude
- a. There are various theories as to which Jude (Judas) wrote this letter. The most accepted is that Jude, as was James, was a half-brother to Jesus who came to faith after the resurrection. The author did exhibit authority to the recipients.

<sup>26</sup> Akin, D. (2003). *John, Letters From*. In C. Brand, C. Draper, A. England, S. Bond, E. R. Clendenen, & T. C. Butler (Eds.), *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary* (p. 939). Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers.

- b. The date of composure is unknown, but, if he indeed a half-brother of Jesus, it was probably written in 50-60 AD.
- c. Jude was written to a church or group of churches dealing false teachers who had made their way into their assemblies claiming new revelations from God. The false teachers are not named and could be one or a combination of several heresies of the time. Their fate and coming punishment will be harsh.
- d. While condemnation of heretic is severe, there is also encouragement and praise for the faithful. They were to persevere and build themselves up in faith. (vs 20)
- e. Jude closes with a beautiful doxology.

***Jude 24** To him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy **25** to the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore! Amen<sup>27</sup>*

#### 4. Prophecy – Revelation

- a. Revelation is the last book in the Bible. It is the only book of prophecy and is primarily apocalyptic in nature but also features prophesy, narrative and liturgical elements.
- b. The author is John. His name appears four times in the book and early church fathers confirm from eyewitnesses that he was the author.
- c. Written during a time of severe persecution, Revelation dates to either the reign of Nero (54-68) or Domitian (81-96).
  - i. Church fathers favored the later date.
  - ii. The seven churches mentioned at the beginning seem to be in decline while were fairly strong in the time of Nero.
  - iii. Most scholars prefer a later date of 90 to 96.
- d. John stated in 1:9 that he was on Patmos when he received the vision. He had been exiled to the island because of his faith.
- e. The recipients of the letter were the seven churches in Asia Minor.

<sup>27</sup> *The New International Version*. (2011). (Jud 24–25). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

- i. Only two of the churches were given only praise by the risen Lord – Philadelphia and Smyrna. The rest were criticized.
    - ii. All were exhorted to either repent and/or be assured of what was to come, that final victory was theirs.
  - f. There are various interpretations of the Revelation of Jesus Christ.
    - g. An Overview of Things to Come
      - i. A resurrection of believers before a time of trouble (1 Thess. 4:13- 18; 1 Cor. 15:51-58)
      - ii. A seven-year time of trouble begins (Rev. 6–19; 70th week of Daniel, cf. Daniel 9:24-27)
      - iii. Israel, nationally, turns to Christ in the time of tribulation
      - iv. Return of Christ to earth (Rev. 19:11–21)
      - v. A physical reign of Christ (Rev. 20; 65:17-25)
      - vi. New Heaven and New Earth (Rev. 21–22)
    - h. The Structure of Revelation
      - i. Introduction (1:1-20)
      - ii. Messages to the seven churches (2:1–3:22)
      - iii. A vision of the heavenly throne room (4:1–5:14)
      - iv. The opening of Seven Seals (6:1–8:1)
      - v. The sounding of the seven trumpets (8:2–11:19)
      - vi. The presence of God versus the powers of evil (12:1–14:20)
      - vii. The pouring out of the seven bowls (15:1–16:21)
      - viii. The judgment and fall of Babylon (17:1–19:5)
      - ix. God’s ultimate victory (19:6–22:5)
      - x. Conclusion (22:6-21)
    - i. Themes
      - i. Judgment on earth
      - ii. The Return of Christ
      - iii. Genesis...and Revelation
      - iv. God
        - 1. Worthy of worship (Rev 4:11; 14:7; 19:6)
        - 2. Intent on judging evil (16:5-7; 19:1-2)

- 3. Loves and protects His people (7:2-3)
- v. Jesus, the “Lion - Lamb”
  - 1. Oneness with God and shares in authority, glory, and worship
  - 2. Rev 1:4-5, 14-16; 5:6, 9-14; 21:22-23
- vi. New Heaven and New Earth
  - 1. What God began in Gen. 1-2, He now completes in Rev. 21-22
  - 2. The community is restored

FULL CIRCLE

<i>Genesis</i>	<i>Revelation</i>
“In the Beginning” (Gen. 1:1)	“I am the Alpha and Omega” (Rev. 21:6)
God creates heavens and earth—sin (Gen. 3)	God creates a new heaven and earth—no sin (Rev. 21:6)
Satan is present (Gen. 3)	Satan and sin are judged (Rev. 19:11-21; 20:7-10)
Death enters (Gen. 4:6-8; Gen. 5)	Death is put to death (Rev. 20:14; 21:4)
Sinful people lose intimate fellowship (Gen. 3)	God’s people serve Him in openness (22:3)
Community forfeited (Gen. 3:8)	Genuine community experienced (21:3, 7)
Hide from God (Gen. 3:8-11)	God’s people “see His face” (Rev. 22:4)
Sin brings pain (Gen. 3:16-17)	No more tears (Rev. 21:4)
Forbidden to eat from Tree of Life (Gen. 3:22-24)	God’s people eat freely and live (Rev. 22:2, 14)

5. Conclusion

Jesus is the fulfillment of all the covenants, but he has **not yet** fulfilled all of them. There is still more to come.

Dr Mark Yarbrough, DTS, summarizes the Bible story as such:  
 “The master narrative allows us to see beauty followed by sin and its consequences. However,

God moves forward in spite of sin, making a covenant promise to Abraham, guaranteeing that through him will come a nation (the Jews) in a land (Israel) that will bless the world through Jesus Christ.

“The track to the fulfillment of that covenant promise is unique. Through Moses and the Mosaic Covenant, God reveals His Law. This Law, while good, demonstrates that man is a sinner in need of God’s grace and deliverance. While judgment, because of unfaithfulness, came to the nation as promised in the Law and reinforced by the prophets, God’s unconditional promises were still intact. God promised to David that an ultimate Deliverer, the Messiah, would establish an everlasting kingdom where God’s people would be under a new covenant that is eternal and ratified by a pure heart, implying complete forgiveness of sin.

“The New Testament writers are focused on showing the explicit fulfillment of all the covenants in the person of Jesus Christ. Jesus is the Messiah of the Davidic line who fulfills the covenant promises to Abraham. Jesus, as full deity and perfect humanity, lived out the Mosaic Covenant flawlessly, doing what Israel could never do. Jesus, through His death and resurrection, inaugurated the New Covenant. And while all covenants are completed in Jesus, Jesus has yet to complete all covenants. That is why we await the second advent of Christ, when He will return and finish what has been started.”<sup>28</sup>

These lessons were highly influenced by the teaching of Dr Mark Yarbrough, Dr Darrell Bock, Dr NT Wright, among others. Scripture readings are NIV unless otherwise noted

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<sup>28</sup> Yarbrough, Mark, DTS, BE201 - Story of Scripture: Genesis to Revelation.

