



REMEMBER THE HEART OF THE BIBLE

Love God, Love Neighbor

By
Tom J. Cowley

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Dedication of this book

To my grandchildren,
Miguel and Thomas de Laveaga - Nicholas and Chelsea Cowley
May the Word of God dwell in their minds and hearts as
they grow and mature.
May all of us grow in knowledge and relationship with Jesus.

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There are many who encouraged me after my first book, *A Biography of Jesus*, to work further and publish a framework for the entire Bible. I hesitate to list some people, fearing omissions, but those who come to mind include Cynthia and John Klock, Art and Marilyn Ammann, Gordon and Susan Gaddy, John and Candace Cowley, Wally and Rita Osgood, Becky Morgan, Bob Losey, Eric Kwok, and the “Biblettes,” a women’s Bible study in Marin County, CA. I also want to acknowledge my mother and father, Ruth and Tom Cowley, lifelong Bible readers, and my son-in-law, Peter de Laveaga, a special storyteller of the Bible in his church with whom I exchange thoughts and ideas.

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The Past few years I have brought together some of the people mentioned here to form an advisory group. I meet with this group, which includes Dan McLennon, Steve Henderson, Cynthia Klock, Art Ammann, Karen Cowley, and Alison de Laveaga, once a year to review my ministry. I thank them for their time and valuable input.

Finally, the God-inspired writers of the Holy Bible deserve all the credit. They opened their hearts and minds to God’s inspiration. They recorded God’s holy word to share and tell his story for the ages and as a guide for daily GOD centered living.

God bless, Tom J. Cowley, D. Min.

Introduction

Most of you who pick up this book have some familiarity with the Bible. You probably own one at home; you may even own several. Many of you studied the Bible in Sunday School and some of you still do. In our Western culture, the Bible is often quoted, and we are almost as likely to hear its words used in the marketplace as in the church. Meanwhile, the Bible tops bestseller lists every year—by a large margin. In fact, “Americans buy more than 20 million new Bibles every year to add to the four the average American [already] has at home” (*The Economist*, Dec. 22, 2007). With such popularity, you would think that knowledge of the Bible is quite high. Yet, it turns out that the opposite is true. The same article reports that “the state of American Bible knowledge is abysmal.” Many polls, such as those done by the Barna Group (www.barna.org), confirm this reality.

Many people, including long-time Christian believers, lack a basic working knowledge or basic “literacy” of the Bible. Or, they may understand some of the basics, but lack a framework to hold it all together. It is my hope that this book, *Remember the Heart of the Bible*, can address both these concerns: I hope to cover the basic truths and narratives of the Bible while providing an overall framework that puts all these pieces together. To do this, I have tried to provide clear summaries of the Bible’s important narratives and to organize the Bible in ways that seem helpful for recall, keeping in mind the importance of being able to share and live Bible truths in our day-to-day life. I have avoided deep theological study. This way, both new and seasoned students of the Bible can benefit from this guide. For new students, I hope this gives a thorough overview of the Bible’s key narrative and truths; for seasoned students, I hope this gives a good review of the same material, while filling in some missing pieces.

Simplifying and ordering scripture was important to Jesus. An important example is told in Matthew 22, when Jesus was challenged in the temple by religious leaders. As the story unfolds, on the Tuesday of Holy Week, Jesus has just silenced one group of dissenters, the Sadducees. The Pharisees (another religious group) gathered together to question him. One of the Pharisees, being an expert in the Law, tested Jesus with a question: “Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the law?”

(Matthew 22:36). There were more than 600 rabbinical laws at the time. Jesus had to take care in bringing simplicity, accuracy, and focus to his answer. He replied,

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself. All of the law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments” (Matthew 22:37-40).

I consider these love commandments to be the heart of the Bible. Later, in the Upper Room on Thursday evening, Jesus shared with his followers:

“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another” (John 13:34-35).

Love is at the heart of Jesus’ message. This is why I have titled this book *Remember the Heart of the Bible*. This story of love is woven throughout the pages of the Bible. Through history God has expressed his love for humanity and in this book we will follow this story. We start with “Foundations,” a look at how God loved his people and laid the foundation for Jesus in the narratives of the Old Testament. We follow that with “Fulfillment,” where we will focus on Jesus’ life through four locations and the message of love as presented in the Gospels, particularly Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount. Lastly, we examine the “First Followers,” those early believers who attempted to live out Jesus’ message, as documented in the Epistles of the New Testament.

To summarize, this book has three sections that contain a total of thirty Bible studies:

Section 1 – Foundations

- 9 narrative studies to order the Torah foundation and epic key event chronology of the Old Testament

Section 2 – Fulfillment

- 4 studies on Jesus’ life are organized around four base locations
- 8 studies on love organized by “Love God/Father” and “Love our Neighbor”

Section 3– First Followers

- 9 Epistles studies, organizing the letters, emphasizing love passages

The idea for this book grew out of work on my earlier book, *A Biography of Jesus*. In that book, I sought to provide an outline and overview of thirty-two key events of Jesus' life centered around four geographic locations. In both the previous book and this one, I attempt to give a framework summary to assist readers in organizing and recalling information. However, *Remember the Heart of the Bible* differs from the previous work in at least two areas: It covers the *whole* Bible, rather than only the Gospel record of Jesus' life, and the emphasis is placed on *love of God* and *love of neighbor* as well as a chronology of the Hebrew nation and key events from the life of Jesus.

I believe that setting up a framework to organize information, spiritual or secular, is extremely helpful. Studies of the human memory show that having a framework increases our ability to retain and recall information. For example, I am a baseball fan and I have a framework for the leagues, teams, and players set up in my mind. It is easy to recall baseball facts, talk about important information, and store new data in my mind. On the other hand, I am not an opera buff; I have no framework for opera information. Facts about operas enter and leave my memory with little chance of "sticking." I am not equipped to talk knowledgeably about opera because I haven't created a framework to store and recall facts. The same is true with scripture and spiritual information. As we set up frameworks for Biblical information, our chances of remembering those stories and facts and being able to dialogue about them increases.

In addition to creating a framework, this book may assist readers in choosing material for an annual reading of the Bible. I am a great believer in regular Bible reading. Keep in mind that the organization and passages presented here are my choice; you may want to develop your own organization and select different passages. Beside the thirty studies, this book also includes two appendices for those who want to focus on meditation and review:

Appendix 1

This appendix presents the thirty-two key events highlighted in my previous book, *A Biography of Jesus*. This framework provides a chronological outline of the life of Jesus. Under the thirty-two key events are 172 scripture references for meditation and study.

Appendix 2

Presents an overview of the twelve apostles. This was developed by Al and Tina Lee, members of the Early Bird Bible Study at the Crystal Cathedral, Garden Grove CA.

As mentioned earlier, this book does not focus on deep theological discussion. It is designed to emphasize the simplicity and practical truths for daily living from the whole Bible, and increase religious literacy among Christian lay persons.

As we will see in our first studies, God provides very basic truths concerning; creation, One God, and God's laws. This assists answers to important questions each of us faith, such as:

- Who am I?
- Who is God?
- Why am I here?
- Are there boundaries in daily living?

He then builds on three truth threads from the Torah throughout the Bible and creates a wonderful fabric mosaic for living. He says:

- You are a child of God, created to dwell in His marvelous creation, the Earth, and create balance in the universe he designed.
- There is one God, who desires a covenant of love with you. He reveals his word (logos) through his son, Jesus Christ and leaves the Holy Spirit to be your counselor for daily living.
- You are made to seek to follow God's laws of love and build his kingdom on this earth.

As you study, focus on these simple truths. The heart of the Bible, the commands to love God and love neighbor, are what we were created for and are good starting points for focus.

God bless,
Tom J. Cowley, D. Min.

SECTION 1 FOUNDATIONS

Three Narratives leading up to the Hebrews Becoming a Nation
Six Narratives from Nationhood to the time of Jesus

CREATION	MONOTHEISM	THE EXODUS	OCCUPATION
Beginning of Time -1900 B.C.	One God 1900 - 1700 B.C.	God's Laws 1270 - 1230 B.C.	Of Land 1230 - 1020 B.C.

Introduction

The Old Testament plays an important role in three great faiths today. For Muslims, the Old Testament contains the story of Abraham's son Ishmael (ancestor of Mohammed), the laws of Moses, and the story of Old Testament Prophets, all of which figure prominently in the Koran. For Jews, the books of the Old Testament are the story of God's special call and laws for living to his chosen people and form the Torah. For Christians, the writings of the Old Testament are the Foundation for the Messiah's coming. The Old Testament shows God's love and relationship with his people and lays down the foundational truths upon which Jesus builds his teachings.

The Old Testament is a large and diverse collection of books written in many different styles. Traditionally, scholars have organized the Old Testament by writing style. Hebrew scholars, for example, organize the thirty-nine books such as the Torah, Prophets, and Writings:

ORGANIZATION OF OLD TESTAMENT – by HEBREW SCHOLARS

Torah (Pentateuch)	5 books of the Law
Prophets	21 books on former and latter Prophets
Writings	13 books of Psalms, Wisdom, Short Stories, History, and Apocalyptic Literature

UNITED	NORTHERN	SOUTHERN PRE - EXILE	SOUTHERN - EXILE AND RETURN
1020 - 931 B.C.	(ISRAEL) 931 - 721 B.C.	(JUDAH) 931 - 586 B.C.	586 - 300 B.C.

English Bibles further break down these thirty-nine books into five areas:

ENGLISH BIBLE – 39 OLD TESTAMENT BOOKS – FIVE AREAS

Books of the Law	First 5 books: Genesis to Deuteronomy
History of Land And Occupation	Next 12 books: Joshua to Esther
Wisdom Literature	Next 5 books: Job to Songs of Solomon
Major Prophets	Next 5 books: Isaiah to Daniel
Minor Prophets	Last 12 books: Hosea to Malachi

I believe the Old Testament is easier to understand and remember by visualizing it as nine historical narratives. God's wisdom lessons through people and events of each time period help us to know him. We see his character as we observe how he reaches out to his people, the Hebrews, and how he guides them, corrects them, and pursues a relationship with them. We also see how, through his covenant to Abraham and the laws given through Moses, he lays the Foundation for the New Covenant that is revealed through the Life of Christ in the Gospels of the New Testament.

The nine narratives I have chosen organize reading the Old Testament chronologically. They can be further divided into two groups, three narratives leading up to the Hebrews becoming a nation, and six narratives describing the time of nationhood up to the time of Jesus. Again, these nine great narratives of the Old Testament provide the Foundation for the Fulfillment, the coming of Jesus Christ, the promised Messiah. The nine narratives and their approximate time frames are listed below.

Nine Foundation Narratives of the Old Testament

Three Foundation Studies - Main Threads of Judeo Christian Faith

1. Creation – God Created the Heavens and the Earth (Beginning of time-1900 B.C.)

– Genesis 1:1 and 1:27 says, “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. ...So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.”

2. Monotheism – One God (1900-1700 B.C.)

– In Genesis 17:7 God says to Abraham, “I will establish my covenant as an everlasting covenant between me and you and your descendants and after you for generations to come, to be your God and the God of your descendants after you.”

3. The Exodus – God’s Laws – Morality (1270-1230 B.C.)

– Moses led the Exodus from Egypt and slavery. On Mt. Sinai, Moses received the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:1-17 and Deuteronomy 5:6-22). Moses told the people: “These are the commandments the Lord proclaimed in a loud voice...he added nothing more. Then he wrote them on two stone tablets and gave them to me.”

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Six Studies from Nationhood to the time of Jesus

4. Occupation of God’s Land (1230-1030 B.C.)

– The story is told in Joshua and Judges. Joshua told the people, “Consecrate yourselves, for tomorrow the Lord will do amazing things among you” (Joshua 3:5). Joshua led the Hebrews in overtaking Jericho and entering the Promised Land. Later (Joshua 24:15b), as Joshua was dying, he told the nation, “then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve...But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord.”

5. United Kingdom – (1020-931 B.C.) – Samuel, the last Judge, follows the will of the people and anoints Saul as Israel’s first king. Saul begins his reign with faithful service to God but ends with a tragic falling away. Israel’s King David comes to the throne and proves to be a man after God’s heart. Much of the great wisdom literature of the Old Testament is penned during the reigns of David and his son Solomon (Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Songs). The golden age of Israel ends with the first Temple being built by Solomon to God. Upon Solomon’s death the kingdom divides between Solomon’s General Jeroboam (ten Northern tribes) and Solomon’s heir and son Rehoboam (two Southern tribes).

6. Northern Kingdom – (931-721 B.C.) – The ten Northern Hebrew tribes unite under Jeroboam. Most kings of this kingdom did evil and did not serve the Lord. Baal worship was common. Intermarriage with Assyrians was common, creating the Samaritan race. Oral Prophets (Elijah and Elisha) were prominent, but finally the Northern tribes were conquered in 721 B.C. by the Assyrians and Israelites were deported to Assyria. Diaspora, the dispersion of Hebrews, begins with Jews relocating and living throughout the Mediterranean basin.

7. Southern Kingdom – Pre-exile (921-586 B.C.) – The story center is Judah and the Jerusalem Temple. There were good and bad kings. Great Prophets (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Micah, etc.) emerge to record God’s word. Jerusalem falls in 586 B.C. to armies of Nebuchadnezzar and talented Hebrews are deported to Babylon.

8. Southern Kingdom – Exile and Return (586-about 300 B.C.) – During the Babylonian exile and the period that follows, God’s people experienced some positive events. For example, scriptures were recorded, synagogue communities formed, Persians began to rule, and the Hebrew remnant returned to Jerusalem, allowing the second Temple to be built in Jerusalem.

9. Fullness of Time – (about 300 B.C. until the Birth of Jesus Christ) – Greek, Persian, Roman and Hebrew cultures converged to provide a platform for the Messiah. The time between the Old and New Testaments is the era of many important figures, including Alexander the Great, Julius Caesar, and Judas Maccabeas.

Let us study each of these narratives in greater detail and work our way through the Old Testament reading key selected passages.

STUDY 1

CREATION

(BEGINNING OF TIME – 1900 B.C.)

Review the following Bible passages:

Genesis 1:1 - 3:24 | 6:9 - 9:29

CREATION	MONOTHEISM	THE EXODUS	OCCUPATION
Beginning of Time -1900 B.C.	One God 1900 - 1700 B.C.	God's Laws 1270 - 1230 B.C.	Of Land 1230 - 1020 B.C.

God Creates the Heavens, the Earth, and Humans in His own image

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth...God created man in his own image...male and female he created them...The earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep.” These familiar and powerful words are the first ones in our Bible, but long before Bibles were printed, these words were part of the Hebrew nomadic oral tradition, passed down from generation to generation. First recorded during Moses’ time, creation accounts were pre-scientific, with the assumption of a three-storied universe (Exodus 20:4) made up of heaven (dwelling place of God), the land, and pillars (holding the land above the water).

Faith in God starts with acknowledgement of his creation powers. But how do we reconcile the creation account with our modern scientific knowledge? A number of scholars have pointed the way. On the issue of the six days of creation, Dr. Herschel Hobbs¹ points out that the Hebrew word used for “day” is yom. Yom can actually mean any number of indefinite time periods—twenty-four hours, a generation, or an era—much like the English word “day” can sometimes mean an indefinite time period, such as the phrase “in those days.” Therefore, six days might refer to a much longer period of time than six twenty-four days; this supports the time frames scientists now know about geologic development. We live in a balanced, wonderful universe, planned by a powerful God. It is hard to believe the order and infinite detail of the universe and human life are the result of random selection and survival of the fittest, as argued by Darwin.

The sequence of creation as recorded over the six days seems to fit well with what many scientists believe is the sequence of the earth’s development. Many “big bang” scientific² scenarios parallel the same sequence of darkness, light, oceans, land, plants, animals, and humans recounted in the pre-scientific revelations to the Hebrews centuries before Christ. It is not hard for me to believe the Hebrews had divine inspiration and accuracy from God in recording the Genesis narrative.

Faith in God starts with acknowledgement of his creation powers.

UNITED	NORTHERN	SOUTHERN PRE - EXILE	SOUTHERN - EXILE AND RETURN
1020 - 931 B.C.	(ISRAEL) 931 - 721 B.C.	(JUDAH) 931 - 586 B.C.	586 - 300 B.C.

Biblical creation begins with a demonstration of God's infinite power. Human dominions are on earth, bound by the seas, animals, plants, and earthly creations of the Lord.

Finally, we may make sense of Adam and Eve as the first people by understanding them as the first people God “visited.” Dr. Stan Nelson³ suggests this view on reading their account in Genesis 4. In Genesis 4:17 Adam’s son Cain built a city. There already appeared to be a considerable number of fellow humans on earth at Cain’s time. Using the “visited” concept, the Neanderthal man and other pre-historic peoples from the Stone Age are explained.

Biblical creation begins with a demonstration of God’s infinite power. Human dominions are on earth, bound by the seas, animals, plants, and earthly creations of the Lord. God created human beings in his own image. That means we are all children of God! We have the potential to do well and love others as God loves us.

Humans Have a Sinful Nature

Although we were created in God’s image, the Bible demonstrates humanity’s free will. God set up a situation to help men and women understand their dependence on Him. Adam and Eve, in a situation of innocence, eat from the tree of good and evil. The fall of man activates the power of Satan. Later (Matthew 4) when Jesus was tempted, Jesus overcame the Devil (or Satan’s power). The term Satan, when used in the Old Testament, refers to the enemy or adversary. Satanic power is a modern term we use today.

The Adam and Eve story is often interpreted as defining original sins of commission. Perhaps we need to be more attentive to sins of omission. Are we fulfilling God’s hope and promise for our lives? Are we omitting prayer and meditation about our purpose and calling on earth? We all are God’s children. We need to better utilize the talents and gifts we have been granted for Him.

CREATION	MONOTHEISM	THE EXODUS	OCCUPATION
Beginning of Time -1900 B.C.	One God 1900 - 1700 B.C.	God’s Laws 1270 - 1230 B.C.	Of Land 1230 - 1020 B.C.

Marriage Is Defined as a Man and Woman Joined Together

God created men and women to be helpmates and joined together becoming one flesh in marriage. The oneness of marriage and parenting is affirmed; man leaves his father and mother, uniting with his wife for procreation. God's order in creation is affirmed today as we understand the miracles of fertilization, life, complexities of cellular biology, and the universe.

God created men and women to be helpmates and joined together becoming one flesh in marriage.

God Makes a Covenant with Noah

Our God is a loving God who reaches out to His creation and desires a covenant relationship. An early example of this is the account of Noah. God advised Noah he was going to bring destructive floodwaters on earth and He desired that Noah make an ark and lead his family and two of each living creature to safety in the ark. Noah weathered the storm and led his family and the animals to dry ground after the flood. God blessed Noah and Noah built an altar to the Lord. Our God reaches out today and desires a covenant with each of His children.

¹ Herschel Hobbs, *Baptist Faith and Message*, (Nashville, TN: Lifeway Press, 1998), pp. 4-6.

² J. Madeleine Nash, "How Did Life Begin?," in *Time Magazine*, October 11, 1993, pp. 70-71.

³ Stan Nelson, lecture from "Systematic Theology" class, Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary, Mill Valley, CA, February, 1998

UNITED	NORTHERN	SOUTHERN PRE - EXILE	SOUTHERN - EXILE AND RETURN
1020 - 931 B.C.	(ISRAEL) 931 - 721 B.C.	(JUDAH) 931 - 586 B.C.	586 - 300 B.C.

Note



Discussion – Creation

- 1.** What are the cornerstone beliefs you hold concerning creation of our universe, the earth, and human life in its fullest?

- 2.** Do you think science and Biblical creation are compatible?

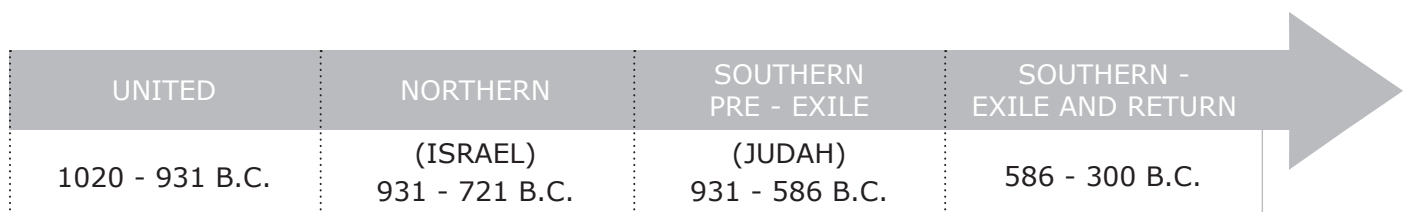
- 3.** Why do you think what God envisioned in marriage is important in our society today?

- 4.** A key woman from this period is Eve. Can you identify the role she played in the Bible?

- 5.** Which do you think are more important, sins of commission or omission?

- 6.** Do you feel God and you have made a covenant?

CREATION	MONOTHEISM	THE EXODUS	OCCUPATION
Beginning of Time -1900 B.C.	One God 1900 - 1700 B.C.	God's Laws 1270 - 1230 B.C.	Of Land 1230 - 1020 B.C.



STUDY 2

MONOTHEISM

(ONE GOD : 1900 – 1700 B.C.)

Review the following Bible passages:

Genesis 11:26 - 12:20		15:1 - 16:16		21:1 - 22:19
24:1 - 25:34		27:1 - 30:24		33:1 - 20
35:23 - 29		37:1 - 36		39:1 - 45:28
47:1 - 31		49:8 - 12		49:29 - 50:26
Job 1:1 - 3:26		19:1 - 29		

CREATION	MONOTHEISM	THE EXODUS	OCCUPATION
Beginning of Time -1900 B.C.	One God 1900 - 1700 B.C.	God's Laws 1270 - 1230 B.C.	Of Land 1230 - 1020 B.C.

***There is One God (Monotheism),
Not Many Gods (Polytheism) or No God (Atheism)***

A patriarch is the founder or head of a family or tribe. Abraham, son of Terah, becomes the head of a tribe, and his descendants Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph create a tribal story of intrigue, deceit, and loyalty to one God. Abraham lived in Ur of the Chaldeans, more than 100 miles southwest of Babylon. Abraham married Sarah. They set out from Ur to Haran, a city on the Euphrates River. Terah died in Haran. Abraham received God's call to set out for the Promised Land, occupied by the Canaanites. God told Abram (later renamed "Abraham"), I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you (Genesis 12:2). Actually, tribes of Abraham lived on marginal hill land, leaving the valleys to Canaanites.

The characters of the patriarchal period (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph, and Job) are related, except for Job. Abraham is father of Isaac (by Sarah) and Ishmael (by Hagar); Isaac is father of Jacob (and twin brother Esau, both born to Rebekah); and Jacob (via four wives) has twelve sons for whom the twelve tribes of Israel would be named. Because of the faith covenant of one man, Abraham, with His God, monotheism (one God) is born, and three great religions of today, Judaism, Islam, and Christianity, have their roots. God creates a covenant with Abraham that all the people of the world will be blessed through one of his descendants. The promise is fulfilled in Jesus Christ, a descendant of the tribe of Judah, formed by one of Jacob's twelve sons. (Genesis 49:10). There are many teaching narratives in the Patriarchal period-- the birth of Isaac to a previously barren Sarah, the subsequent tension between Hagar and Sarah resulting in Hagar and her son Ishmael being sent away from Abraham's tribe, God's test of Abraham in sacrificing his son Isaac on the altar, Isaac winning Rebekah's hand in marriage through a series of trials, Jacob winning Isaac's blessing over Esau, and Jacob's favoritism of his son Joseph.

*God told Abram
(later renamed
"Abraham"),
"I will make
you into a great
nation and I
will bless you."
(Genesis 12:2)*

UNITED	NORTHERN	SOUTHERN PRE - EXILE	SOUTHERN - EXILE AND RETURN
1020 - 931 B.C.	(ISRAEL) 931 - 721 B.C.	(JUDAH) 931 - 586 B.C.	586 - 300 B.C.

Joseph, a Story of One Man's Love of God

Sold into slavery by his brothers, Joseph is transported to Egypt. He recovers to prosper in Egypt and win favor with Pharaoh by interpreting his dreams.

While the key persons in these narratives are related (heirs of Abraham), deceit and cunning are a part of this family's leadership and lives. Brothers cast aside kin to gain a father's blessing; an unpopular brother is sold into slavery.

Genesis (37-50) tells of Joseph, Jacob's favorite among his twelve sons. Sold into slavery by his brothers, Joseph is transported to Egypt. He recovers to prosper in Egypt and win favor with Pharaoh by interpreting his dreams. Famine and drought befall Jacob and Joseph's eleven brothers. Jacob's tribe and family are forced into Egypt for survival. The great story of a family reuniting unfolds. God's promise to Abraham, "I will be your God, you will be my people," continues on in Egypt. A patriarchal family lifestyle is defined with genealogy. We can learn lessons regarding the sin of sibling rivalry and forgiveness in a family.

We can learn lessons regarding the sin of sibling rivalry and forgiveness in a family.

CREATION	MONOTHEISM	THE EXODUS	OCCUPATION
Beginning of Time -1900 B.C.	One God 1900 - 1700 B.C.	God's Laws 1270 - 1230 B.C.	Of Land 1230 - 1020 B.C.

Job, a Struggle with Human Suffering and Test of Faith

Job lived in the Patriarchal period. Job is a person who took his doubts to the Lord, accepted Yahweh's explanations, and emerged victorious from his struggles. This was contrary to the popular divine retribution doctrine of the Israelites who understood: do good and God will reward you, do bad and God will punish you. Job said to God: I know that my Redeemer lives and that in the end he will stand upon the earth (Job 19:25). Job's message reshapes the doctrine of divine retribution

Some final thoughts from the patriarchal period should be considered. Ishmael (born of Abraham's maidservant Hagar) should not be overlooked. He was Abraham's first son. He is viewed today as an important figure in the nation of Islam. Read Genesis 16, 21:9-21, and 25:12-18. These passages tell the story of Hagar and her son Ishmael. They were sent away from Abraham's camp after the birth of Isaac. We must remember, (Gen. 21:20) teaches, God was with the boy and he lived in the desert and became an archer.

A foundation of our faith is that one God had one son, Jesus Christ. Polytheism, the belief in many gods, practiced in the golden age of the Greeks, would not have fostered the covenant of one God to see His son visit earth. Atheism, belief in no god, also would not emerge to have a Son visit God's kingdom, His precious Earth!

Job said to God:

"I know that my Redeemer lives and that in the end he will stand upon the earth."

(Job 19:25)

A foundation of our faith is that one God had one son, Jesus Christ.

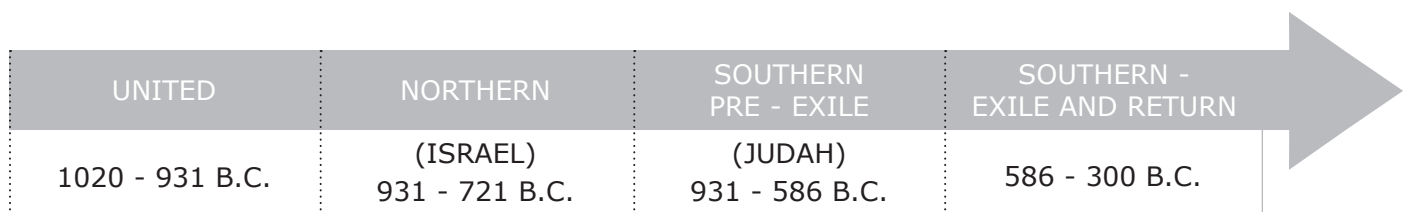
UNITED	NORTHERN	SOUTHERN PRE - EXILE	SOUTHERN - EXILE AND RETURN
1020 - 931 B.C.	(ISRAEL) 931 - 721 B.C.	(JUDAH) 931 - 586 B.C.	586 - 300 B.C.

Note

Discussion – Patriarchal Period

- 1.** How does the one God of Abraham tie with the creation narrative? Would the order and harmony of our universe happen if there were many gods?
- 2.** Women are important in this period. Briefly recall the characters of Sarah, Hagar, Rebekah, Rachel, and Potiphar's Wife.
- 3.** Discuss examples of family cunning, jealousy, and deceit from this period.
- 4.** Why is Abraham viewed as the father of three great faiths today?
- 5.** What lessons from the story of Joseph are relevant today?
- 6.** How do you express their is One God (Monotheism) when in a conversation with an atheist (no God) or a polytheist (many gods)?

CREATION	MONOTHEISM	THE EXODUS	OCCUPATION
Beginning of Time -1900 B.C.	One God 1900 - 1700 B.C.	God's Laws 1270 - 1230 B.C.	Of Land 1230 - 1020 B.C.



STUDY 3

THE EXODUS

(GOD'S LAWS – MORALITY : 1270 – 1230 B.C.)

Review the following Bible passages:

Exodus	1:1 - 7:13		11:1 - 13:22		15:1 - 16:36
	19:1 - 21:11		26:1 - 37		40:1 - 38
Leviticus	9:1 - 24		16:1 - 34		19:16 - 18
	23:1 - 44		25:1 - 55		
Numbers	2:1 - 3:51		12:1 - 13:33		27:12 - 23
Deuteronomy	5:1 - 6:25		33:1 - 34:12		

CREATION	MONOTHEISM	THE EXODUS	OCCUPATION
Beginning of Time -1900 B.C.	One God 1900 - 1700 B.C.	God's Laws 1270 - 1230 B.C.	Of Land 1230 - 1020 B.C.

Moses Leads the Hebrews out of Slavery in Egypt, God Reveals his Laws to Moses in the Desert

It has been 430 years since Joseph died. The Israelites are enslaved in Egypt building cities for the Pharaoh. The oppressed Hebrews multiplied; thus Pharaoh decides to cast all Hebrew boy babies into the Nile. Placed in a basket, covered with tar, and discovered among the Nile reeds, Moses is named and raised by Pharaoh's daughter. The book of Exodus relates the great work of God through Moses in redeeming the nation of Israel out of slavery in Egypt. "God said to Moses, 'I AM WHO I AM.' This is what you are to say to the Israelites: 'I AM has sent me to you'" (Exodus 3:14). Later in Exodus, the Song of Moses and Miriam, in which they sing "The Lord shall reign forever" (Exodus 15:18), is a stirring testimony to God's faithfulness and care for his people.

The last four books of the law conclude the Torah and cover primarily the life of Moses. The life of Moses can be divided into three periods of about forty years each:

1. Grows to manhood in Pharaoh's court → Strikes first blow for freedom, kills soldier
2. Lives in solitude in Midian → Tends sheep: period of training and reflection
3. Returns under God's order → Leads the Exodus, frees a nation from Egyptian slavery

The book of Exodus relates the great work of God through Moses in redeeming the nation of Israel out of slavery in Egypt.

UNITED	NORTHERN	SOUTHERN PRE - EXILE	SOUTHERN - EXILE AND RETURN
1020 - 931 B.C.	(ISRAEL) 931 - 721 B.C.	(JUDAH) 931 - 586 B.C.	586 - 300 B.C.

Exodus is an epic story about Moses and the emergence of the Hebrew nation under God. An overview outline of Exodus and the key subjects covered can be grouped by subject from Exodus chapters as follows.

Subject	Exodus Chapter
Birth and life of Moses until call	1 - 2
Burning bush, reuniting of Moses with brother Aaron	3 - 4
Ten plagues on Pharaoh and Egypt	5 - 11
The Passover, Exodus, and crossing the Red Sea	12 - 14
Survival in desert: manna, quail, and water	15 - 18
The Laws, Ten Commandments	19 - 24
Tabernacle, God's dwelling place; An order of priests under Aaron	25 - 40

***God's Moral Laws, the Ten Commandments,
will be Emphasized by Jesus***

The book of Deuteronomy takes the form of closing speeches Moses delivered to the Israelites as they remain camped out east of the Jordan River hoping to occupy Canaan. Because much material appears in the previous books of the Bible, it is often termed the "second telling" of the Torah books. Moses' final sermon to God's people can be studied as training the Hebrews for dwelling in the Promised Land (Palestine or Canaan). For example, the Ten Commandments are repeated in the book's fifth chapter. Perhaps the most important instruction Moses shared was "to love and serve only one God." In Deuteronomy 6, God, through Moses, instructs us to impress the commandments on our children, talk about them as we sit at home or walk on the road, tie them as symbols to our bodies and write them in our homes.

CREATION	MONOTHEISM	THE EXODUS	OCCUPATION
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A key chapter in Leviticus (16) provides important guidance for atonement of sins. Numbers overviews the nation's wandering in the desert and three important census events. The Israelite's life in the desert was hard. Moses needed input on when to advance to Canaan, the Promised Land. Twelve spies (Numbers 13) were sent to explore options; ten returned advising Moses "don't go"; only Joshua and Caleb advised "go." Knowing God's will is not easy! Risking decisions based upon God's leadership and promises takes courage, but retreating in fear and unbelief is a deadly comfort.

The Hebrews were introduced to and practiced three types of laws: moral laws (Ten Commandments), sacrificial laws (atonement--Leviticus 16), and civil laws (Exodus 21, Deuteronomy 19). Jesus would emphasize moral laws; he became the sacrifice for atonement, and regarding civil law he would simply instruct "render to Caesar what is Caesar's and God what is God's."

Concluding thoughts - Torah Studies

As we leave the Torah (first five books) of the Old Testament, it is important to grasp the foundation threads that are laid for God's teaching in the rest of the Bible:

1. God Created the Heavens and the Earth; and humankind in his own image - to procreate the human race. As human beings we are fallen , sinful, and need a Savior to atone for our sins.
2. There is one God; all powerful; not many gods or no god. He had one son Jesus Christ who left the power of the Holy Spirit to dwell in those who follow Him.
3. God has laws. The moral laws are best expressed in the Ten Commandments; as laws of love in Jesus' "Sermon on the Mount". There are boundaries in daily living of life; we should not live a life of creating our own rules for living.

Perhaps the most important instruction Moses shared was "to love and serve only one God."

UNITED	NORTHERN	SOUTHERN PRE - EXILE	SOUTHERN - EXILE AND RETURN
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Note



Discussion – Exodus Period

- 1.** How did Moses initially respond to God’s request?

- 2.** From what event is the Hebrew Passover pilgrimage derived?

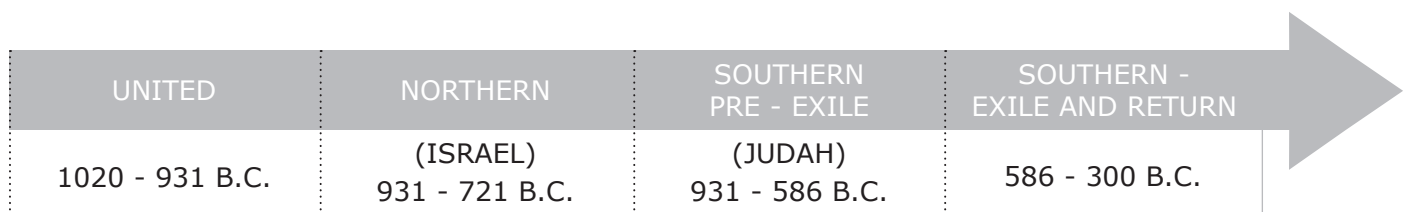
- 3.** The two key women in this period are: Pharaoh’s daughter and Miriam (sister of Moses and Aaron). Briefly relate their role in the Bible.

- 4.** Why do you think Jesus emphasized the moral laws vs. sacrificial laws and civil laws?

- 5.** What positive characteristics as a leader did Moses demonstrate?

- 6.** Can you recall the Ten Commandments in conversation with others?

CREATION	MONOTHEISM	THE EXODUS	OCCUPATION
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STUDY 4

OCCUPATION

OF THE LAND

(1230 – 1030 B.C.)

Review the following Chronological Epic Narrative Bible passages:

Joshua	1:1 - 6:27 23:1 - 24:33		10:1 - 15		19:49 - 51
Judges	1:1 - 36		3:12 - 7:25		13:1 - 16:31

CREATION	MONOTHEISM	THE EXODUS	OCCUPATION
Beginning of Time -1900 B.C.	One God 1900 - 1700 B.C.	God's Laws 1270 - 1230 B.C.	Of Land 1230 - 1020 B.C.

Joshua Leads the Hebrews to their Promised Land

At the end of his life Joshua can speak to his kin, “As for me and my household, we will serve the Lord” (Joshua 24:15b). How did he reach such an enviable position? After forty years in the desert, upon Moses’ death, the Lord commands Joshua to get the nation ready to cross the Jordan River into the Promised Land. Joshua sends two spies, and with the help of a prostitute, Rahab, the spies detect melting fear. Joshua, with God’s hand, leads Israelites in the Fall of Jericho, which begins their occupation of the Canaanite lands.

Joshua is a great military strategist. He brings victory to the people of Yahweh, in three campaigns following success in Jericho. But he recognizes that divine power, not human might, guides God’s people. God fulfilled his promise of land for the Israelites. In Joshua 3:5 Joshua told the people, “Consecrate yourselves, for tomorrow the Lord will do amazing things among you.” While Abraham only possessed Canaan marginally and had to purchase land for the burial of his wife, the people in Joshua’s day learned of God’s faithfulness. This success story becomes the basis of future warnings and admonitions. A disobedient people cannot expect God’s blessings. Obedience to Yahweh (God) provides basis for the continuing blessings.

Joshua divides the conquered land as an inheritance among the tribes of Israel. He calls the leaders together (Joshua 23) and instructs them to obey all that is written in the book of the Law of Moses. Joshua encourages them not to intermarry with the conquered nations and reminds all to serve the Lord God and not other gods. Outlining their choices (Joshua 24) he reminds them that they may serve the gods of the Amorites, Canaanites, Hittites, Jebusites, etc., but as for “me and my household, we will serve the Lord.”

*In Joshua 3:5
Joshua told
the people,
“Consecrate
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UNITED	NORTHERN	SOUTHERN PRE - EXILE	SOUTHERN - EXILE AND RETURN
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Judges Tells the Story of Challenges in Occupying the Land

The book of Judges has been referred to as the book of cycles.

The cycles can be described as:

Disobedience → Bondage → Repentance →
Redeemer/Judge → Freedom

Joshua's charge was fulfilled at varying levels by the various tribes. Leadership was decentralized. The cycle of disobedience to Yahweh led to suppression of Israelites by locals. God-fearing Judges were raised, and for a time they rescued God's people. The environment was one of the Israelites falling into serving the heathen Canaanite gods and the Lord sending faithful Judges to rule over them and deliver the Israelites back to God. When the Judge died the nation regressed to worship idols. Examples of Judges who served God were: Ehud, Deborah, Gideon, Jephthah, and Samson.

Ehud (a left-handed man) approached Eglon, king of Moab, after Eglon had taken power over the Israelite's lands. Ehud slays Eglon and regains the power of the Israelites.

Deborah, a prophetess, held court under the Palm of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in the hill country of Ephraim. She joined Barak in a successful campaign against Jabin, the Canaanite king. Upon victory Barak sang a song to Deborah.

CREATION	MONOTHEISM	THE EXODUS	OCCUPATION
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After forty years of peace, Gideon came on the scene. Gideon placed a wool fleece on his threshing door by night, awaiting the signal from the Lord that dew would wet the fleece or wet the ground. As Gideon moved out the Lord directed him to reduce his army; only 300 men from an army of tens of thousands were chosen to defeat the Midianites.

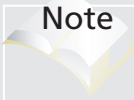
Jephthah was engaged in a great struggle with the Ammonites and succeeded by calling upon the men of Gilead.

The strength of Samson is legendary in the Bible and his love affair with Delilah (who was secretly working for the enemy Philistines) is most interesting. She finally persuades him to share the secret of his strength (his head had never been shaved) and when Delilah sent word to the Philistines, they shaved his head and his strength left him.

So the period of Judges was up and down as the Israelites fought a variety of enemies to hold their land and way of life. They had successes and failures, but the nation leaves the period with a desire to find a new way of leadership and governance.

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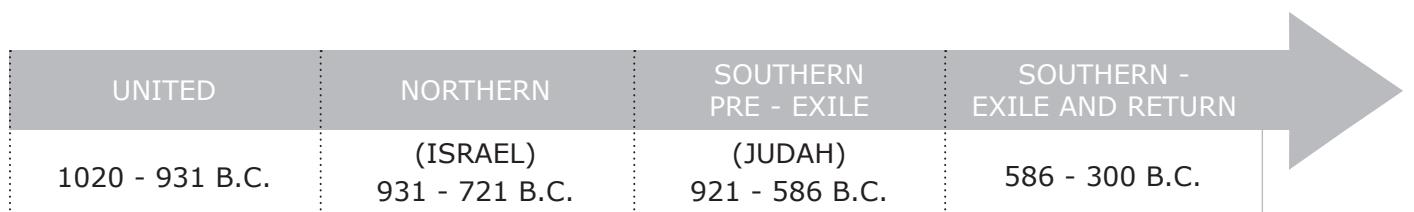
UNITED	NORTHERN	SOUTHERN PRE - EXILE	SOUTHERN - EXILE AND RETURN
1020 - 931 B.C.	(ISRAEL) 931 - 721 B.C.	(JUDAH) 931 - 586 B.C.	586 - 300 B.C.



Discussion – Joshua and Judges Period

- 1.** Can you tell us about Joshua crossing the Jordan River and his faith?
- 2.** What happened at the battle of Jericho?
- 3.** Considering women of this period, how do Rahab, Deborah, and Delilah contribute to the Bible narrative?
- 4.** Tell us a little about the selected Judges.
- 5.** What can we learn from this period? Is land hard to hold on to as a possession?
- 6.** Have you experienced cycles in your walk with Jesus?

CREATION	MONOTHEISM	THE EXODUS	OCCUPATION
Beginning of Time -1900 B.C.	One God 1900 - 1700 B.C.	God's Laws 1270 - 1230 B.C.	Of Land 1230 - 1020 B.C.



STUDY 5

UNITED KINGDOM

(1020 – 931 B.C.)

Review the following Chronological Epic Narrative Bible passages:

Ruth 1:1 - 4:22

1 Samuel 1:1 - 3:21 | 8:1 - 12:25 | 14:49 - 20:42
24:1 - 22 | 28:1 - 31:13

2 Samuel 1:1 - 3:39 | 5:1 - 7:18 | 11:1 - 12:31
22:1 - 24:25

1 Kings 1:28 - 8:66 | 11:1 - 43

1 Chronicles 11:1 - 25 | 15:1 - 29 | 29:21 - 30

2 Chronicles 7:11 - 22

Related Bible Reading from this period :

Psalms 1, 5, 23, 84, 100, 119, 139

Proverbs 2, 4, 5, 12, 19, 27

Ecclesiastes 1, 3, 7, 9, 12

Song of Songs 2:14 - 4:15

CREATION	MONOTHEISM	THE EXODUS	OCCUPATION
Beginning of Time -1900 B.C.	One God 1900 - 1700 B.C.	God's Laws 1270 - 1230 B.C.	Of Land 1230 - 1020 B.C.

*Samuel, the Last Judge, Turns Leadership to a King;
The Kingdom is United During Reigns of Saul,
David and Solomon*

Ruth accompanies her mother-in-law, Naomi, from Moab to Judah. While gleaning fields, Boaz notices, then marries, Ruth. Boaz fathers Obed, who fathers Jesse, the father of David; thus Ruth is David’s great-grandmother. Samuel, the last Judge, implements the desire of the people for a king and crowns Saul. Saul starts his reign by serving God but ends with a tragic reversal. The death of Jonathan, his son (and a friend of David), and Saul by the Philistines leads to David’s reign.

From 1020 B.C. to 921 B.C. Israel experiences its golden years when it is united. Samuel, the last Judge, follows the will of the people and anoints Saul as Israel’s first King. Israel’s greatest King, David, was a shepherd boy who showed faith killing Goliath with a single stone from his sling. David had a long and special friendship with Jonathan, Saul’s son. Jonathan saves David from his jealous father Saul, who tries to kill David.

David is Israel’s Greatest King

II Samuel is the story of David assuming the throne, after Saul’s death. David consolidates the northern tribes, the capital is moved to Jerusalem, and David’s army leads in victories over neighbors. David was a man after God’s heart (I Samuel 13:14). He wrote many beautiful Psalms: “Your word is a lamp to my feet, and a light for my path” (Psalms 119:105) is one of many attributed to him. Yet David commits adultery with Bathsheba and sends her husband, Uriah, to his death at the front lines of battle. The prophet Nathan rebukes David regarding his sin, and David seeks God’s forgiveness. God does forgive David. However, during David’s reign he does not accomplish the building of a temple in Jerusalem. This is left for his son Solomon.

Ruth is David’s great-grandmother.

From 1020 B.C. to 921 B.C. Israel experiences its golden years

“David was a man after God’s heart ” (I Samuel 13:14).

UNITED	NORTHERN	SOUTHERN PRE - EXILE	SOUTHERN - EXILE AND RETURN
1020 - 931 B.C.	(ISRAEL) 931 - 721 B.C.	(JUDAH) 931 - 586 B.C.	586 - 300 B.C.

Solomon is known for his wisdom and organization. He constructs a magnificent temple to honor the Lord.

The monarchy demonstrates the frailties of man's leadership and the importance of God's kingdom.

Psalms is book of worship. It defines the relationship between people and the Lord through hymns, anthems, prayers, and laments. The believer may find a pattern for prayer and meditation in reading the Psalms. Many human feelings can be brought to the Lord as we reach out to him through using the Psalms. Among my favorite Psalms are Psalms 1, 5, 23, 51, 84, 100, 119, and 139. Thumb through the Psalms; learn to be at home with the hymns of Israel.

Solomon Builds the First Temple in Jerusalem

After David's death Solomon assumes the throne. Solomon is known for his wisdom and organization. He constructs a magnificent temple to honor the Lord. Trade and commerce create great wealth. The worship and wisdom of this golden age provides rich books of the Old Testament. Solomon was a patron of the wisdom movement in the ancient Near East. Proverbs, a book of short pithy sayings, is a guidebook for successful living. Most of the book of Proverbs can be attributed to Solomon. Beginning at Proverb 10:1, much of the oldest section consists of Proverbs of Solomon.

While David was a man after God's heart, the foibles of human kings and leaders are evident among leaders and common people. The issue of sin and obedience resurfaces under the kings. Examples include Saul's disobedience and decline, David's actions with Uriah and Bathsheba, and Solomon's lack of obedience, particularly in his marriages to foreign wives, despite his wealth and wisdom.

The United Kingdom ends with Solomon's passing. Israel rebels against Rehoboam, Solomon's son, and the kingdom divides into ten Northern Tribes and two Southern Tribes. The monarchy demonstrates the frailties of man's leadership and the importance of God's kingdom. In stark contrast to the relatively brief life of the United Kingdom's riches and golden temples, Jesus promises eternal life (John 3:16).

CREATION	MONOTHEISM	THE EXODUS	OCCUPATION
Beginning of Time -1900 B.C.	One God 1900 - 1700 B.C.	God's Laws 1270 - 1230 B.C.	Of Land 1230 - 1020 B.C.

Note

Discussion – United Kingdom Period

- 1.** Because Samuel's sons did not walk in his ways, what did the elders ask him to do?
- 2.** Can you summarize Saul's up and down walk with the Lord?
- 3.** Key women in this period are: Ruth, Hannah, and Bathsheba. They were all mothers. Can you identify their children?
- 4.** David is mentioned as Israel's greatest king. Can you share why? Which Psalms help you most in a time of need?
- 5.** Solomon was a man of great wisdom. Tell about the temple he built and some of his wise Proverbs.
- 6.** Share experiences where the Psalms or Proverbs have strengthened your faith.

UNITED	NORTHERN	SOUTHERN PRE - EXILE	SOUTHERN - EXILE AND RETURN
1020 - 931 B.C.	(ISRAEL) 931 - 721 B.C.	(JUDAH) 931 - 586 B.C.	586 - 300 B.C.

STUDY 6

NORTHERN KINGDOM

(ISRAEL : 931 – 721 B.C.)

Review the following Chronological Epic Narrative
Bible passages:

1 Kings	12:1-14:20		15:25-22:53		1:1-2:25
2 Kings	6:24-7:20		9:1-10:17		17:1-41

Related Bible Reading from this period :

Amos	Jonah
Hosea	Nahum

CREATION	MONOTHEISM	THE EXODUS	OCCUPATION
Beginning of Time -1900 B.C.	One God 1900 - 1700 B.C.	God's Laws 1270 - 1230 B.C.	Of Land 1230 - 1020 B.C.

Ten Tribes Organize the Northern Kingdom under Jeroboam

Jeroboam, who became leader of the Northern tribes, had been a man of standing in Solomon’s court. However, he had rebelled against Solomon and fled to Egypt. He was still in Egypt when Rehoboam, Solomon’s heir, took the throne. Rehoboam’s reign over the United Kingdom was short-lived. He angered the Northern tribes by maintaining the harsh taxation of his father, against the advice of his elders, and the North (Israel) rejected him. They called on Jeroboam to lead them. Thus began the divided Kingdoms. Rehoboam was forced to go south to Jerusalem to lead just two tribes, Judah and Benjamin.

Most kings in the North (Nadab, Omri, Ahab, Ahaziah, Joram, Jehu, Jeroboam II, and Hoshea) did evil and did not serve the Lord. Baal worship was common. One particularly memorable such king was Omri’s son Ahab. Ahab did more evil in the eyes of the Lord than any of those before him (1 Kings 16:30). He married Jezebel, daughter of a Sidonian king, and began to serve and worship Baal. Ahab set up an altar to Baal in the temple, made an Asherah pole, and did much to provoke the Lord. Meanwhile, as in other turning points in Israel’s history, God did not abandon his people. He now turned to prophets or messengers to guide them. These included oral prophets (Elijah, Elisha) and warriors (Ben-Hadad defeated by Ahab). In one interaction with Ahab, Elijah stands on Mt. Carmel and declares: “As the Lord, The God of Israel, lives, whom I serve, there will be neither dew nor rain for the next few years except by my order” (I Kings 17:1b). Later, Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah threatening his death.

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Amos condemned the empty religion he saw and called for practice of justice and righteousness.

In 724 B.C. Shalmaneser, king of Assyria, invaded Samaria, laid siege and in 722 B.C. King Hoshea, the last king of Israel, surrendered. Israelites were deported to Assyria beginning in 721 B.C.

Oral Prophets (Elijah and Elisha) are Important, but also Four Written Prophets Have their Role

The popular definition of prophet is someone who foretells the future. The biblical definition comes from the Greek, “prophetes,” which means one who speaks for God and interprets his will to man. Prophets of the Northern Kingdom whose written works are Old Testament books include Amos, Hosea, Jonah, and Nahum. (Nahum preached against the fall of Nineveh and Assyria. It was written 100 years after Jonah visits Ninevah and describes the destruction of Ninevah; it is included here for reading continuity.)

Amos was not a professional religious leader and was called from the South (about 765 B.C.) to the Northern Kingdom during a great time of wealth in the North. Religion of the day included worship of the God of Israel along with the Baals of Canaan. Amos condemned the empty religion he saw and called for practice of justice and righteousness. The love of God is the doctrinal foundation of Hosea. God seeks a covenant relationship with his people. Hosea used the reconciling love with his adulteress wife Gomer as an example of how the Lord loves the Israelites. Jonah obeyed the Lord and led a great conversion in Nineveh. A century later Nahum would find the city had fallen away from its commitment to the Lord; my people your God.

In 724 B.C. Shalmaneser, king of Assyria, invaded Samaria, laid siege and in 722 B.C. King Hoshea, the last king of Israel, surrendered. Israelites were deported to Assyria beginning in 721 B.C. Israelites who were left behind inter-married with the conquering Assyrians and began the “Samaritan genealogy” (considered inferior by Hebrews returning from Babylon who had not inter-married).

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Beginning of Time -1900 B.C.	One God 1900 - 1700 B.C.	God’s Laws 1270 - 1230 B.C.	Of Land 1230 - 1020 B.C.

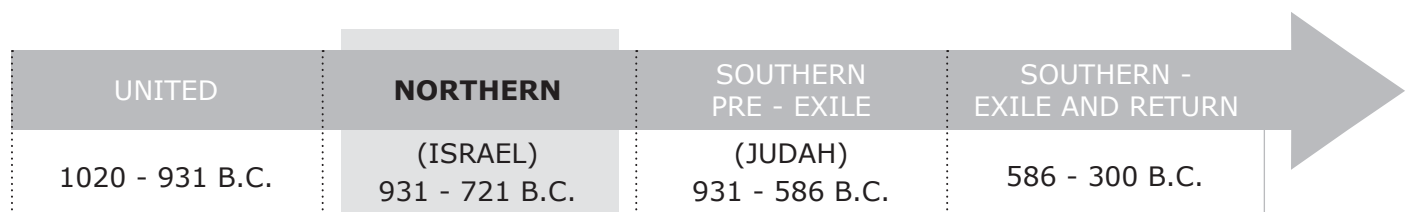
As we reflect on this period leading up until the exile, we can see how God used different messengers in various roles: patriarchs, priests/judges, monarchs/kings, and prophets; we will see later that Jesus Christ, God's only son, is a prophet, priest, and king in one. This subject is further discussed in the New Testament study of Hebrews.

Many Jews did not like the Assyrian occupation and rule. This began an exodus of the area to all parts of the Mediterranean basin by devout Jews. This dispersion is known as Diaspora (dispersion of Hebrews) around the Mediterranean Sea. Later, in the period after the death of Jesus Christ, these Hebrew communities provided a welcome spiritual community for the apostle Paul and other early church missionaries.

Although the Northern Kingdom did not serve the Lord well, God used these people and this period for his good. During this period he showed his power through the oral prophets (Elijah is a particularly dramatic example); he also later uses the Samaritan people, who get their start during the time of exile. The Samaritans are welcomed by Jesus and help spread the Gospel beyond Hebrew circles. Finally, the Diaspora creates important links for future early church conversions.

Many Jews did not like the Assyrian occupation and rule.

This dispersion is known as Diaspora (dispersion of Hebrews) around the Mediterranean Sea.



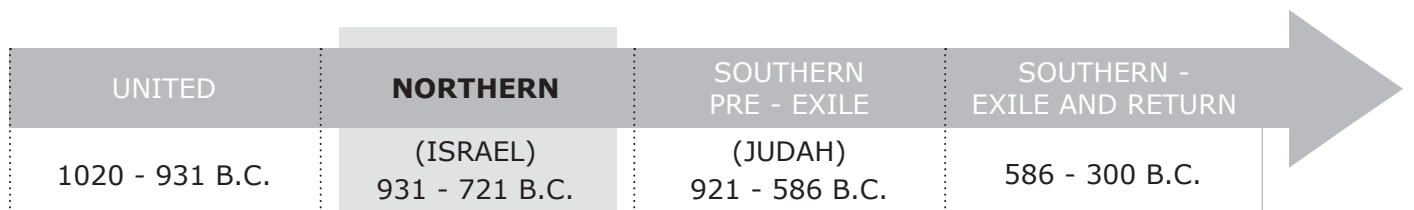
Note



Discussion – Northern Kingdom

- 1.** What led to the split of the Northern tribes?
- 2.** In general did kings of the North serve the Lord? Give examples.
- 3.** Among the women of this period are Jezebel and Gomer. Can you identify each and tell a little about them?
- 4.** What is a Samaritan? What is Diaspora?
- 5.** Is Jonah considered one of the great evangelists in the Bible?
- 6.** Elijah and Elisha were oral prophets. Is oral sharing of the Gospel needed today?

CREATION	MONOTHEISM	THE EXODUS	OCCUPATION
Beginning of Time -1900 B.C.	One God 1900 - 1700 B.C.	God's Laws 1270 - 1230 B.C.	Of Land 1230 - 1020 B.C.



STUDY 7

SOUTHERN KINGDOM

(JUDAH : PRE – EXILE 931 – 586 B.C.)

Review the following Chronological Epic Narrative Bible passages:

1 Kings 14:21-15:24 | 22:41-50
2 Kings 8:16-14:1-22 | 18:1-25:30
2 Chronicles 10:1-17:19 | 29:1-32:33

Related Bible Reading from this period :

Isaiah 1:1-11:16 | 37:1-40:31
Jeremiah 1:1-6:30 | 18:1-10 | 30:1-31:40
Joel 2:28-32
Micah 1:1-7:19
Habakkuk 3:1-19

CREATION	MONOTHEISM	THE EXODUS	OCCUPATION
Beginning of Time -1900 B.C.	One God 1900 - 1700 B.C.	God's Laws 1270 - 1230 B.C.	Of Land 1230 - 1020 B.C.

Judah and Benjamin Tribes
Form Southern Kingdom of Judah

The center of the Southern Kingdom story is Jerusalem and the Temple of Solomon. I have divided this story into two periods, (1) pre-exile (931-586 B.C.), which is the subject of this study, and (2) exile (586-539 B.C.) and return (539-350 B.C.), which is the subject of the following study. The concluding period is covered in the last study, “Fullness of Time,” and brings us to the New Testament. The Southern Kingdom (House of David from Judah) provides Christ’s genealogy.

Rehoboam, son of Solomon, became Judah’s King, had a falling out with the ten Northern tribes, and allowed detestable practices such as shrines to male prostitutes and Ashram poles on most high hills. During the pre-exile period, Judah was ruled by corrupt, ungodly kings (i.e. Manasseh). The few godly kings (Josiah, Hezekiah) stand out. Josiah was only eight years old when he became king and reigned for thirty-one years. He did what was right in the eyes of the Lord and tried to walk in the ways of David. Josiah’s predecessors, Amon and Manasseh, had encouraged idol worship. Early in his reign Josiah warned the people against the Lord’s judgment. He renewed the covenant with the Lord through the priests and built altars to the Lord.

Hezekiah was twenty-five when he became king and he reigned for twenty-nine years. He purified the Temple. Hezekiah also sent letters throughout the kingdom inviting people to come to Jerusalem and celebrate Passover. He made great contributions to worship contributing from his own possessions to burnt offerings.

During the pre-exile period, Judah was ruled by corrupt, ungodly kings (i.e. Manasseh).

UNITED	NORTHERN	SOUTHERN PRE - EXILE	SOUTHERN - EXILE AND RETURN
1020 - 931 B.C.	(ISRAEL) 931 - 721 B.C.	(JUDAH) 931 - 586 B.C.	586 - 300 B.C.

Prophets Become Increasingly Important for the Lord and Sharing Word

Prophets became God's messengers. Isaiah's message of judgment was matched by words of comfort and hope.

Jeremiah's writings began about 627 B.C. and continued past the fall of Jerusalem to Nebuchadnezzar in 586 B.C.

Prophets became God's messengers. Isaiah's message of judgment was matched by words of comfort and hope. From 739 B.C. (the year King Uzziah died) until Isaiah died (681 B.C.), Isaiah worked for the Lord spanning the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah. Isaiah was put to death by Manasseh (Hezekiah's son). Two favorite passages from Isaiah include his ninth and fortieth chapters. In Isaiah 9, he writes, "The people walking in darkness have seen a great light...For to us a child is born, to us a son is given...And he will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." In 40:31, Isaiah shares the reassuring words: "But, those who hope upon the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles, run and not grow weary, walk and not be faint."

Jeremiah's writings began about 627 B.C. and continued past the fall of Jerusalem to Nebuchadnezzar in 586 B.C. The emotional book is a collection of his sermons and historical narratives. His unpopular mission was to call Judah to submit to foreign domination as discipline from the Lord. Jeremiah chapters 30-33 are among the most important prophecy of the Old Testament. Key verses 31:33-34 envision the New Covenant that Jesus proclaims: *putting God's law in the mind and writing it on the heart.*

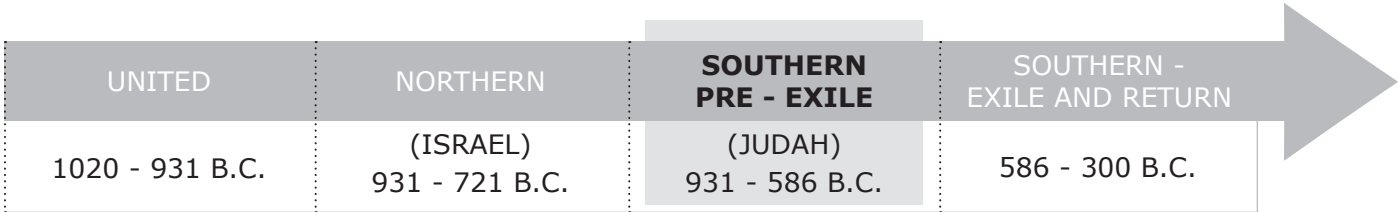
Micah prophesied during the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah. These were the last days of the Northern Kingdom and he predicted the fall of Samaria (Micah 1:6). God's message of justice, mercy, and humility come through Micah. He also sees God as patient and forgiving. In the fifth chapter, Micah predicts the place of the birth of the coming ruler and Savior. Bethlehem is a special city.

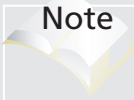
CREATION	MONOTHEISM	THE EXODUS	OCCUPATION
Beginning of Time -1900 B.C.	One God 1900 - 1700 B.C.	God's Laws 1270 - 1230 B.C.	Of Land 1230 - 1020 B.C.

Jerusalem Falls in 586 to Nebuchadnezzar

Jehoiachin, an eighteen-year-old, was king of Judah (the Southern Kingdom) at the time Nebuchadnezzar advanced on Jerusalem in 586 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar took Jehoiachin prisoner and removed treasures from the Temple and royal palace. He also took the officers, fighting men, and craftsmen—a total of 10,000 people—into Babylonian exile. The Southern Kingdom becomes God’s remnant for maintaining his word through Old Testament laws and practices among families and communities in Judea. The area will undergo a series of occupations by other nations but the people of God hold firm!

The Southern Kingdom becomes God’s remnant for maintaining his word through Old Testament laws and practices among families and communities in Judea.





Note

Discussion - Southern Kingdom - Pre-Exile

- 1.** Can you mention two kings of the Southern Kingdom who tried to serve the Lord?

- 2.** Isaiah and Jeremiah were great prophets. Share a few of their teachings.

- 3.** There seem to be no prominent women in this period. Correct?

- 4.** Micah is one of my favorite prophets. Can you imagine why?

- 5.** Share stories and truths from this period you can use today.

CREATION	MONOTHEISM	THE EXODUS	OCCUPATION
Beginning of Time -1900 B.C.	One God 1900 - 1700 B.C.	God's Laws 1270 - 1230 B.C.	Of Land 1230 - 1020 B.C.



STUDY 8

SOUTHERN KINGDOM

(EXILE AND RETURN : 586 – ABOUT 300 B.C.)

Review the following Chronological Epic Narrative Bible passages:

2 Kings 24:8-25:30

2 Chronicles 36:9-23

Ezra 1:1-10:44

Nehemiah 1:1-13:31

Related Bible Reading from this period :

Isaiah 49:8-26

Ezekiel 2:1-3:27 | 11:16-12:28 | 40:1-44:31

Esther 1:1-10:3

Daniel 1:1-6:28

Haggai 1:1-2:23

Zechariah 14:1-21

Malachi 3:1-18

CREATION	MONOTHEISM	THE EXODUS	OCCUPATION
Beginning of Time -1900 B.C.	One God 1900 - 1700 B.C.	God's Laws 1270 - 1230 B.C.	Of Land 1230 - 1020 B.C.

Jerusalem Falls and Key Hebrews are Carried to Exile

The Babylonians removed all the treasures from the Temple and royal palace. Judah's King Jehoiachin was taken captive and held for thirty-seven years. Although the exile was a chastening period, Jews learned and relearned that God was everywhere, not just in the Temple. During the exile period in Babylon the synagogue develops in the home and many ancient scriptures are recorded by scribes. As Jeremiah prophesized, (noted at the end of II Chronicles), the Hebrews were servants in Babylon for seventy years. When Cyrus, King of Persia, came to power he conquered the Babylonians. His heart was moved to proclaim that the Lord God had appointed him to build a temple in Jerusalem in Judah. Any Hebrew among the people in Babylon who wished to go up to Jerusalem and help were free to go!

One of the most important Old Testament books of this period is Daniel. Daniel was a youth of perhaps twelve years when he was taken to Babylon. He rose in King Nebuchadnezzar's court (much as Joseph had in Pharaoh's courts) through his skill in interpreting the king's dreams. Daniel divides into two main parts. Chapters 1-6 record Daniel's dream interpretations and 7-12 record his apocalypse prophecies. Daniel interprets dreams for three kings: Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar (Nebuchadnezzar's son), and Darius (first Persian king). In all instances Daniel remained loyal to the Lord and his superiority over human kings. Among his prophecies is the rise and fall of four great kingdoms, the Babylonian, Persian, Greek, and Roman empires, and the timing of the Messiah's coming to earth.

During the exile period in Babylon the synagogue develops in the home and many ancient scriptures are recorded by scribes.

Chapters 1-6 record Daniel's dream interpretations and 7-12 record his apocalypse prophecies.

UNITED	NORTHERN	SOUTHERN PRE - EXILE	SOUTHERN - EXILE AND RETURN
1020 - 931 B.C.	(ISRAEL) 931 - 721 B.C.	(JUDAH) 931 - 586 B.C.	586 - 300 B.C.

Nehemiah calls on the heart of God's followers to build a wall around the Temple to protect God's house.

Hebrews Begin Returning and Building a New (2nd) Temple

As noted earlier, when the Persians conquered Babylon their kings looked favorably on the Jews returning to Jerusalem and rebuilding the Temple. (See Ezra 1:2 for the proclamation of King Cyrus.) A dedicated remnant core prepares to return and rebuild the Jerusalem Temple under Persian rule (Babylon fell 537 B.C.). God's Prophets during the exile include Ezekiel and Daniel. After their return Haggai and Zechariah encourage returning Israelites (520-516 B.C.) to rebuild the Temple. The Old Testament draws to a close with the historical books of Ezra and Nehemiah. Ezra tells us how first the altar was restored and then work on the Temple began. Ezra was a teacher and well-versed in the Laws of Moses. He can be thought of as the father of modern Judaism, establishing Temple worship practice and procedures.

Nehemiah calls on the heart of God's followers to build a wall around the Temple to protect God's house. There was opposition to building the wall, but it was completed, dedicated, and brought fear to surrounding nations.

Esther is an exciting story of God delivering his people from a crisis. King Xerxes ruled 127 provinces stretching from India to Cush. He reigned on his royal throne in the citadel of Susa. Xerxes desired to take a new queen from his harem. Mordecai, a Jew from the tribe of Benjamin, had raised through youth (after her parents died) a cousin, named Esther. Esther was taken to the king's palace. She did not reveal her nationality. Esther became a part of the harem from which the Xerxes would choose the next queen. King Xerxes was attracted to Esther and made her queen. Haman had a seat of high honor in the King's court and was disturbed that Mordecai would not kneel down and pay the king honor.

CREATION	MONOTHEISM	THE EXODUS	OCCUPATION
Beginning of Time -1900 B.C.	One God 1900 - 1700 B.C.	God's Laws 1270 - 1230 B.C.	Of Land 1230 - 1020 B.C.

Haman plotted to kill Mordecai and all Jews, but Esther's favor with the king won out and Haman was hanged. The king gave an edict on behalf of the Jews and to this day Jews celebrate the Feast of Purim in recognition of this blessing.

The Southern Kingdom becomes God's remnant for maintaining his word through Old Testament laws and practices among families and communities. Synagogue emerged from the practice of meeting in homes during exile. God's people survive a harrowing period!

The king gave an edict on behalf of the Jews and to this day Jews celebrate the Feast of Purim in recognition of this blessing.

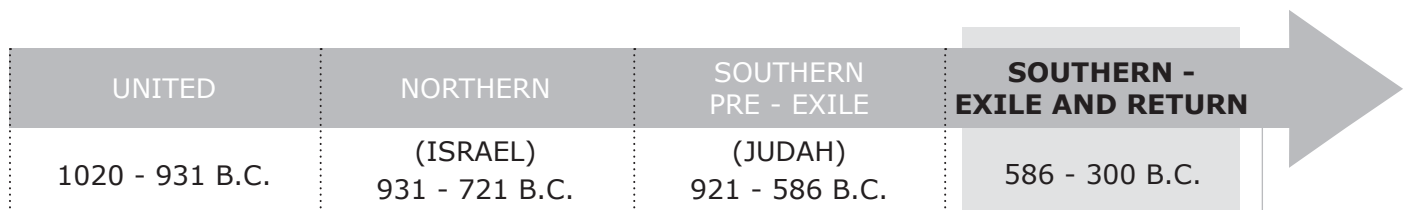
UNITED	NORTHERN	SOUTHERN PRE - EXILE	SOUTHERN - EXILE AND RETURN
1020 - 931 B.C.	(ISRAEL) 931 - 721 B.C.	(JUDAH) 931 - 586 B.C.	586 - 300 B.C.

Note

Discussion - Southern Kingdom - Exile and Return

1. What did the Jews accomplish during the exile time period?
2. Share some parts of Ezekiel's vision of a new Temple.
3. Tell us something about Esther.
4. Ezra and Nehemiah were crucial to the remnant's return in what way?
5. How was God loyal to his people in this period? Today?

CREATION	MONOTHEISM	THE EXODUS	OCCUPATION
Beginning of Time -1900 B.C.	One God 1900 - 1700 B.C.	God's Laws 1270 - 1230 B.C.	Of Land 1230 - 1020 B.C.



STUDY 9

FULLNESS OF TIME

(ABOUT 300 B.C.
UNTIL THE BIRTH OF JESUS CHRIST)

There are no Bible passages to review,
only historical characters and events.

CREATION	MONOTHEISM	THE EXODUS	OCCUPATION
Beginning of Time -1900 B.C.	One God 1900 - 1700 B.C.	God's Laws 1270 - 1230 B.C.	Of Land 1230 - 1020 B.C.

“Inter-Testament Period”
Greek, Persian, Roman, and Hebrew cultures
Converge to Provide a Platform for the Coming Messiah

Paul records in his letter to the Galatians: “But when the time had fully come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the Law” (Galatians 4:4). The “Fullness of Time” refers to convergence of Hebrew, Greek, and Roman cultures to provide a “backdrop” for the birth of Christ. Main period characters include Alexander the Great, the powerful Greek ruler (356-323 B.C.); Judas Maccabeas (d. 161 B.C.), whose family were prominent Jewish patriots; and Julius Caesar (100 B.C.-44 B.C.), the Roman Emperor, statesman, writer and general. The “Inter-Testament Period” (between the Old and New Testament) starts about 350 B.C. and takes us to the birth of Christ. The remnant had returned and set up a small theocratic community governed by priests. The Hebrew tribes which were molded into the united and then divided Kingdoms of Israel and Judah become divided on theocratic “parties” at Jesus birth--the Pharisees (middle class), Sadducees (wealthy), Essenes (communal, monastic), and Zealots (rebels against Rome). Worldly powers will deal, sometimes harshly, with the Hebrew community and its laws.

In 333 B.C. Alexander captured Persia and ruled Palestine. Greek culture (Hellenism), language, and philosophy were important throughout the area. The Greek common language (koine) would become the language early believers used to record the “Good News” of Jesus Christ. The writings of Plato, on the supreme god, were read by scholars. Within the Greek culture stoicism (emphasis on moral life) and Apethia (emphasis on the simple life) would provide Christians a base upon which to discuss monotheism and the Ten Commandments. Alexander died at age thirty-three in June of 323 B.C. in Babylon. A conqueror, his vision was a world commonwealth of people, with marriage between Macedonians and Asians.

The Greek common language (koine) would become the language early believers used to record the “Good News” of Jesus Christ.

UNITED	NORTHERN	SOUTHERN PRE - EXILE	SOUTHERN - EXILE AND RETURN
1020 - 931 B.C.	(ISRAEL) 931 - 721 B.C.	(JUDAH) 931 - 586 B.C.	586 - 300 B.C.

Roman rulers pursued “PAX Romano,” peace within the Empire. These were tolerant times—all gods were acknowledged—one god was good, more were better.

About 250 B.C., in Alexandria, the Septuagint (Greek Old Testament) was translated by 70 Jewish scholars.

Alexander’s heir was Phillip, his half-witted brother, and the real power devolved to his generals. The Ptolemaic Empire emerged, distinguished by economic activity. Agents of royal monopolies traveled far and wide in search of goods. Ptolemy was an Alexandrian scientist who advanced the theory that the earth was the center around which the sun and planets revolved. His ideas were later superceded by Copernican theory.

Rome became a republic in 509 B.C. and an empire under Pompey in 51 B.C. In 49 B.C. Julius Caesar replaced Pompey. Caesar plunged himself into consolidating the empire. Elected “dictator for life,” Caesar’s head was stamped on coinage. Ruling a short five years, he was assassinated March 15, 44 B.C. by Marcus Brutus. Roman rulers pursued “PAX Romano,” peace within the Empire. These were tolerant times—all gods were acknowledged—one god was good, more were better. Proper recognition of the emperor/dictator was the goal. Roads were built and commerce expanded, thus making travel possible for later Christian apostles.

While the remnant re-established the Jerusalem Temple (Ezra and Nehemiah), dispersion (Diaspora) of Jews had occurred. During first century A.D. about 10 percent of all people in the Roman Empire were Jewish. Synagogues provided a platform for Paul and other apostles to teach the word of Christ. About 250 B.C., in Alexandria, the Septuagint (Greek Old Testament) was translated by seventy Jewish scholars. The moral and messianic teachings of the Old Testament became available in the familiar Greek language. In 163 B.C. Judas Maccabeus cleansed the Temple of Hellenism (Hanukkah). The Hasmonean Dynasty came from Maccabees family. Roman soldiers aided Herod to defeat Antigonus, the last Hasmonean ruler, in 37 B.C. Herod, king of Judea when Jesus was born, was to undertake an ambitious Temple and public building program, yet later in life he ordered the slaying of children in Bethlehem to ensure his rule. God sent the coming Messiah, Jesus Christ, at a great convergence of advancement of knowledge in civilized life.

CREATION	MONOTHEISM	THE EXODUS	OCCUPATION
Beginning of Time -1900 B.C.	One God 1900 - 1700 B.C.	God’s Laws 1270 - 1230 B.C.	Of Land 1230 - 1020 B.C.

God chose the perfect time to send his only son Jesus to the Earth. It had been about 1,000 years since David took the throne of the Hebrew people. A foundation of beliefs about creation, monotheism, and God's laws had been revealed. His people had occupied land, had leaders (all of whom were human, and some of whom feared God), been exposed to oral and written prophets, lost their land to invading armies, been dispersed throughout the Mediterranean basin, and been held captive and released.

The time had fully come for God to take action and bring his son Jesus to all people with God's word (the Logos).

UNITED	NORTHERN	SOUTHERN PRE - EXILE	SOUTHERN - EXILE AND RETURN
1020 - 931 B.C.	(ISRAEL) 931 - 721 B.C.	(JUDAH) 931 - 586 B.C.	586 - 300 B.C.

Note



Discussion – Fullness of Time

- 1.** Who was Alexander the Great? When did he live? What did he do?

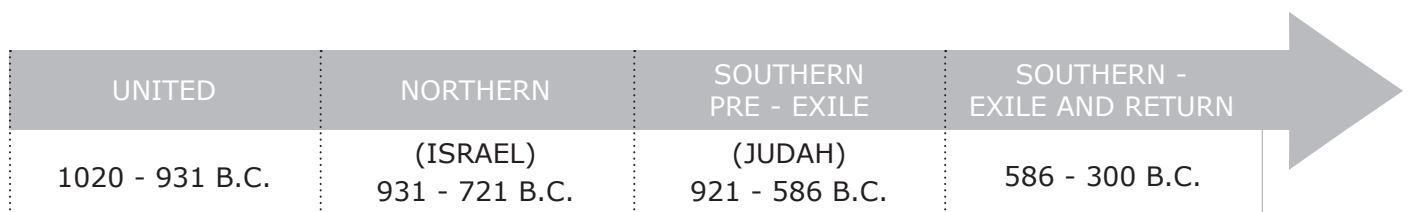
- 2.** Who was Judas Maccabeas and what did he accomplish in 165 B.C.?

- 3.** What is the history of the Roman Empire and who was Caesar?

- 4.** When did Jerusalem come under Roman rule and who is King Herod?

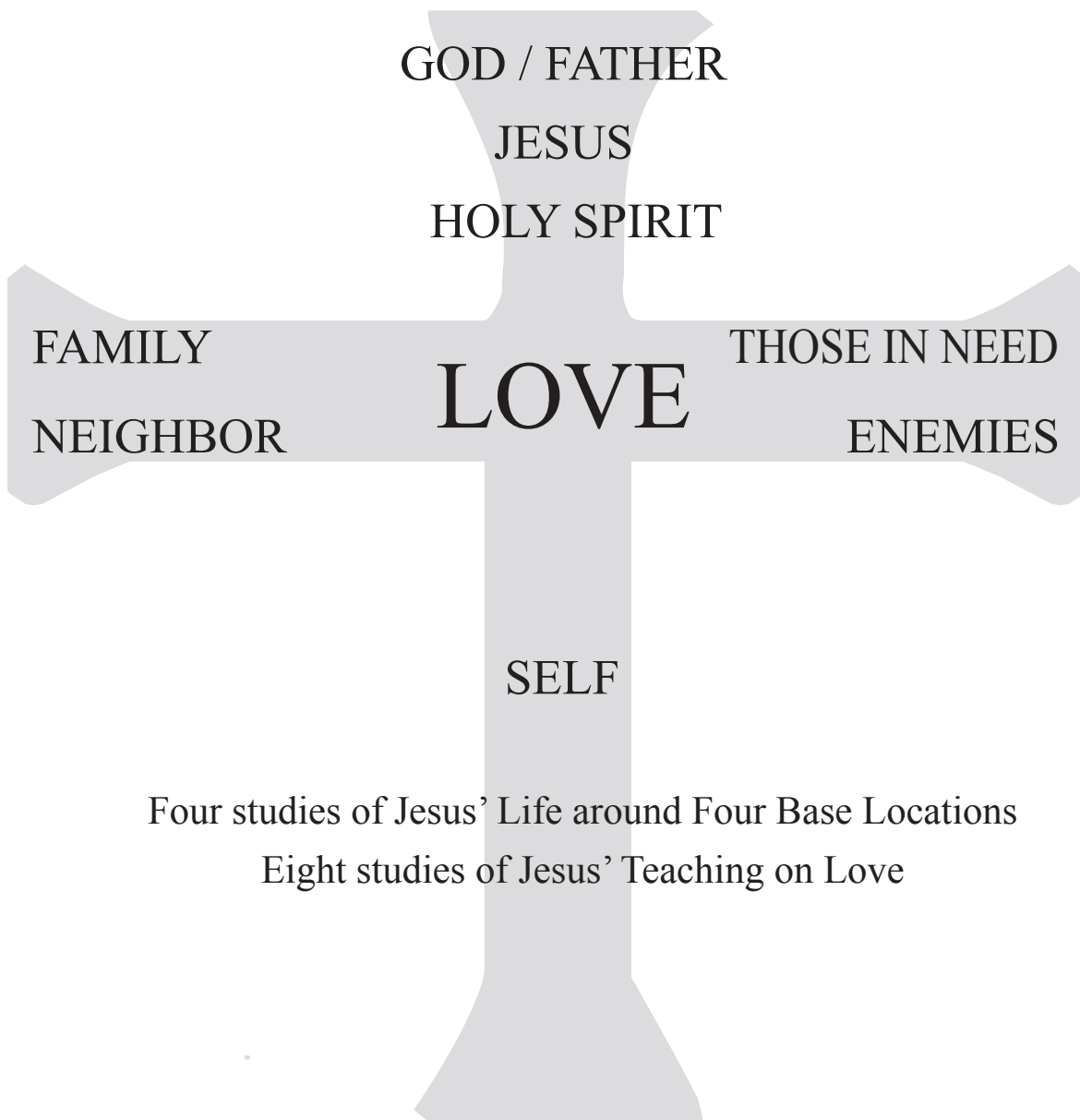
- 5.** Define a “fullness of time”. Why was this the platform on which God chose to bring his only son, Jesus, into the world?

CREATION	MONOTHEISM	THE EXODUS	OCCUPATION
Beginning of Time -1900 B.C.	One God 1900 - 1700 B.C.	God’s Laws 1270 - 1230 B.C.	Of Land 1230 - 1020 B.C.



SECTION 2

FULFILLMENT



Four studies of Jesus' Life around Four Base Locations
Eight studies of Jesus' Teaching on Love

Introduction

Building upon the Foundation of the Hebrew nation, God sent his Son, Jesus, to earth with his WORD (logos) for all mankind. Jesus came to “fulfill the Law” (Matthew 5:17). Jesus came to preach the good news of the kingdom of God (Luke 4:43). He lived a life of agape love and set a high standard for his followers to strive for in their daily living.

The previous section of this book was organized chronologically, around nine key narratives from the Old Testament. Through those stories, we see God’s hand in human history and his love, promises, and pursuit of his people. We see his special relationship with Israel and their struggle to faithfully follow God. In this section, we pick up the story with Jesus, God’s Son, coming to earth to fulfill God’s promises. This story is recorded in the four Gospels of the New Testament. After 350 years of “silence,” during which time no Prophets spoke to Israel, Jesus was born and lived for 33 years. It’s possible to study Jesus’ life chronologically, as we did with the Old Testament. In this “Fulfillment” section we will start with this type of approach, as the first four studies here give an overview of the key events and places in Jesus’ life, from his birth in Bethlehem to his resurrection and ascension in Jerusalem. This overview draws on material from my prior book, *A Biography of Jesus*, which organized Jesus’ life around 32 events and four key locations. (Those readers interested in seeing the complete list of events from *A Biography of Jesus* can find it in Appendix 1) Once we are familiar with the chronology and places of Jesus’ life, we will focus on the heart of Jesus’ message in the next eight studies. Jesus’ message, which builds on God’s truths to the Old Testament people, is found primarily in the Gospels as Jesus’ words on love, and provides the most complete summary of his teachings and instructions on living.

Before we head into Jesus’ life, though, let’s take a moment to consider who Jesus was and how he fit into human history. In our final study of the Foundation section, we saw that Jesus was born in turbulent times. The Golden Age of the Israelites had passed and they suffered under Roman rule. They expected and waited for a Messiah, perhaps another warrior-king along the lines of David to restore them. Meanwhile, Jesus (descendent of David) was born to a Jewish family in the most humble of circumstances, to a young woman in a lowly stable. His family was forced to flee to Egypt soon after he was born. Jesus became a carpenter and then a powerful leader, but not on

account of any “worldly” power. He had no kingdom, led no armies, governed no nations and had little money. Still, the impact of his teaching and healing ministry was so great that our Western world still marks time by his birth and all major religions have been affected by his compelling message. I believe Jesus’ message was for all mankind and has truth for people of all backgrounds, faiths and walks of life.

To a Jew, who follows the Old Testament, Jesus is a Rabbi, teacher—someone to learn from, listen to, and understand his point of view. Hillel and other great Rabbis of his time are also to be valued. To a member of the Islamic faith, Jesus is the second most-quoted prophet in the Koran. Only Mohammed, whom Muslims consider the last and greatest prophet, has more quotes in the Koran. In Buddhism, the twelve-step path to Nirvana involves much self-sacrifice and concern for others. An atheist, who would deny there is a god, from a practical point of view may support the idea of love, compassion, and service as a key part of daily living. For example, Richard Dawkins, a noted atheist, in his recent book, *The God Delusion*, states, “there is no denying, from a moral point of view, Jesus is a huge improvement over the cruel ogre of the Old Testament. Indeed, Jesus, if he existed (or whoever wrote his script if he didn’t), was surely one of the great ethical innovators of history. The Sermon on the Mount was way ahead of its time.”

Key Events and Locations in Jesus’ Life: A Chronological study

Jesus’ life certainly had impact and has impact today. Most of us have heard stories from his life, but how many have studied it in a focused way that we remember? My previous book, *A Biography of Jesus*, was written for this purpose: to help people order, understand, and remember the life of Jesus. As mentioned earlier, this book contains 32 studies focused on different key events in his life. The key events are grouped around four base locations from which Jesus lived, traveled, and ministered: Nazareth, Capernaum, Judea / Perea, and Jerusalem. My hope is that in covering this material here, readers of this “Fulfillment” section will also better understand the life of Jesus. Followers of Jesus should be prepared to share in dialog Jesus’ life effectively with friends and others.

“Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect” (1 Peter 3:15b).

Jesus stated, “I and the Father are one” (John 10:30). This particular claim led Jews to pick up stones and accuse him of blasphemy. Jesus’ claims were bold, often controversial, but simple. Becoming a follower of Jesus has led me to understand and appreciate the simplicity he tried to bring to theology, the study of God.

The four studies provide a chronology to the 33-year life of Jesus as follows:

- 1. Nazareth – “In’s” – Birth and early years to end of “Year of Inauguration of Ministry”:**
30+1 Years
- 2. Capernaum – “C’s” – New Covenant – The Great Galilee Ministry:** 1 ½ Years
- 3. Judea / Perea – “D’s” – Disciples coached, Divinity declared – After Transfiguration to Triumphal Entry:** 6 Months
- 4. Jerusalem – “T’s” – Treks, Travels – Passion Week to Pentecost:** 7 days + 50 days.

You may realize already that each of these four studies covers a lot of ground in Jesus’ life! Each study has extensive suggested Bible readings. Only those with ample time will be able to get through the readings. The average user of this book will need to pick and choose which readings to cover for each section.

You might also notice that in an effort to help readers recall the life of Jesus, I have tried to use memory devices, such as easy to remember headings for each location (i.e. C’s of Capernaum and the New Covenant). In addition I have adapted an idea from another simple theology: Come Down, Come Out, and Come Home (“Hour of Power,” television service, Crystal Cathedral, January, 2003). I have adapted Dr. Sweet’s “simple theology” to eight words that are tied to the four base locations used here.

<i>Place</i>	<i>Simple Theology</i>	<i>Scripture and Author's Comment</i>
Nazareth	Come down	John 1 tells us Jesus has come down from Heaven with God's Word (logos) and truth for all to receive his light.
Capernaum	Come follow	As Jesus called his disciples he said, "Come follow me" (Matthew 4:19a). His call remains the same today to mankind.
Judea / Perea	Come live	In teaching his disciples, Jesus calls us to live for him. Jesus reminds us that he has come that we might live life "to the full" (John 10:10b). Paul reminds us and the Galatians the fruit of the spirit-filled life in "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control" (Galatians 5:22-23).
Jerusalem	Come home	Passion Week in Jerusalem is the story of Jesus coming home. Jesus assured his followers in the Upper Room, "I am going to prepare a place for you...that you also may be where I am going" (John 14:3-4).

Eight Fulfillment Markers Jesus Taught: A study of Jesus' Message

Our next eight studies turn the focus to Jesus' love teachings, the heart of his message. I suggest we organize these eight studies in terms of both an inward and outward Journey.

I believe that Jesus wants us to be attentive to both our "private" life with God and our "public" life with our neighbor (other people). The following studies will encourage us to evaluate both spheres of our life.

Jesus captured this duality well when he was asked to name the greatest commandment. He said the greatest commandment was:

Matthew 22:37-40 – “ ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”

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Jesus' answer distilled all of God's commands into loving God and loving our neighbor, both an "inward" and "outward" practice of faith. In this section we will study three benchmarks of our inward journey and five benchmarks of our outward journey, as summarized on the following pages.

Jesus used the terms God and Father almost equally and interchangeably in the Gospels. Referring to the 'red letter' words of Jesus, he used (NIV) 'Father' more than 175 times and 'God' more than 165 times in the four Gospels. For this reason the Fulfillment study one is titled "Love God / Father". Also we attempt to harmonize the terms as we study the Trinitarian God of Christianity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Inward Journey

5. Love God / Father – God created men and women in his own image. We bear the stamp of a compassionate, loving, and gracious God. Be thankful for the way God created you out of your mother’s womb. God loved Jesus before the creation of the world (John 17:24). God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son to death on the cross of Calvary.

6. Love Jesus – We learn at the baptism of Jesus and his transfiguration that God loved his Son and was well-pleased with him. If we love God, then we also love Jesus. Loving Jesus means obeying his teachings. Our reward is that his father will make his home with that us (John 14:23). Jesus came that we might have life in its abundant, fullest sense (John 10:10b). Following him means living life fully and practicing a new kind of love, agape love.

7. Love the Holy Spirit – Jesus knew that we would need a counselor, the Holy Spirit. That still small voice reminds us of life’s boundaries, the rewards of entering through the narrow way. “But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you” (John 14:26). It is for our good that Jesus went away: “Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you” (John 16:7b). The kingdom of God is spirit within each of us (Luke 17:21).

Outward Journey

8. Love of Self – We are told that whoever loses his life for Jesus will find it (Matthew 16:25b). We must be humble and have a right view of ourselves. Some Pharisees neglected justice and true love of God. JOY loves Jesus first, Others second, Yourself last! Our love of God can best be expressed in constantly seeking to become the person God created us to be in his world. The unique, unrepeatable gifts and talents each of us has been given are here for a purpose, to use them in God's kingdom here on earth. Our inspiration should be to use our talents in the service of our Lord on earth.

9. Love of Family – Honoring one's father and mother are important (Matthew 19:19a). The importance of marriage and two (a man and woman) becoming one is a model Jesus called upon (Matthew 19:4-6). Jesus also envisioned bringing the agape love of our Christ-centered community to the earthly family (Mark 3:33-35). The call to express love on the outward journey begins with both our genetic family and Christian family.

10. Love of Neighbor – Jesus states the “Golden Rule” in the Sermon on the Mount: “do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets” (Matthew 7:12). When asked to order the 613 Rabbinical laws of the Old Testament, Jesus first instructs us to love God, and then “Love your neighbor as yourself” (Matthew 22:39b). Again, in the Upper Room, Jesus commands his disciples to “Love each other as I have loved you” (John 15:12).

11. Love Those in Need – When asked “Who is my neighbor?” Jesus answered with the story of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10). Jesus was always sensitive to the needs of others. His healing ministry was about serving those in need. He said: “Give to one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you” (Matthew 5:42).

12. Love your Enemies – “But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you” (Matthew 5:44a). Jesus showed forgiveness on the cross for his enemies. If we are to let our light shine and be the salt of the earth, forgiveness is a key step in the process! The Prince of Peace stands ready for the world to understand this principle.

STUDY 1

KEY EVENTS AND LOCATIONS IN JESUS' LIFE

- NAZARETH -

Review the following Bible passages:

Matthew 1:1 – 4:11

Mark 1:1 – 1:13

Luke 1:1 – 4:30

John 1:1 – 4:42

NAZARETH	CAPERNAUM	JUDEA / PEREA	JERUSALEM
<i>30+1 Years</i>	<i>1 ½ Years</i>	<i>6 Months</i>	<i>7+50 Days</i>

Nazareth is a city on a hill in Galilee. It overlooks the Old Testament Jezreel Valley. Looking to the South on a clear day from Nazareth, Mounts Tabor, Moreh and Gilboa can be seen. The village of Nain is also visible in the distance. Today, Nazareth is primarily an industrial town housing an important automotive assembly plant. It is a part of Israel's "occupied territory" and has a large Arab (Islamic) influence.

Nazareth was the hometown of Jesus. As Matthew (2:23) notes, he was called Nazarene. Just like each of us have a hometown where we were brought up (New York, San Francisco, etc.), Jesus too could call Nazareth his hometown. Interestingly, Nazarene in Jesus' day was a synonym for "despised."

The Studies identified around Nazareth cover the longest period in his life, 30+1 = 31 years. "In's" help us remember this first part of his life. There was no room in the "Inn," and the baby Jesus was born in a humble Bethlehem stable, south of Jerusalem. There are seven events in this study 1. The events are in chronological order. We study about four chapters from each Gospel writer except Mark (only 13 verses from the first chapter) in the Nazareth section:

The seven events below summarize this period of Jesus' life. Review these events to understand Jesus' early years, before and as he began his ministry.

Events in Nazareth

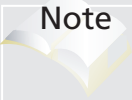
- In the Beginning** God's Word (logos) came down and dwelt among us
Review: John 1:1-18
- Infant Birth** Birth of Jesus and presentation – The Christmas Story
Review: Matthew 1:18-2:23, Luke 1:5-2:40

"In's" help us remember the first part of his life.

NAZARETH	CAPERNAUM	JUDEA / PEREA	JERUSALEM
30+1 Years	1 ½ Years	6 Months	7+50 Days

Increase in Wisdom and Stature	Jesus at age 12, in the Jerusalem Temple, among teachers, asking questions <i>Review: Luke 2:41-52</i>
Inspiration	Jesus, at age 30, leaves Nazareth and carpentry for baptism <i>Review: Matthew 3:1-17, Mark 1:1-11, Luke 3:1-22, John 1:19-34, 3:22-36</i>
Inner Strength	Jesus uses Inner Strength while tempted in the Wilderness <i>Review: Matthew 4:1-11, Luke 4:1-13,</i>
Initial Encounters	Wedding at Cana, Nicodemus, Woman at Well, Nobleman <i>Review: John 1:35-3:21, 4:1-54,</i>
Inauguration Year Ends	Inauguration year of Jesus' Ministry ends – Rejected in Nazareth <i>Review: Luke 4:14-30</i>

NAZARETH	CAPERNAUM	JUDEA / PEREA	JERUSALEM
30+1 Years	1 ½ Years	6 Months	7+50 Days



Note

Discussion - Nazareth

- 1.** What key parts of the Birth of Jesus help you recall His divine nature?

- 2.** How can you daily show your love of God / the Father?

- 3.** What made the Baptism of Jesus a special event and marker in His life?

- 4.** Can you identify with the temptations of Jesus?

- 5.** Of the initial encounters of Jesus, do you feel the visit by Nicodemus was most important or the Samaritan Women at the well?

- 6.** Referring to Luke 4, can you recall rejection in your own life?

NAZARETH	CAPERNAUM	JUDEA / PEREA	JERUSALEM
30+1 Years	1 ½ Years	6 Months	7+50 Days

STUDY 2

KEY EVENTS AND LOCATIONS IN JESUS' LIFE

- CAPERNAUM -

Review the following Bible passages:

Primary Review:

Matthew 4:12 – 18:35

Secondary Resources:

Mark 1:14 – 9:50

Luke 4:31 – 9:50

John 4:43 – 6:71

NAZARETH	CAPERNAUM	JUDEA / PEREA	JERUSALEM
<i>30+1 Years</i>	<i>1 ½ Years</i>	<i>6 Months</i>	<i>7+50 Days</i>

After rejection in his local Nazareth synagogue (Luke 4:14-30), Jesus moved his ministry for the next 1½ years to Capernaum, on the Sea of Galilee. Jesus had a new start in Capernaum and emphasized important teaching of the New Covenant in his ministry. Galilee proved to be a most responsive audience to his messages. In contrast, the people of Nazareth had trouble accepting one of their own as the Messiah and Hebrew leaders and priests in Jerusalem had too much at stake not to challenge Jesus as the fulfillment of the Old Testament-promised Messiah.

Peter’s home in Capernaum served as the base of Jesus’ Galilee travels. Jesus must have felt comfortable in the midst of these affirming surroundings. Fishermen, a tax collector, a Zealot, and people from all walks of a more rural life listened to his teachings. Hillsides beside the sea provided natural amphitheatre settings for oral preaching and teaching of the New Covenant truths Jesus shared. Some scholars refer to the time of Jesus in Galilee as the “Year of Popularity.” Jesus must have felt good to be affirmed in his life!

Much of our record of Jesus’ ministry in Galilee comes from two Gospel writers: Matthew and Mark. Matthew, writing to Hebrews, wanted his listeners to understand a restatement of Hebrew laws and traditions. Mark, writing to Romans, emphasized the actions, miracles, and Jesus’ accomplishments. Studies referenced in Capernaum are ordered around ten “C’s” to help recall the New Covenant and this important teaching phase of the ministry of Jesus Christ.

We will review nearly half (13+ chapters) of Matthew’s gospel. More than half of Mark (about 9 of 16 chapters) is devoted to Jesus in Galilee. About 5 chapters of Luke and only 2+ chapters of John (including an important trip of Jesus to Jerusalem) tell us about Jesus in Galilee. Matthew provides the “spine” or ordering sequence of this study section of ten

Galilee proved to the a most responsive audience to His messages.

This is an important teaching phase of Jesus’ ministry.

NAZARETH	CAPERNAUM	JUDEA / PEREA	JERUSALEM
30+1 Years	1 ½ Years	6 Months	7+50 Days

events. The individual Galilee events are not chronological. Matthew was guided by principle of association rather than a strict chronology of events.² As we order ten studies of the “New Covenant” from Matthew, God’s laws written on man’s heart (love) and kingdom living versus earthly living, move to the forefront. Related readings concerning the Great Galilee ministry are tied in from the other Gospel writers.

Events - Capernaum

Come Follow Me	Jesus calls his disciples and followers <i>Review Matthew 4: 12-25, 9:9-13, Luke 6:12-16</i>
Changed Attitudes	The Beatitudes – Kingdom Attitudes – Sermon on Mount (part 1) <i>Review: Matthew 5:1-16, Luke 6:17-26</i>
Commandments of Love	Sermon on Mount / at Lake – You have heard it said... Sermon on Mount (part 2) <i>Review: Matthew 5:17-48, Luke 6:27-36,</i>
Construction on Rock	Love God through - Prayer, fast, trust, do not judge, the narrow way, bear fruit. Your house will withstand storm - Sermon on Mount (part 3) <i>Review: Matthew 6:1-7:29</i>
Caring / Curing	Caring, curing, compassion miracles of Jesus <i>Review: selected Miracles of Jesus (see Appendix 1 - P.176)</i>

² Robinson, Edward. *Robinson’s English Harmony of the Gospels*. The Riverside Press, Cambridge, MA. 1846. Preface section.

NAZARETH	CAPERNAUM	JUDEA / PEREA	JERUSALEM
30+1 Years	1 ½ Years	6 Months	7+50 Days

Centrifugal Faith Send out workers. Two by two fields are ripe for harvest
Confirmed Ministry Disciples of John the Baptist confirm ministry of Jesus
Review : Matthew 9:35-11:19

Cultivate Word Parable of Sower, Mustard Seed, Lost Coin, Pearl value
Clean Within What comes from our mouth (from heart within) makes us clean
Review : Matthew 13, 15:1-20,

Church Defined Peter's confession, Jesus, "on this rock, I will build my church" at Caesarea Philippi – Church, community of believers
Review : Matthew 16:13-20, 18:1-20

Children Important Jesus sees a model for spiritual learning in children.
Review : Matthew 18:1-9, 19: 13-14 Mark 9:33-37

Completion, Jesus predicts death, Transfiguration, leaves Galilee
Galilee Ministry moves through Judea / Perea, towards Jerusalem
Review : Matthew 16:21-17:13

NAZARETH	CAPERNAUM	JUDEA / PEREA	JERUSALEM
30+1 Years	1 ½ Years	6 Months	7+50 Days

Note



Discussion - Capernaum

- 1.** What type of people did Jesus call to follow him as his disciples?
- 2.** What are Kingdom attitudes Jesus taught for daily living?
- 3.** How did Jesus restate the Ten Commandments in the Sermon on the Mount?
- 4.** What did Jesus teach concerning marriage?
- 5.** How did Jesus see building his church in the world?
- 6.** At the Mount of Transfiguration who was present and what happened?

NAZARETH	CAPERNAUM	JUDEA / PEREA	JERUSALEM
<i>30+1 Years</i>	<i>1 ½ Years</i>	<i>6 Months</i>	<i>7+50 Days</i>

NAZARETH	CAPERNAUM	JUDEA / PEREA	JERUSALEM
<i>30+1 Years</i>	<i>1 ½ Years</i>	<i>6 Months</i>	<i>7+50 Days</i>

STUDY 3

KEY EVENTS AND LOCATIONS IN JESUS' LIFE

- JUDEA / PEREA -

Review the following Bible passages:

Primary Review:

Luke 9:51-19:27

John 7-11

Secondary Resources:

Matthew 19-20

Mark 10

NAZARETH	CAPERNAUM	JUDEA / PEREA	JERUSALEM
<i>30+1 Years</i>	<i>1 ½ Years</i>	<i>6 Months</i>	<i>7+50 Days</i>

The last six months of the earthly life of Jesus Christ is a travelogue through the provinces of Judea and Perea. These six months represent a turning point in Jesus’ life. Some authors call it a period of opposition. After his receptive audiences in Galilee, “Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem” (Luke 9:51b). The stakes for following Jesus are raised. Early in the journey Jesus warned those who were with him walking along the road: “the Son of Man has no place to lay his head” (Luke 9:58b). He emphasizes a sense of urgency as he says, “Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and proclaim the kingdom of God” (Luke 9:60b). In this Luke travelogue (Luke 9:51 – 19:27), Jesus “raises the bar” for his followers and Disciples are coached.

The stakes for following Jesus are raised. He declares His divinity.

The base of Jesus’ ministry moved about in Judea and Perea during this six- month period and was not centered in a particular village. Perea, an area east of Jerusalem across the Jordan River, was a center from which some sojourns occur. Although those disciples close to Jesus did not fully understand the transfiguration and his approaching death, the affirmation Jesus received from God would take him twice to feasts in Jerusalem and once to heal Lazarus. In John chapters 7-11 Jesus Declares his Divinity at the Feast of Tabernacles, Feast of Dedication, and His trip to Bethany (near Jerusalem) to raise Lazarus from the dead. Through a series of I AM claims before Hebrew leaders, he leaves no doubt as to his mission during these travels to Jerusalem and Bethany.

Luke becomes the organizing thread for study of this six-month period in the life of Jesus. Reading John 7-11 we capture the travels Jesus made to Jerusalem and its surroundings. Luke is ordered more by principles; thus “events” in this section are also not necessarily chronological. The Judea / Perea six-month ministry period becomes a time for Jesus to coach his disciples. Kingdom values and divinity claims to confront Jewish leaders in Jerusalem are also key themes. We read ten chapters from Luke (nearly half of Luke), five chapters from John, and small parts of Matthew and Mark.

³ Carter, John Franklin. *Op. cit.* p. 15.

NAZARETH	CAPERNAUM	JUDEA / PEREA	JERUSALEM
30+1 Years	1 ½ Years	6 Months	7+50 Days

Events - Judea / Perea

Deny Self

Whoever is least among you will be the greatest

Review: Luke 9

Decision with Focus

Treasures in heaven and treasures on earth, we can not serve two masters

Review: Luke 11, 12.

“Do it”

Be a good neighbor, carry the cross and follow me, at the great banquet, he who has ears let him hear

Review: Luke 10.

Dwelling with him Daily

God does not come by careful observation, people will say, “Here it is” or “There it is,” but the Kingdom of God is within you!

Review: Luke 17

Discourage Divorce

God’s goal; two becoming like one, strive to attain this ideal in marriage. Marriage is not by the Law, but the heart.

Review: Matthew 19:1-12

Dignity of Women

Jesus’ ministry elevated women and he demonstrated a dignity for them (and all persons). “The ground is level at the foot of the Cross”

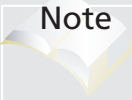
Review: See Appendix 1 P.179 for selected readings

Divinity Declared

The I AM’s of John begin an important step in the ministry of Jesus, he openly declares his divinity

Review: John 7-11.

NAZARETH	CAPERNAUM	JUDEA / PEREA	JERUSALEM
30+1 Years	1 ½ Years	6 Months	7+50 Days



Note

Discussion - Judea / Perea

- 1.** How can we deny ourselves today?
- 2.** Can you have a "Do it" attitude with Focus on Jesus?
- 3.** How can we dwell with Jesus through prayer, Bible study, and living a Christ-like life?
- 4.** What did Jesus teach concerning marriage?
- 5.** What are some examples of Jesus providing Dignity to Women?
- 6.** During Jesus' three trips to Jerusalem in this period, what happened?

NAZARETH	CAPERNAUM	JUDEA / PEREA	JERUSALEM
30+1 Years	1 ½ Years	6 Months	7+50 Days

STUDY 4

KEY EVENTS AND LOCATIONS IN JESUS' LIFE

- JERUSALEM -

Review the following Bible passages:

Matthew 21-28

Mark 11-16

Luke 19:28-24:53

John 12:12-21:25

Acts 1-2

NAZARETH	CAPERNAUM	JUDEA / PEREA	JERUSALEM
<i>30+1 Years</i>	<i>1 ½ Years</i>	<i>6 Months</i>	<i>7+50 Days</i>

Studies in Jerusalem cover the seven-day Passover period, resurrection experiences through his ascension (40 days), and the power of the Holy Spirit being with the Apostles at Pentecost (50 days after Passover). We will walk with Jesus during the last days of his earthly ministry, and experience the grief of the cross and joy of Easter. We will see his disciples with the power of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost. About 35% of the four Gospels are devoted to these last days in Jerusalem. Each of the Gospel writers has a different audience in their Gospel writing, but all assign great importance to this period.

During the eight event studies or Treks (Walks or Travels) with Jesus, we will read from all Gospels. While Matthew, Mark, and Luke devote important portions of their Gospels to this “Passover Week,” nearly one half of John (10 out of a possible 21 chapters) records events of this Passion Week of Jesus.

The thread that has helped to unify the four Gospel writers is the empty tomb and the power of the risen Christ. He left the ministry of the Word with his disciples calling them to become Apostles of the faith. He had no other plan then...and he has no other plan today. The faith is left in the hands, heads, and hearts of his followers to be his witnesses to the ends of the earth...salt and light. From Passover week to Pentecost the disciples of Jesus had grown to become Apostles, his co-workers in the Kingdom! He expects no less of his followers today.

The final two events (Tomb is empty, Teach and Talk), along with the two beginning events surrounding the birth of Jesus, (from the Nazareth Section) provide the cornerstones of the Christian faith. Is your God big enough to make the decision, in the fullness of time, to send his son Jesus to earth to become human and teach God’s word (logos) for all people? Does the God who manages the universe, the Milky Way, and the stars of the heavens have power to impregnate a young virgin woman? Can he demonstrate his love for people by raising his son from the tragic death on the cross? Did the power of the Holy Spirit dwell with his followers as they defended the early church and is it available to follower of Jesus today? The author’s faith leads to an affirmative response to each of these God event questions. Can you, by faith, affirm these responses?

NAZARETH	CAPERNAUM	JUDEA / PEREA	JERUSALEM
<i>30+1 Years</i>	<i>1 ½ Years</i>	<i>6 Months</i>	<i>7+50 Days</i>

Events - Jerusalem

Triumphal Entry
Sunday

God sends his humble servant leader on the back of a donkey, Crowds shout Hosanna

Review: Matthew 21:1-11.

Temple Cleared
Monday

Jesus cleanses temple of moneychangers for prayer, notes fig tree with no fruit

Review: Matthew 21:12-22.

Teaching in Temple
Tuesday

The woes of priests, and hypocrisy. Simplicity, love God, love neighbor, all laws can be summarized under

Review: Matthew 21:18-23:39

Teaching on Mt. of Olives
Tuesday, evening

To disciples; subject end times. Hour of his return known only by Father, heaven and earth pass away, but his words never pass away

Review: Matthew 24, 25.

Time had come
Wednesday evening, Thursday

Jesus anointed, moves to Upper Room, passes temple, crosses Kidron Valley, to Gethsemane

Review: John 13:1-17:26.

Trials, Crucifixion
Thurs. night, Friday morning

Arrested by Romans. Trials of Jesus by High Priests, Sanhedrin, Roman rulers, accused of blasphemy, flogged, crucified.

Review: John 18:1-19:42.

NAZARETH	CAPERNAUM	JUDEA / PEREA	JERUSALEM
30+1 Years	1 ½ Years	6 Months	7+50 Days

Tomb Empty
Sunday morning

He has Risen!! Mary Magdalene arrives early with spices, stone is rolled back, she sees Jesus, cries out: 'Rabboni'

Review: Luke 24, John 20, 21.

Teach and Talk
The 50 days after
Christ Arose

The Great Commission (Teach) and Jesus imparts power of Holy Spirit at ascension; be my witnesses (Talk).

Review: Matthew 28:16-20, Acts 1,2.

NAZARETH	CAPERNAUM	JUDEA / PEREA	JERUSALEM
30+1 Years	1 ½ Years	6 Months	7+50 Days

Note



Discussion - Jerusalem

- 1.** What did Christ's arrival in Jerusalem, as a suffering servant on the back of a Donkey, symbolize?

- 2.** What did the clearing of the Temple and seven woes of its leaders say to our church today (Matthew 22, 23)?

- 3.** What are some lessons about end times Jesus taught to his disciples on the Mount of Olives?

- 4.** As you recount the story of Jesus in the Upper Room and Garden of Gethsemane, what strikes you?

- 5.** What impacts you about the trials and Crucifixion of Jesus?

- 6.** Can you retrace the events of Easter Sunday morning through the ascension of Jesus in Acts 1:8?

NAZARETH	CAPERNAUM	JUDEA / PEREA	JERUSALEM
<i>30+1 Years</i>	<i>1 ½ Years</i>	<i>6 Months</i>	<i>7+50 Days</i>

NAZARETH	CAPERNAUM	JUDEA / PEREA	JERUSALEM
<i>30+1 Years</i>	<i>1 ½ Years</i>	<i>6 Months</i>	<i>7+50 Days</i>

STUDY 5

INWARD JOURNEY

- LOVE GOD / FATHER -

Review the following Bible passages:

Matthew 6:24

Matthew 22:37-38

Mark 12:30

Luke 11:42

John 5:42

John 14:31

Genesis 1:27 – So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

God created man in his own image. The fact that God's fingerprint is on each of our lives is a great blessing. Our talents, gifts, idiosyncrasies, and temperament are all unique gifts from God. The beautiful creation of earth and sun, seas and land, and animals of all species described in Genesis culminates with God creating man and woman before God rests. All human beings are marvelous creations of God. Thus we are all children of God, unique and not to be repeated. Each of us had long odds in being created on this earth at this very time. Women usually produce 400 to 500 eggs during their childbearing years. Thousands of sperm are released to fertilize a single egg. Many fertilized embryo are discarded today through abortion. Each person is richly blessed to have been born on this earth. God had a purpose in our creation and a desire to develop a covenant with each human. He wants us to seek to love and worship him through accepting his free gift of a relationship with him for eternity. Yes, we are free to live in his beautiful garden, the world, and we are free to sin or fall short of the perfection in creation.

Thus we are all children of God, unique and not to be repeated.

Exodus 34:6 – He passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, “The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin.”

Life is a journey. God wants a covenant relationship with each person for the long haul. The Lord's Prayer begins, “Our father who art in heaven hallowed be thy name.” We are to always honor God with our praise, worship, faithfulness, and prayer. Our God is a God of love. He is a gracious God. Abounding in faithfulness, he is willing to forgive our sins if we reverently approach him and ask for his forgiveness.

Life is a journey. God wants a covenant relationship with each person for the long haul.

We love the Father by obeying his commandments.

John 3:16 – For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

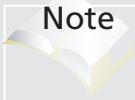
God showed his love for all humans by allowing his only Son, Jesus, to be falsely accused and crucified on a cross. His blood was shed so that all who believe in him may be saved for eternity and abide with him in the heavens above. In response to God's love for us, Jesus calls us to love God. We are to commit our whole being to loving God and his beautiful universe. It is a blessing to have loving parents and be brought up in a Christian home, learning about a loving God. On the other hand, we can be overcomers of a negative upbringing and focus on becoming the person God wants us to be.

Matthew 22:37-38 – Jesus replied: “ ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment.” (Also Mark 12:30).

We love the Father by obeying his commandments. Jesus lived out a life of loving his Father as an example for all humans to observe and follow. Jesus is the example of living the life God called him to fulfill.

John 14:31 – “but the world must learn that I love the Father and that I do exactly what my Father has commanded me.”

Our love of God starts with accepting who we are and being thankful for life on this earth. We must covet a relationship with our creator and desire to serve him in his kingdom. This is a beginning point for a faith that can be deepened and continually becomes stronger.



Note

Discussion - Love God

- 1.** Do you believe God is a God of love and forgiveness?

- 2.** How can you daily show your love of God / the Father?

- 3.** Why did God create you in his kingdom?

- 4.** In what ways do you honor God?

STUDY 6

INWARD JOURNEY

- LOVE JESUS -

Review the following Bible passages:

Luke 20:13

John 8:42

John 14:15-17a

John 14:21

John 14:23-24

John 15:19

John 21:15-17

GOD/FATHER **JESUS** HOLY SPIRIT SELF FAMILY NEIGHBOR THOSE IN NEED ENEMIES

God loved his Son, Jesus. He made that clear at his baptism and on the Mount of Transfiguration. One way we can express our love of God is to love his Son, Jesus. God's only Son, Jesus, fulfilled the life his Father called him to lead. Even if that meant facing the cross, after a spirit-filled life on earth, Jesus showed his love for all people and his Father through his works on earth and sacrifice on Calvary.

God loved his Son, Jesus.

Matthew 17:5b – a voice from the cloud said, “This is my Son whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!” (Also Luke 3:22.)

Jesus set a reciprocal example of love for his Father by doing precisely what his Father had commanded throughout his earthly life. We love Jesus by following his example of obedience, as he instructs:

John 14:23 – Jesus replied, “If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him and we will come to him and make our home with him.”

John 15:9 – “As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you. Now remain in my love.”

Love is the key to being a follower of Jesus. A new kind of love, agape love, is what Jesus brought to this earth. Agape love is learning to intelligently and intensely will the best for another person. Agape love expects nothing in return. The commands of Jesus centered upon this love: John 15:17 – “This is my command: Love each other.” In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus emphasized loving our enemies as well as our neighbors. “You have heard it said ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.”

Agape love is learning to intelligently and intensely will the best for another person.

Jesus learned to love all people. There are many stories of his love



He loved his Father and obediently followed him. He loved others with agape love.

beyond those close to him, his disciples. Some examples include a Samaritan woman at the well, Zacchaeus the tax collector, a crippled man by the pool of Bethesda, and a woman crippled for eighteen years whom he healed on the Sabbath.

In summary, we love Jesus by practicing love the way he did. He loved his Father and obediently followed him. He loved others with agape love. Others will know we are followers of Jesus by our love of God and all people! This is not an easy task. We all fall short of the goal often. The beginning point of life, creation, and harmony in life is love. How are we capable of such love? The great hymn “O How I Love Jesus” answers this well: because he first loved me.

John 17:24 – “Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world.”

The risen Christ can reinstate us when we have fallen away, if we openly affirm our love for him. Peter discovered this truth. He had denied even knowing Jesus three times as Jesus faced his trials before his crucifixion. Later, after Jesus’ resurrection, Jesus finds Peter and the disciples at the Sea of Galilee fishing. He shares a meal with them and reinstates Peter.

John 21:15 – When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon son of John, do you truly love me more than these?” “Yes Lord,” he said, “you know that I love you.” Jesus said, “Feed my lambs.”

We are to practice an active love.

Three times Jesus asks Peter this question, “Do you love me more than these [the fish]?” Three times Peter tells Jesus, yes, in effect, he does not want to return to his fishing business but wants to feed his sheep. Loving Jesus means loving others. We are to practice an active love.



Discussion – Love Jesus

- 1.** Does loving God and loving Jesus go together?
- 2.** Does the comfort that followers of Jesus were given help you follow his commands?
- 3.** What is an example of how you love Jesus?
- 4.** Is it possible to love Jesus and not be a follower of him?

STUDY 7

INWARD JOURNEY

- LOVE THE HOLY SPIRIT -

Review the following Bible passages:

Luke 17:20b-21

John 14:23

John 14:26

John 16:7

John 16:12-15

GOD/FATHER JESUS **HOLY SPIRIT** SELF FAMILY NEIGHBOR THOSE IN NEED ENEMIES

John 16:7 – “But I tell you the truth: It is for your good I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you.”

John 14:26 – “But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.”

God and his Son Jesus knew that we would need spiritual counsel and reminders in our daily living. For this reason, after Jesus ascended to heaven, God sent his Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit’s powerful arrival is documented in the book of Acts. We read there of Peter’s empowerment on the day of Pentecost. Ever since that day, the Holy Spirit remains our permanent link to God and Jesus, and serves as our counselor and guide. Through prayer, meditation, spiritual study, and reflection, the Holy Spirit blesses us with a means of communication at all times to Jesus. We must strive to utilize this wonderful resource of our faith. The words of the old hymn “In the Garden” express well the intimacy of a spirit-filled relationship: “he walks with me and he talks with me and he tells me I am his own.”

Luke 17:20b-21 – Jesus replied, “The kingdom of God does not come with your careful observation, nor will people say, ‘Here it is’ or ‘There it is’, because the kingdom of God is within you.”

Walking with Jesus daily in kingdom living is a challenge. Knowing God’s will is not easy. We often strike out on a course only to find doors are not opening and God through the Holy Spirit is creating barriers. There is a spirit of faith within each believer for strength, guidance, hope, and peace. This can be a signal to re-evaluate God’s will and our actions through prayer, sharing with our close spiritual friends, and thinking through alterations or improvements to a plan of action.

Through prayer, meditation, spiritual study, and reflection, the Holy Spirit blesses us with a means of communication at all times to Jesus.

Knowing God’s will is not easy.

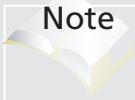
Communion is a special time for all believers to meditate and commune with Jesus.

The Holy Spirit can be a wonderful teacher for our living a Christ-centered life. The Apostle Paul teaches that living by the spirit produces rich fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self control (Galatians 5:22).

Luke 22:19-20 – And he took the bread, gave thanks, and broke it saying, “This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me.” In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, “This cup is of the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.”

Communion is a special time for all believers to meditate and commune with Jesus. A focused spirit can come over us as we meditate upon the great sacrifice Jesus made on the cross for all humans. The bread and the wine are symbols of his body and his blood shed for each follower of Jesus. We are called to do this in remembrance of Jesus. The Holy Spirit is present at the communion table to be called upon for spiritual healing and new horizons.

It is for our good that the Holy Spirit dwells in our world and is available to believers. The transcendent, ever-present nature of God and Jesus is affirmed by the Holy Spirit being available to us daily, if we call upon his power. What a privilege it is to have a living savior that continues to speak to us today through a spiritual connection. God’s free gift to all humankind is his Son Jesus and the power of the Holy Spirit.



Note

Discussion – Love the Holy Spirit

- 1.** Do you call upon the Holy Spirit often in your walk with Jesus?

- 2.** What techniques do you employ to call upon the Holy Spirit? Prayer, communion, meditation, quiet time, feedback from friends, etc.?



STUDY 8

OUTWARD JOURNEY

- LOVE SELF -

Review the following Bible passages:

Matthew 6:5

Matthew 10:29-31

Luke 11:43

Luke 20: 46

John 10:7-11

GOD/FATHER JESUS HOLY SPIRIT **SELF** FAMILY NEIGHBOR THOSE IN NEED ENEMIES

Matthew 10:29-31 – “Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from the will of your Father. And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. So don’t be afraid, you are worth more than many sparrows.”

Learning to love one’s self “just as we are” is not easy. It is easy to fall into envy, jealousy, and pity parties of our own making as we think of others that appear more gifted. We can easily become negative as we think of ourselves and our shortcomings. God, however, does not see us this way—far from it! God created each person in his own image. All people are important to the Father. God created each person for a purpose in his kingdom.

Jesus, too, saw people with God’s eyes. Jesus liked to call his followers by new names. For example, Simon, a fisherman, he called Peter or Cephas (meaning rock), and Levi, a tax collector, he called Matthew. Jesus calls us to new life. Nicodemus, who visited Jesus by night, was told he must be born again so that a new wind of the spirit could blow through his life. The followers of Jesus are promised life to its fullest.

John 10:10b – “I have come that they might have life, and have it to the full.”

Jesus brought life and new possibilities to many he healed. A blind man at the Pool of Siloam, a paralytic in his hometown who was lowered through the roof on a mat, and an invalid who had tried to reach the Sheep Gate Pool for thirty-eight years are just a few of those he healed. In addition, Jesus calls us to leverage our talents. The parable of the talents (Matthew 25:14-30) reminds us that God wants us to use our talents in the kingdom—bloom where we are planted.

God created each person for a purpose in his kingdom.

Jesus brought life and new possibilities to many he healed.

Jesus calls us to love ourselves while at the same time being humble and clean on the inside and out.

With this mandate to use our talents comes responsibility. Jesus discourages flaunting our holiness or spiritual nature. There are numerous occasions where Jesus reminded the Pharisees and Scribes of this danger.

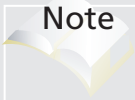
Matthew 23:6-8 – (Jesus talking to the crowds and his disciples about the chief priests and elders) “they love the place of honor at banquets and the most important seats in the synagogues; they love to be greeted in the marketplaces and have men call them ‘Rabbi.’ But you are not to be called ‘Rabbi’ for you have only one Master and you are all brothers.”

Luke 11:42 – “Woe to you Pharisees, because you give God a tenth of your mint, rue and all other kinds of garden herbs, but you neglect justice and the love of God. You should have practiced the latter without leaving the former undone.”

Luke 20:46-47 – “Beware of the teachers of the law. They like to walk around in flowing robes and love to be greeted in the marketplaces and have the most important seats in the synagogues and places of honor at banquets. They devour widow’s houses and for a show make lengthy prayers. Such men will be punished most severely.”

Jesus calls us to love ourselves while at the same time being humble and clean on the inside and out. Authentic living is important in the kingdom. Let your “yes” be a “yes” and your “no” be a “no.” We are to honor Jesus with both our lips and our hearts. Again, Jesus tells the Pharisees that their “righteous” actions only serve to glorify themselves, not God. He quotes Isaiah when he says:

Matthew 15:8 – “ ‘These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. They worship me in vain; their teachings are but rules taught by men.’ ”



Note

Discussion – Love Self

- 1.** How can Jesus help you to feel good about yourself? Your gifts? (and be humble)

- 2.** When you're "down" what helps you recover?

STUDY 9

OUTWARD JOURNEY

- LOVE OF FAMILY/
BELIEVERS COMMUNITY -

Review the following Bible passages:

Matthew 19:19

Mark 3:33-35

John 13:34-35

John 15:9-10

John 15:19

John 19:26-27

GOD/FATHER JESUS HOLY SPIRIT SELF **FAMILY** NEIGHBOR THOSE IN NEED ENEMIES

Mark 3:33-35 – “Who are my mother and my brothers?” he [Jesus] asked. Then he looked at those seated around him and said, “Here are my mother and my brothers! Whoever does God’s will is my brother and sister and mother.”

Family and a kingdom-centered Christian community seem to be considered the same in the teachings of Jesus. Both our genetic family and Christ-centered close friends are very important to walking with Jesus. As a matter of fact he noted that the same love that he shared with his close community of disciples is the standard of love practiced with family.

Parents are important to the kingdom family tree. Jesus quoted Old Testament law (Matthew 19:19a–honor your father and mother) when he commanded his followers to honor their father and mother. Indeed, Jesus ensured proper care of his mother upon his death, even as he lay dying on the cross.

John 19:26-27 – When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved [John] standing nearby, he said to his mother, “Dear woman, here is your son” and to the disciple, “Here is your mother.”

John writes that from that time on he took Mary into his home. Jesus also extends this kind of care to close Christian friends. In John 11:3 the sisters (Mary and Martha) sent word to Jesus, “Lord the one you love [Lazarus] is sick.” Jesus healed this close friend, a near family member.

Both our genetic family and Christ-centered close friends are very important to walking with Jesus.

God created man and woman in his own image and in marriage two (a man and a woman) become one flesh.

Jesus does not focus on laws, but where the heart is.

A group of Pharisees came to Jesus with a difficult question concerning divorce, “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any and every reason?” (Matthew 19:3b). Jesus went back to the original purpose of marriage in Genesis 1:27 and 2:24; God created man and woman in his own image and in marriage two (a man and a woman) become one flesh. Jesus discourages divorce as he affirms God’s plan for marriage:

Matthew 19:6 – “So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate.”

Jesus does not focus on laws, but where the heart is. This is the goal in marriage: two become one. When one finds this in the husband and wife relationship, it is a treasure and gift from God. The love of Christ and his cross at the center of marriage is God’s vision of two becoming one in him. The idea that “couples who pray together, stay together,” is worth heeding. It seems that few Christian couples regularly pray together; for those who do, though, the divorce rate is extremely low.

Love, including forgiveness, is to be the language of family, Christian friends, parents, and spouses. This laudable goal is something to strive for in our life each day.

Note

Discussion – Love of Family/Believers Community

- 1.** Love at the center of family life is key. Do you have any broken family relationships? How might God intervene to heal those relationships?

- 2.** Do our spouses, children, and parents know we love them and encourage their gifts?

- 3.** Do you have love relationships with friends in your Christian community or Bible study group?

- 4.** What relationships in your Christian community require love, attention and healing?

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STUDY 10

OUTWARD JOURNEY

- LOVE NEIGHBOR -

Review the following Bible passages:

Matthew 19:19b

Matthew 22:39-40

Mark 12:31

John 13:34-35

John 15:12-13

John 15:17

GOD/FATHER JESUS HOLY SPIRIT SELF FAMILY **NEIGHBOR** THOSE IN NEED ENEMIES



Matthew 7:12 – “So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.” (Also see Lev. 19:18.)

Matthew 19:19b – “love your neighbor as yourself.”

In the Sermon of the Mount, Jesus taught what has become known as “The Golden Rule.” Most of us learned the Golden Rule as children but we came to see that adults often live by another version of this rule, the one that says “he who has the gold rules.” We need to go back to Jesus’ words and follow his original call, letting this truth permeate every area of our lives. He says that in God’s kingdom everything we do (see Matthew 7:12 above), including our demeanor and behavior towards others, is important. We must strive to show agape love to all people in all situations.

The Pharisees got together and tried to trick Jesus. There were 613 Rabbinical laws at the time and they asked him which was the greatest commandment. Jesus’ answer was profound: First, love God. Second, love your neighbor as yourself (Matthew 22:39 and Mark 12:31 and 33).

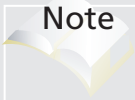
In the Upper Room, after Jesus had washed the feet of his disciples, he shared the importance of love among all people. Learning to love another as he has loved us is, in fact, the mark of a follower. It is a commandment that all who follow Jesus must put love at the forefront of their very being and life.

John 13:34-35 – “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.” (Also John 15:17.)

We must strive to show agape love to all people in all situations.

Jesus encouraged him to “go and do likewise.”

Jesus helps us understand who our neighbor is in the Parable of the Good Samaritan. An expert in the Law asked Jesus, “who is my neighbor?” (Luke 10:29b). Jesus shared the story of a man who was traveling from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell into the hands of robbers. They stripped him of everything, leaving him half dead. Holy men, a priest, then a Levite, passed by him providing no comfort. Finally a Samaritan (a person of mixed Hebrew blood who was looked down upon in society) stopped, helped the man, and left money for his care with a local innkeeper. Jesus concludes the story by asking the expert in the Law, “who was a neighbor to the injured man?” When the man answered correctly “the Samaritan,” Jesus encouraged him to “go and do likewise.” Loving our neighbors requires initiative and action.



Note

Discussion – Love Neighbor

- 1.** How broad is our friendship base? Does it extend beyond Christian friends?

- 2.** What random acts of kindness have you practiced recently?



STUDY 11

OUTWARD JOURNEY

- LOVE THOSE IN NEED -

Review the following Bible passages:

Matthew 5:42

Luke 6:32-33

Luke 7:41-42

Luke 16:13

GOD/FATHER JESUS HOLY SPIRIT SELF FAMILY NEIGHBOR **THOSE IN NEED** ENEMIES



Luke 6:32-33 – “If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners love those who love them.”

Loving those in need is not easy. It requires a generous spirit that I do not always demonstrate. The opposite of generosity is selfishness. I have always liked my own things and been too protective. This is not an easy trait for me to abide by concerning my things; on the other hand in my adult life I have always enjoyed tithing and sharing my nominal material wealth. There is joy in giving when we learn to live on 90 percent of our income.

Matthew 5:42 – “Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you.”

Sometimes as I look around, I am impressed with people who give time to community, civic, and secular “good causes.” I suspect the gauge point for the follower of Jesus is where the love is. Are we able to respect need with true compassion and a warm heart? Jesus calls on those who follow him to be a cut above society and its good deeds, to seek out those in true need and try to serve all people. I have always prided myself in trying to be friends to all and have a generous smile for all who cross my path, regardless of race, spiritual background, or other differences.

The story of the Good Samaritan was shared in our last lesson. It is a great standard and example by which we can measure our own lives and actions. Jesus created a real-time example to emphasize the meaning of neighbor and how open we must be to all people. Remember Jesus’ concluding words to the teachers of the Law, “Go and do likewise.”

Giving in an anonymous fashion to those in need is valued by Jesus. He shares the parable of the sheep and goats (Matthew 25) to illustrate this. The righteous in the parable are surprised when they hear that the Lord has blessed them for feeding the hungry, helping a stranger, and clothing people. The Lord explains, “whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.”

Loving those in need is not easy.

Note



Discussion – Love Those in Need

- 1.** How do we set boundaries for whom we help and do not help?
- 2.** Where are you on the giving scale of a tithe?
- 3.** Should we on occasion, show 'Tough Love' for those in need?



STUDY 12

OUTWARD JOURNEY

- LOVE YOUR ENEMIES -

Review the following Bible passages:

Matthew 5:43-46

Matthew 6:12

Matthew 5:43-44

Luke 6:27-31

Luke 23:34a

John 15:12-13

GOD/FATHER JESUS HOLY SPIRIT SELF FAMILY NEIGHBOR THOSE IN NEED



Jesus gave us a new command to love our enemies. Wow! That is not easy! It is much easier to hold grudges, avoid seeing someone, or remain angry at someone who has not treated us fairly. On a larger scale nations create enemies and terrorists present a real problem with the hate and malice that they deliver to our doorstep. Leaders must show political strength or perhaps they will not be re-elected. An eye for an eye might be an old and still-practiced standard, but Jesus is about higher standards. He announced that “whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.” And in the Sermon on the Mount he stated that the meek shall inherit the world and peacemakers will be called Sons of God.

Matthew 5:43-44 – “You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.” (Also Luke 6:27-36.)

What is at the heart of learning to love our enemies? Agape love. Jesus gave his disciples an example of this in the Upper Room after washing their feet. He knew then that Judas would betray him. After Satan entered Judas, Jesus told him to complete his betrayal “quickly.” Jesus said he is the vine and we are the branches. Abiding in him we can learn a new type of love.

John 15:12-13 — “My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.”

In addition to a special type of love, another important step is forgiveness. Forgiving our fellow humans is a part of loving our enemy. I am very impressed with those who can forgive one another after a grievous act such as murder, adultery, or another crime. Fortunately God to this date has not placed such a mountain on my path. I admire those who can follow the lead of Jesus and forgive those who harm them.

Jesus gave us a new command to love our enemies.

Jesus said he is the vine and we are the branches.

Forgiving our fellow humans is a part of loving our enemy.



Luke 23:34a – “Father forgive them for they do not know what they are doing.”

We may not be facing such huge hurdles as Jesus did. Still, we are told to examine our relationships daily and practice forgiveness, as Jesus taught:

Matthew 6:12b – “Forgive those who have trespassed against us.”

Do we acknowledge our need for forgiveness and go to God? Do we forgive others? Who is our enemy and how can we treat them with love? These are among the most challenging of Jesus’ questions for us and ones that we can only answer through abiding with him and growing in our relationship with him.

As we conclude our final study in the Fulfillment section, take a moment to look back on the full sweep of Jesus’ teachings. How might his words have been seen by the Jewish people, who had a rich history with God? How did he fulfill and build on God’s earlier promises? The Sermon on the Mount can be viewed as fulfillment of the new covenant described by the prophet Jeremiah: “The time is coming,” declares the Lord, “when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judea” (Jeremiah 31:31). “I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts” (Jeremiah 31:33b).

Note



Discussion – Love Your Enemies

1. Are there people who we choose to avoid, hold grudges against, or feel anger towards? How might God want us to view those people and repair those relationships? What is the result of not resolving broken relationships?

2. Are there any relationships that have been healed recently in your life?

3. Look back at the Sermon on the Mount, what do you think was most compelling for the Jewish audience (and non-Jewish audience) at the time? What is most compelling for you?



SECTION 3

FIRST FOLLOWERS

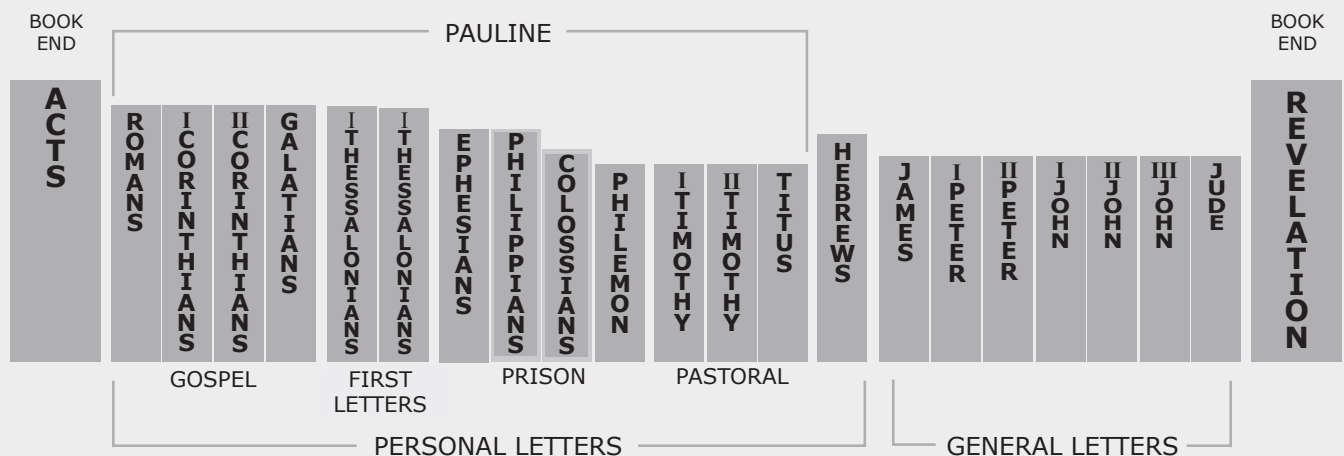
Nine Studies

Paul's Life

Book Ends

Personal Letters

General Letters



Introduction

The Epistles are a series of letters completing the New Testament. They tell the story of the first-century followers of Jesus. The power of the Holy Spirit filled the disciples who became apostles, proclaiming the faith. Their letters serve to encourage, instruct, exhort, and caution members of the first churches that sprang up after Jesus' crucifixion. The letters explain Jesus' call to live a life of agape love for God and neighbor. The letters document the struggle early Christians had in living out that life. They continue to build on God's early foundations with the Jews, his fulfillment in Jesus, and his continued call to live a life of love. It is amazing that the apostles' words are as relevant today as they were to the first churches.

There are many ways to organize and order these letters. I have chosen to study the twenty-three letters under the following nine headings:

1. The Life of Paul – Thirteen of the twenty-three Epistles are attributed to Paul. Before studying the individual letters, I believe it is important to study the life of Paul, the great missionary and church planter of the early church. How Saul, a Jew and persecutor of early Christians, was converted and became the important catalyst of the early church, is key to understand.

2. Book Ends – Acts and Revelation – The twenty-eight chapters of Acts focus on the journeys and teaching of two main Apostles, Peter (1-12) and Paul (13-28). Peter preached boldly with the power of the Holy Spirit in the early chapters of Acts. He led many to accept Jesus as Lord. Saul, meeting Jesus on the road to Damascus, is converted from Judaism to become a follower of Christ. Saul is given a new name, Paul. Luke (the author of a Gospel and writer of Acts) tells how Paul becomes a strong early church force through missionary journeys in the Mediterranean basin.

The Apostle John concludes his life and ministry on the island of Patmos by penning Revelation to persecuted churches in Asia Minor. Revelation envisions intense conflict between Satan and God. The conflict ends with Christ conquering. The book of Revelation is an apocalyptic writing, a similar form to the Old Testament book of Daniel.

3. Romans – Paul’s Theology Letter – Paul teaches that man living by faith in Jesus is living right with God. The book of Romans is his great letter summarizing Christian theology. I have used an “S” outline to order Paul’s book written to Christians in Rome. After a Salutation, Paul defines Sin, and shares how a Saving faith in Jesus overcomes sin. Paul discusses his Struggle with the law and sin. Chapter 8 is pivotal because Paul reveals the Solution, a spirit-filled life in Jesus. The concluding subjects, the Shared root with Jews, Sanctification, Servanthood, and the Saints, walk us through the balance of this great book of the Bible.

4. I and II Corinthians, Galatians – Paul’s Gospel Letters Continued – Galatians has been called the “Magna Charta of Christian liberty.” Paul shares how grace frees Christians to discover power through living in faith in Jesus. This freedom carries responsibilities. The fruits of the spirit-filled life are outlined in Paul’s fifth chapter to the Galatians.

I Corinthians deals with problems in the cosmopolitan Corinthian church. An anchor of the letter describes the meshing together of spiritual gifts in a church community (chapter 12) and Paul’s great treatise on love (chapter 13). In II Corinthians Paul defends his ministry and outlines many of the hardships he has endured for Christ.

5. Paul’s First Letters and Prison Letters – Paul’s first brief letters (I and II Thessalonians) were written to Christians in Thessalonica. He teaches hope for believers and the value of a good work ethic. In II Thessalonians Paul predicts the return of Jesus. Paul’s prison letters were written later in his ministry while in a Roman prison. Ephesians, Colossians, Philippians, and Philemon cover a variety of subjects including avoiding heresy, keeping a clear vision of Christ, believers as Priests, and learning to rejoice in hardship.

6. Paul’s Pastoral Letters – In Paul’s letters to Timothy and Titus, his concerns for the churches he planted and each community are apparent. Among the subjects his pastoral letters deal with are: encouragement of pastors, guidance for church leaders, leadership of Christ-centered communities, warning about false doctrine, and order in early churches. The authority of God’s Word is emphasized: It is God-breathed and useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training righteousness. Man should be thoroughly equipped to do good work. Titus, left on Crete to straighten out churches, is encouraged to teach the sound doctrines of self-control, love, faith, and endurance.

7. Hebrews – The author of Hebrews is unknown. It was written to support the faith of a group of Hebrew Christians. Christ is described as superior to angels and greater than Moses and past Hebrew leaders, and he is pictured as the great high Priest. Hebrews supports the wavering faith of believers from persecution. Hebrews has a high Christology: Jesus is Lord, the fulfillment of the Old Testament-promised Messiah.

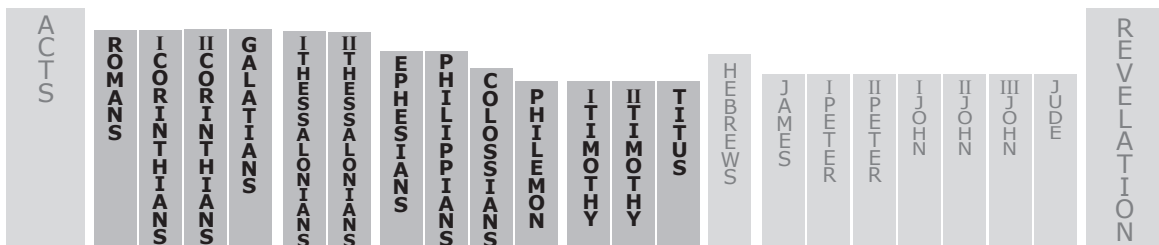
8. General Letters – James, I and II Peter, and Jude – Hebrews concludes the personal letters section of the New Testament. We move to study the concluding seven “general” letters, written to a general audience. These letters will be studied in two sections. Our first section consists of letters written by Jesus’ brothers (James and Jude) as well as Peter. The conversion of Jesus’ brothers after the crucifixion is documented in Acts 1:14. We have a letter from each. His brother James shares practical religion; faith without works is empty. Our tongue is to be controlled. We should listen carefully and give our ears a chance. Jude warns the church against immoral teachers and alarming heresies. Peter, meanwhile, writes to people who are suffering for the Lord. Encouragement, living for Jesus, hope for suffering Christians, and avoiding heresies and false teachers are central to Peter’s messages.

9. General Letters Continued – I, II, III John – John encourages his readers to walk in love, know the truth of Christ, be careful not to sin, and be assured of eternal life. Discerning false teachers and the importance of hospitality are themes of his last two short letters.

STUDY 1

PAUL'S LIFE

- AN OVERVIEW -

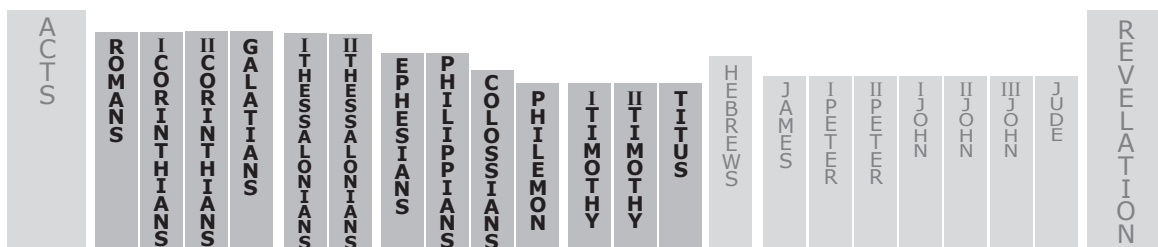


Paul, born about five years after Jesus, of the tribe of Benjamin in Tarsus, was educated in Jerusalem under Gamaliel. The young Saul was a zealous Pharisee, persecuted Christians, and participated in the stoning of Stephen. Sent to Damascus to arrest Christians, he was converted, baptized, and escaped in a basket. Paul settled in Tarsus and was brought to Antioch by Barnabas. The Antioch church became the first Christian church outside of Jerusalem and was a “sending” congregation for missionaries. An approximate timeline of Paul’s ministry would be:

Conversion	35 A.D.
Two-week visit to Jerusalem	38 A.D.
1st missionary journey	46-48 A.D.
Jerusalem conference	49-50 A.D.
2nd Missionary journey	50-52 A.D.
3rd Missionary journey	53-57 A.D.
Caesarean imprisonment	57-59 A.D.
Shipwreck, voyage to Rome	59 A.D.
1st Roman imprisonment	60-62 A.D.
Pastoral letters and visits	63-66 A.D.
2nd Roman imprisonment	67 A.D.
Trial and execution	67-68 A.D.

Paul established churches in Asia Minor and Greece. He corresponded with the congregations encouraging, correcting, sharing from his ministry, teaching, and establishing a theological base that explained the life of Christ as a fulfillment of the Old Testament.

The Antioch church became the first Christian church outside of Jerusalem and was a “sending” congregation for missionaries.

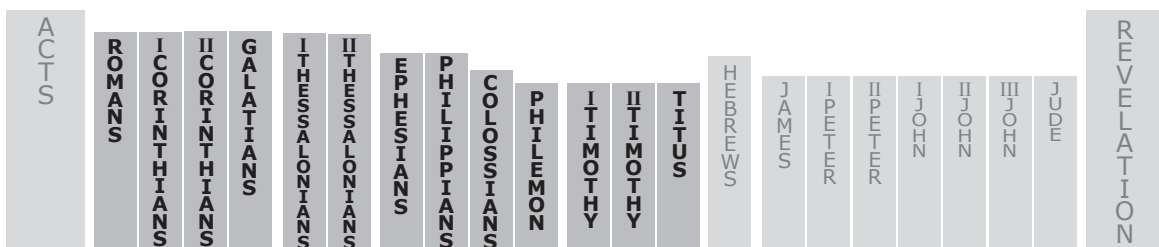


Paul wrote thirteen letters, nearly half of the twenty-seven books that comprise the New Testament.

Paul wrote thirteen letters, nearly half of the twenty-seven books that comprise the New Testament. Four of our nine divisions of New Testament letters are Pauline letters. As a reminder, the headings we will use are:

Theology Letter	Romans
Theology Letters (Continued)	I and II Corinthians, Galatians
First Letters and Prison Letters	I and II Thessalonians, Ephesians, Colossians, Philippians, Philemon
Pastoral Letters	I and II Timothy, Titus

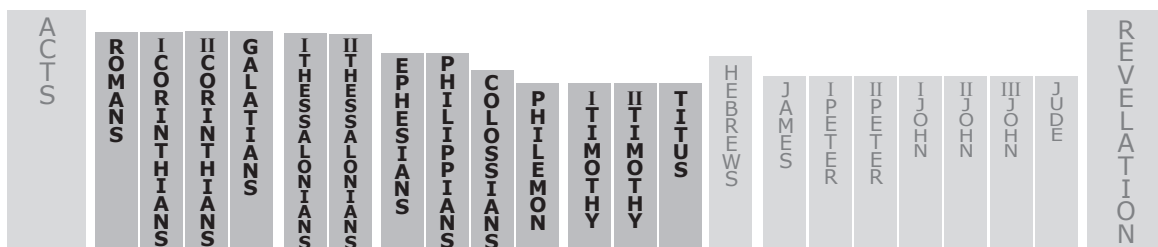
Appendix 2 Overviews the background, Interaction, and role of the 12 disciples Jesus called to be his close followers. This overview was developed by Al and Tina Lee. The summary is utilized with their permission. The work is an example of lay person expanding materials presented in *A Biography of Jesus and Remember the Heart of the Bible* as they facilitate bible study classes.



In his book *The Pauline Circle*, F. F. Bruce reminds us of the depth and impact Paul had with the early Christian church. The varied, broad backgrounds of the lives touched by Paul include:

- Mark (cousin of Barnabas) – Left Paul in Pathos, author of a Gospel, traveled with Peter, reconciled with Paul
- Luke (physician) – Author of a Gospel and Acts, joins Paul in Troas, alone with Paul as Paul’s life ends
- Barnabas (Levite from Cyprus) – Gift supports early church, introduces Paul to Christians in Jerusalem
- Timothy (of Lystra) – His mother Eunice and grandmother Lois were faithful followers, he was like a son for Paul, Paul asks him “bring my cloak”
- Silas – (Roman citizen, Jewish convert) – Flogged and imprisoned with Paul in Philippi, possibly helped write I & II Thessalonians
- Priscilla and Aquila – Moved from Rome 49 A.D., employed Paul as a tentmaker, with Paul in Corinth, back in Rome 58 A.D.
- Onesimus (escaped slave) – Converted by Paul in prison, his acceptance as a Christian brother advocated for in Paul’s letter to Philemon the slave owner

Paul, after his conversion recorded in Acts 9, had two great loves. He loved Jesus Christ as his Lord and Savior, and he loved the church, a community of believers in Jesus.

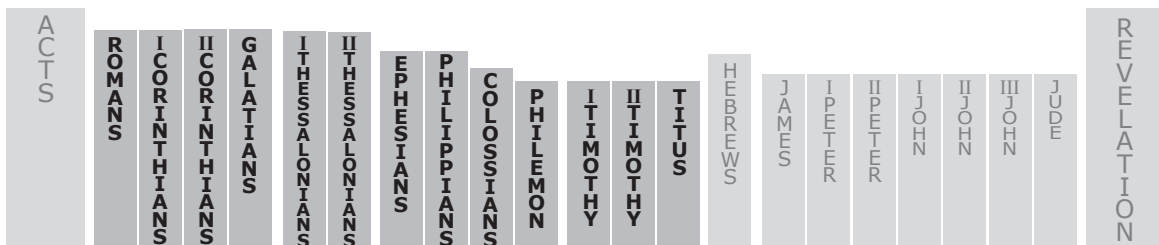


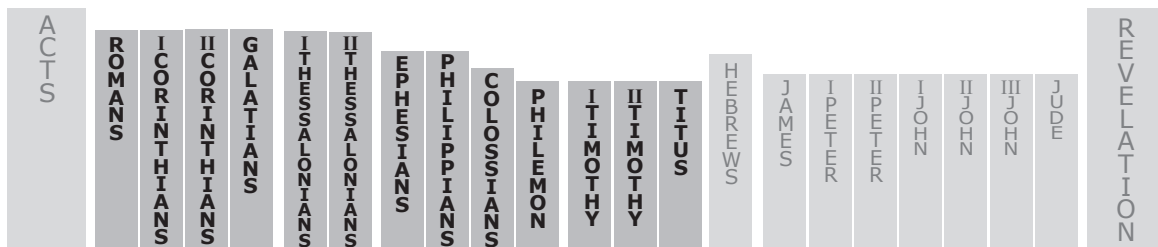
Note



Discussion – Paul’s Life

- 1.** Explain Saul’s background and his activities against the early church.
- 2.** What happened on the road to Damascus and in the fellowship in Damascus?
- 3.** How did Barnabas help Saul / Paul?
- 4.** What took place during Paul’s visit to the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15)?
- 5.** What are highlights of Paul’s three missionary journeys?
- 6.** What took place during his trials and trip to Rome?





STUDY 2

BOOK ENDS

- ACTS OF THE APOSTLES AND
REVELATION -

Review the following Bible passages:

Acts of the Apostles

Revelation

ACTS

ROMANS

I CORINTHIANS

II CORINTHIANS

GALATIANS

I THESSALONIANS

II THESSALONIANS

EPHESIANS

PHILIPPIANS

COLOSSIANS

PHILEMON

I TIMOTHY

II TIMOTHY

TITUS

HEBREWS

JAMES

I PETER

II PETER

JOHN

II JOHN

III JOHN

JUDE

REVELATION

Luke's Gospel records the journey of Jesus to Jerusalem. In Acts of the Apostles Luke writes to Theophilus concerning the spread of the Gospel of Jesus Christ from Jerusalem. The journeys and teachings of two main Apostles, Peter (Acts 1-12) and Paul (Acts 13-28), form the broad division of the book. The power of the Holy Spirit in the lives and events of Christ's Apostles is evident throughout the Book of Acts. Some key events by Acts chapters are:

Chapter – Subject

2-3 - Pentecost, Peter preaches
 4 - Early Christian community
 5 - Disciples before Sanhedrin
 7 - Stephen's death
 9 - Paul's (Saul's) conversion
 10 - Peter and Cornelius
 11 - Church in Antioch
 12 - Peter's prison escape
 13-14 - Paul's 1st missionary journey
 15 - Jerusalem Council
 16-20 - Paul's 2nd and 3rd missionary journeys
 21-28:14 - Paul's trial, sails to Rome

Result from the Power of the Holy Spirit

About 3,000 were added to their number
 Believers share possessions
 Gamaliel instructs: Leave these men alone
 Saul gives approval to his death
 God asks: Saul, why do you persecute me?
 God accepts men from every nation
 Barnabas brings Paul to Antioch church
 Night before trial, chains fall off
 Paul and Barnabas in Asia Minor

 James agrees, Gospel for Jew and Gentile
 Paul's vision in Macedonia, travels, return to Jerusalem with gifts for the church
 Paul tried, transferred to Caesarea, claims Roman citizenship, sails for Rome



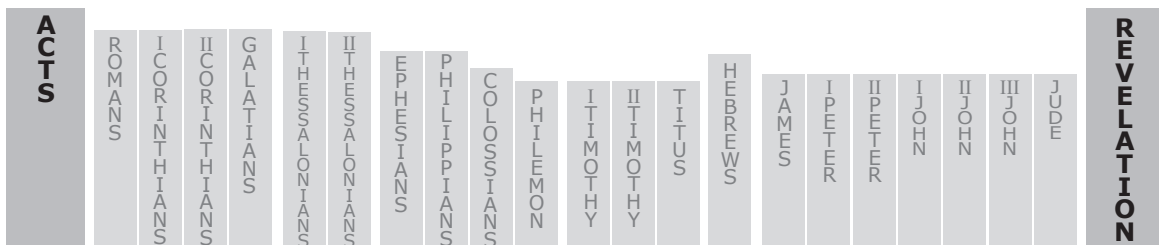
The purpose of John's writing was encouragement. He wanted the faithful to resist the demands of emperor worship.

Peter preached boldly, "Therefore, let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2:36). He warned them, "Save yourself from this corrupt generation" (Acts 2:40b). Those who accepted the message were baptized, about 3,000 in number on a single day. Peter and the disciples were given strict orders by the High Priest not to teach in Jerusalem, but they continued. Peter, John, and the disciples were called before Sanhedrin and faced a similar trial to that of Jesus.

The wise Gamaliel advised accusers: "Leave these men alone. Let them go! For if their purpose or activity is of human origin, it will fail. But if it is from God, you will not be able to stop these men; you will only find yourself fighting God" (Acts 5:38b-39). Saul's conversion to Paul the great Apostle on the road to Damascus begins his exciting missionary work to the Gentiles. We will examine Paul's Christ-centered character and theological contribution in greater detail as we study his thirteen Epistles in the New Testament.

Revelation

The author of Revelation identifies himself as "John" (1:1,1:4,1:9, and 22:8). Scholars generally attribute the book to the Apostle John, son of Zebedee. Revelation was written when Christians in Asia Minor were being persecuted, probably during the latter part of Domitian's reign, 81-96 A.D. Roman authorities at the time were enforcing the cult of emperor worship: Caesar is lord. Christians who held that Christ was Lord were facing increasing hostility and persecution.



The purpose of John's writing was encouragement. He wanted the faithful to resist the demands of emperor worship. He informs readers that the showdown between God and Satan is imminent. Believers are sealed against spiritual harm but they must stand fast, even until death. They will soon be vindicated as Christ returns and the wicked are forever destroyed.

There are at least two views of Revelation: One interprets Revelation as a great book of things to come; a second position views it as an allegory filled with difficult symbolism that conveys that God is sovereign and in the end he will triumph. While I personally favor the latter position, I welcome dialogue with those holding the former position. Beautiful imagery is presented in Chapter 21 (New Jerusalem) and 22 (River and Tree of Life). John's writing style is special and presents the living, breathing Christ, the Son of God he knew so well. John testifies to what he saw to the seven churches in the province of Asia. A possible outline of Revelation after the introduction could be:

*God is sovereign
and in the end
he will triumph.*

Chapters	Topic
2-3	Letters to the Seven Churches of Asia Minor
4-5	The Throne, the Scroll, and the Lamb
6-7	The Seven Seals
8-12	The Seven Trumpets
12-14	Various Personage Events
15-16	The Seven Bowls
17-19:5	Babylon: the Great Prostitute
19-22	Return of Christ, 1000 Years, Satan's Doom, New Heaven and Earth



Note

Discussion – Book Ends

1. What is Pentecost; who was there and what happened?
2. Who was Paul? Tell a little about his missionary journeys.
3. Who spoke at the Council of Jerusalem and what was the result?
4. When Paul was tried by Jewish and Roman leaders, what were the results?
5. Who was persecuting the seven churches in Asia Minor? Why?
6. How do you see the book of Revelation?

ACTS

ROMANS

I CORINTHIANS

II CORINTHIANS

GALATIANS

I THESSALONIANS

II THESSALONIANS

EPHESIANS

PHILIPPIANS

COLOSSIANS

PHILEMON

I TIMOTHY

II TIMOTHY

TITUS

HEBREWS

JAMES

I PETER

II PETER

I JOHN

II JOHN

III JOHN

JUDE

REVELATION

ACTS

ROMANS

ICORINTHIANS

II CORINTHIANS

GALATIANS

THESSALONIANS

II THESSALONIANS

EPHESIANS

PHILIPPINES

COLLOSSIANS

PHILEMON

TIMOTHY

TIMOTHY

TITUS

H
E
B
R
E
W
S

JAMES

I P E T E R

II PETER

I JOHN

II JOHN

III
JOHN

JUDE

REVELATION

STUDY 3

PERSONAL LETTER

- PAUL'S KEY THEOLOGY
LETTER TO THE ROMANS

Review the following Bible passages:

Romans



Romans is Paul’s theological cornerstone “Gospel letter” for the way it explains God’s good news. In the New Testament, Paul’s letters to the Corinthians and letter to Galatia are also considered “Gospel letters.”

While Paul had not visited the church in Rome, he longed to travel there. Romans was written from Corinth towards the end of his third missionary journey (Acts 20:2-3). The letter is filled with useful messages to Christians. I use the letter “s” to remind me of Paul’s theology outline in Romans:

Subject	Romans Chapter / Verse
Salutation, an opening greeting	1:1-17
Sin Defined, all have sinned	1:18-3:20
Saved by faith in Christ, justified	3:21-5:11
Struggle, Paul’s struggle with Law and Sin	5:12-7:25
Solution – Spirit-filled life	8
Shared Root, with Hebrew fathers	9-11
Sanctification – Lead a Holy life	12:1-14:13
Servanthood, serving others is key	14:14-15:22
Saints, concluding encouragement	15:23-16:27

As with his other letters, Paul begins Romans with a salutation. From there, he explains sin: “all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (3:23). Therefore, he says, we are justified before God by a saving faith in Jesus Christ. Paul himself struggles with sin; he desires to do good but cannot carry it out (7:18-20). The solution is faith in Jesus! If God is for us who can be against us? (8:31b). All things work for the good of those who love him (8:28a). Hebrew fathers created an olive root of which we now share in the nourishing sap (11:17). Therefore, Paul urges followers of Christ to offer their bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God (12:1). Accept one another; become a servant; you are full of goodness (15:7, 14). Paul’s final note encourages the followers, the saints in Rome, to stay steady in their faith.

I use the letter “s” to remind me of Paul’s theology outline in Romans.

“all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (3:23)

He says, we are justified before God by a saving faith in Jesus Christ. Paul himself struggles with sin.



Note



Discussion – Romans

- 1.** How do we get right with God (justified in his sight)?
- 2.** Did Paul suffer from sin like all of us?
- 3.** What is the Solution? Sanctification? Servanthood?
- 4.** Do you have two or three favorite verses from Romans?





STUDY 4

PERSONAL LETTERS CONTINUED

- PAUL'S THEOLOGY_(CONTINUED)
LETTERS TO THE CORINTHIANS
AND GALATIANS

Review the following Bible passages:

I Corinthians

II Corinthians

Galatians



It has been estimated that in Paul's day the city of Corinth had a population of about 250,000 free people plus about 400,000 slaves. In a number of ways it was the chief city of Greece. It was a crossroads for travelers and traders. Although Corinth was not a university town such as Athens, its people placed a high premium on philosophy and wisdom. Corinth had at least twelve temples during Paul's time, the most famous being dedicated to Aphrodite, the goddess of love. Like any large commercial city of the time it was open for immorality and prostitution.

In I Corinthians Paul receives information from several sources concerning the condition of the church in Corinth. Divisions, moral irregularities, and spiritual immaturity were among Paul's concerns. Thus the theme of problems in the conduct of the church is central to Paul's letter. His guidance concerning unity of the parts of the body as a symbol of church unity (Chapter 12), the superiority of love (Chapter 13), and use of spiritual gifts (Chapter 14) are important suggested solutions for the church in Corinth. He concludes by assuring readers of the certainty of the resurrection of Christ (Chapter 15).

II Corinthians also focuses on the church in Corinth which had been infiltrated by false teachers. The teachers were challenging both Paul's personal integrity and credibility as an apostle of Jesus. His adversaries were asserting that his word could not be trusted. Paul explains his conduct of ministry and God's direction of his moves (Chapters 1-7), encourages generosity (Chapters 8-9), and concludes with a strong defense of his ministry, the thorn in his side, and final warnings (Chapters 10-13).

He concludes by assuring readers of the certainty of the resurrection of Christ

The teachers were challenging both Paul's personal integrity and credibility as an apostle of Jesus.



Galatians has been called the “Magna Charta of Christian liberty”

This freedom is designed to provide fruits of the spirit (5:22): “love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self control, against which there is no law.”

The churches in Galatia were established on Paul’s first missionary journey. Written about the time of the Council of Jerusalem (Acts 15), Paul addresses the “Judiazers” infiltrating new Christian churches and teaching that a real Christian must submit to Old Testament laws. Galatians has been called the “Magna Charta of Christian liberty” as Paul explains how grace frees Christians to discover power through living in faith with the Holy Spirit.

Galatians focuses on Jewish Christians who believed, among other things, a number of ceremonial practices of the Old Testament were still binding to the New Testament church. Paul preaches a gospel of justification by faith alone in Jesus Christ. The freedom believers experience is Christ is important. This freedom is designed to provide fruits of the spirit (5:22): love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self control, against which there is no law.



Note

Discussion – Paul’s Personal Letters Continued

1. What does freedom in Christ mean to you?
2. What are the fruits of the Holy Spirit?
3. Can you think of any cities like Corinth today?
4. How do you see I Corinthians 12 being useful in churches today?
5. How did Paul defend himself in II Corinthians?



STUDY 5

PERSONAL LETTERS

- PAUL'S FIRST LETTERS
AND PRISON LETTERS -

Review the following Bible passages:

I Thessalonians

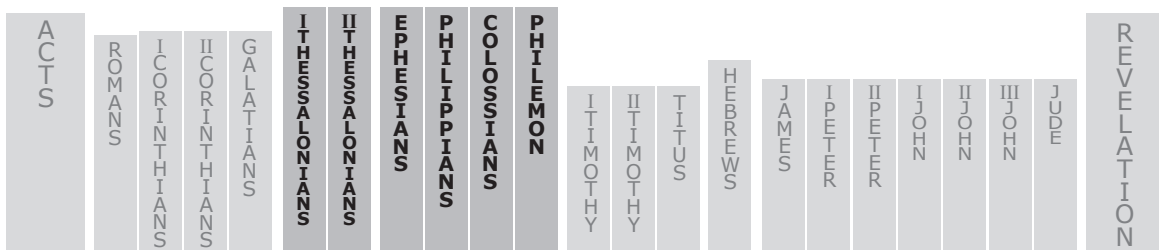
II Thessalonians

Ephesians

Philippians

Colossians

Philemon



The purposes of Paul's first letters (51-52 A.D.) to the church in Thessalonica were to:

- Encourage new believers in their trials in the midst of persecution (I 1:2-2:16)
- Provide instruction concerning Godly living (I 4:1-12, II 2:13-3:5)
- Urge some not to neglect daily work (II 3:6-14)
- Give assurance regarding the future (I 4:13-5:11)

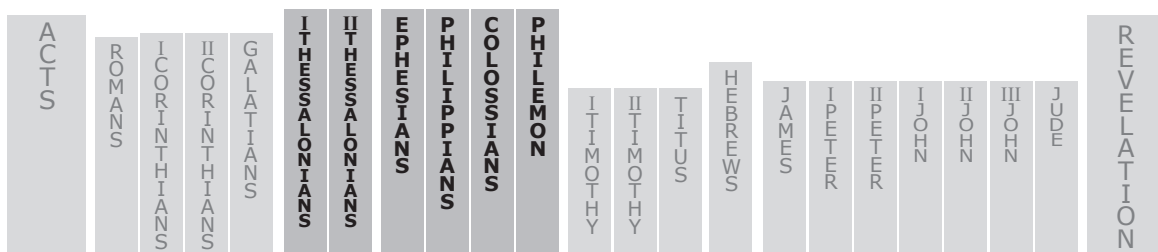
Eschatology, the doctrine of last things, is also a theme of these early letters.

Paul's Prison Letters were: Ephesians, Colossians, Philippians, and Philemon. Paul wrote on a variety of themes: avoiding heresy, keeping a clear vision of Christ (Colossians), believers as Priests (Ephesians), avoiding despair over hardship, rejoicing (Philippians). Most researchers conclude Paul's prison letters were written during his imprisonment in Rome (60-62 A.D.). Others suggest he may have written them during his imprisonment in Caesarea (before sailing for Rome — Acts 27).

Ephesus was an important city in Asia Minor (now Turkey). Paul had made Ephesus a center of his evangelism for about three years (Acts 19:10) and the church there flourished but needed some warnings (Revelation 2:1-7). In Paul's time he addressed heresy on a general basis and wanted readers to appreciate the high purposes God has for the church, the glory of the headship of Christ, as well as God's power. Among his important subjects in Ephesians are:

- The steps believers can take to fulfill their individual and community call to Christ. Paul's ministry to the Gentiles is an example (Chapters 2-3).

Eschatology, the doctrine of last things, is also a theme of these early letters.



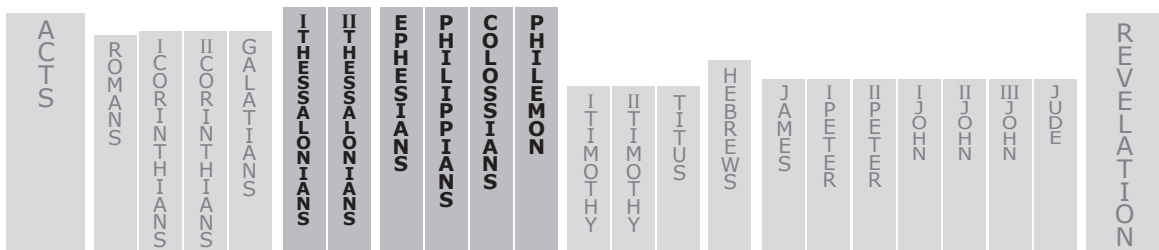
*Encouragement
to be strong and
put on the armor
of God.*

- Guidance to living lives worthy of Jesus and children of the light (Chapter 4).
- Instruction on Christ-centered relationships: wives and husbands, children and parents, slaves and masters (Chapters 5-6)
- Encouragement to be strong and put on the armor of God (Chapter 6).

Philippi was an important city in Macedonia, located on a main highway from the Eastern provinces of Rome. It is about ten miles from the coast where one arrives in Neapolis. Neapolis is the place where Paul first landed after sailing from Troas, in response to his Macedonian vision (Acts 16:11). Paul's preaching outside the city gate of Philippi led to the conversion of Lydia (Acts 16:14-15). Paul and Silas were in prison in Philippi and the jailer and his family were converted (Acts 16:31-34). Among the important subjects of Paul's letter to the Philippians are:

- Stand firm, lead a vigorous Christian life, and be humble as Christ was (2:1-4).
- Press towards the goal (3:13-14).
- Rejoice, pursue unity, live by the truth noble lives (4:2-9).
- Thanks for their gifts during his detention and rejoice in the Gospel, always (1:3-30, 4:10-19).

*Rejoice, pursue
unity, live by the
truth noble lives*



Colossae was a leading city in Asia Minor located on the Lycus River on a great east-west trade route from Ephesus to the Aegean Sea. During Paul's three-year ministry in Ephesus, Epaphras was converted and carried the Gospel to Colossae (Acts 19:10 and Colossians 1:7). Among the themes of Colossians are:

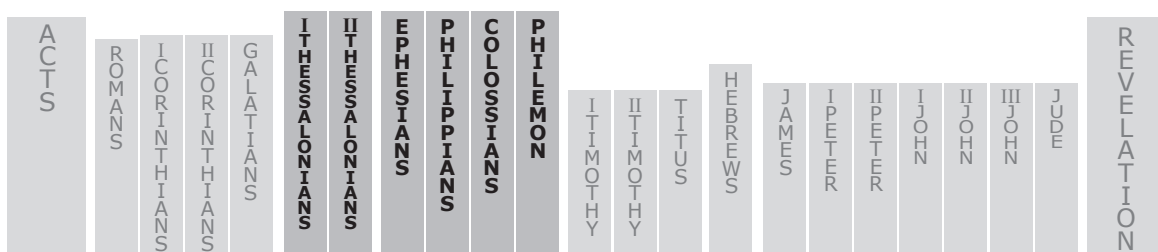
- The supremacy of Christ is an important cornerstone (1:15-23).
- Rules for holy living (3:1-4:6).

Philemon is a very short letter sent to Philemon, a believer in Colossae. The subject of the letter is the return of Philemon's slave Onesimus. Onesimus is now a converted brother in Christ. Verses 16-17 summarize Paul's instructions: Welcome him no longer as a slave but a dear brother, a partner in the ministry.

An outline of Paul's time in prison; possibly 7-8 years of his ministry is summarized on the next page.

The supremacy of Christ is an important cornerstone.

Welcome him no longer as a slave but a dear brother, a partner in the ministry.



Paul's Imprisonments

Acts 16:11 - 40 (50-52 A.D.) Phillippi - 2nd Missionary Journey

Acts 21:27 - 23:11 (57 - A.D.) Jerusalem - End of 3rd Missionary Journey

Acts 23:12 - 40 (57 - 59A.D.) Transferred to Caesarea - sea

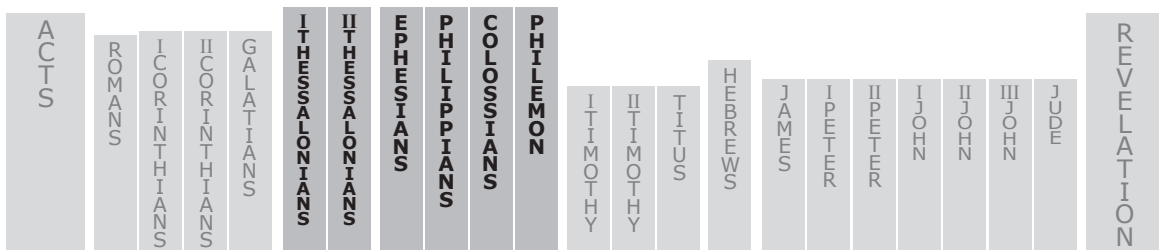
Acts 27:1 - 28:10 (59 A.D.) Sets sail for Rome

Acts 28:11 - 30 (60-62 A.D.) Prison in Rome

Two Years - House arrest

62 - 67 A.D. Released from prison 4th Missionary Journey

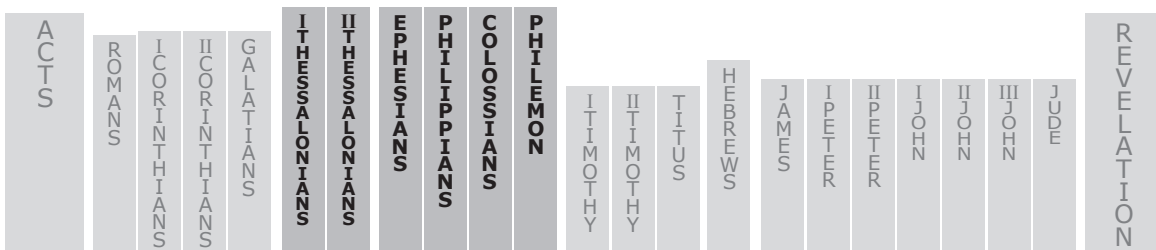
67-68 A.D. Second Roman Imprisonment Trial and Execution



Note

Discussion – Paul’s First Letters and Prison Letters

1. What were some thoughts Paul had for the Thessalonica church?
2. What were Paul’s concerns for the churches in Ephesus? Colossae?
3. What are your favorite parts of Philippians?
4. Who was Philemon and what did Paul want him to do?



STUDY 6

PERSONAL LETTERS

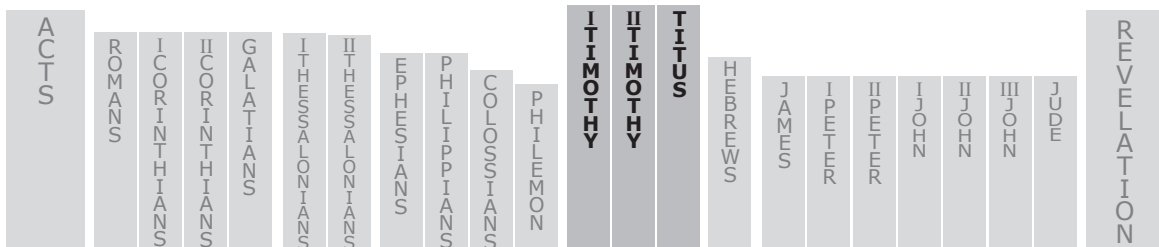
- PAUL'S PASTORAL LETTERS -

Review the following Bible passages:

I Timothy

II Timothy

Titus



Paul's concern for the churches he planted and the mission pastors he sent to each community are apparent. His letters dealt with encouragement of pastors, guidance for church leaders, leadership of communities, warnings about false doctrine, and proper order of early churches. II Timothy was probably written from prison (Timothy 4:6) but it is generally grouped with "pastoral letters" because of its advice and content to pastors. The following brief outline summarizes subjects Paul covered in his letters to Timothy and Titus:

Subject	Reference
False teachers and those who teach the law without wisdom	I Timothy 1:3-11
Grace through faith in Jesus Christ; Paul a sinner	I Timothy 1:12-20
Worship instructions, Christ the one mediator	I Timothy 2:1-15
Church organization and leadership	I Timothy 3:1-16
Personal training message to Timothy	I Timothy 4:1-16
Concerning widows, orphans, elders, and servants	I Timothy 5:1-6:2
Teaching regarding financial gain	I Timothy 6:3-10
Timothy, guard what has been entrusted	I Timothy 6:1-20
Timothy, be faithful!	II Timothy 1:3-2:13
God's workmanship is important	II Timothy 2:14-3:9
Paul's charge to Timothy: be trained, pour yourself out for Christ	II Timothy 3:10-4:8
Paul's final personal remarks to Timothy	II Timothy 4:9-22
Titus in Crete: straighten things out, be pure	Titus 1:1-16
Leaders are examples, moderation with love	Titus 2:1-15
Kindness and love are hallmarks, do good	Titus 3:1-15

*Timothy,
be faithful!*

*Leaders are
examples*

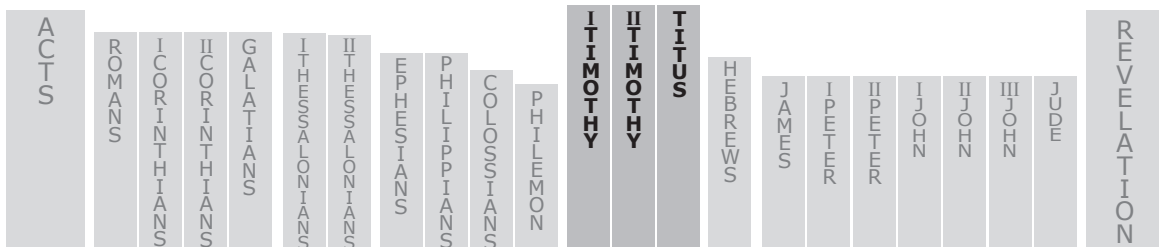


Note



Discussion – Paul’s Pastoral Letters

- 1.** Who was Timothy?
- 2.** What advice did Paul give Timothy that impresses you?
- 3.** How does the last part of Paul’s second letter to Timothy letter strike you?
- 4.** Who was Titus and what did Paul suggest to him?



STUDY 7

PERSONAL LETTERS

- HEBREWS -

Review the following Bible passages:

Hebrews

ACTS

ROMANS

I CORINTHIANS

II CORINTHIANS

GALATIANS

I THESSALONIANS

II THESSALONIANS

EPHESIANS

PHILIPPIANS

COLOSSIANS

PHILEMON

I TIMOTHY

II TIMOTHY

TITUS

HEBREWS

JAMES

I PETER

II PETER

I JOHN

II JOHN

III JOHN

JUDE

REVELATION

Hebrews does not start with a salutation like other New Testament letters. What we do know is that the author is very familiar with the Old Testament and frequently compares Jesus to the High Priest of the Old Testament. The author writes: “Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see” (Hebrews 11:1).

Hebrews is written to Jewish believers to present Jesus as the High Priest of the New Covenant, superior to past high priests of the Old Testament. Jesus is presented as faithful to God, a builder like Moses, and surpassing all previous high priests. Specifically, the writer states that Jesus is:

- Superior to the Angels (1:5-2:18)
- Superior to Moses (3:1-4:13)
- Superior to priests of Aaron, including Melchizedek (4:14-7:28)

He then outlines the ways Jesus is superior to the sacrificial work of previous High Priests in Chapters 8-10:

- Christ’s throne of majesty is in heaven
- New Covenant is written on men’s hearts
- Christ is the mediator of a new tabernacle
- Christ’s sacrifice left the power of the Holy Spirit once and for all

Hebrews is written to Jewish believers to present Jesus as the High Priest of the New Covenant.



*Remember
examples of past
faith heroes*

Hebrews closes with an exhortation to preserve the faith (Chapters 11-13):

- Remember examples of past faith heroes (11)
- Surrounded by these past heroes, a “great cloud of witnesses,” run the faith race marked out for us (12)
- Keep on loving each other as brothers (13:1)

*Again, we see
that the book
of Hebrews
presents a high
Christology.*

Again, we see that the book of Hebrews presents a high Christology. Jesus is the fulfillment of the New Covenant (Jeremiah 31:31-34) by putting God’s laws on men’s minds and writing them on their hearts. Jesus is the mediator who has replaced the earthly tabernacles and mercy seat of the Old Testament with the sacrifice of his life. Christians are encouraged to believe in Christ and be saved.

It is interesting to note that Hebrews closes with exhortations about loving our brothers. Here the writer of Hebrews revisits the two great commandments of Jesus: Love the Lord and love our neighbors.



Note



Discussion – Hebrews

- 1.** To whom was Hebrews written and for what purpose?
- 2.** What are some of the ways Christ is superior?
- 3.** What is an example of high Christology in Hebrews?

ACTS	ROMANS	I CORINTHIANS	II CORINTHIANS	GALATIANS	I THESSALONIANS	II THESSALONIANS	EPHESIANS	PHILIPPIANS	COLOSSIANS	PHILEMON	ITIMOTHY	II TIMOTHY	TITUS	HEBREWS	JAMES	I PETER	II PETER	JOHN	II JOHN	III JOHN	JUDE	REVELATION
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STUDY 8

GENERAL LETTERS

- I & II PETER, JAMES, JUDE -

Review the following Bible passages:

I Peter

II Peter

James

Jude



The General Letters are written to a general audience on issues common to the early church and followers of Christ. Among the themes addressed in these letters are:

I Peter	Obedience: Encourage each other, suffer through to feed the flock
II Peter	A warning against false teachers
James	Practical religion: Faith without works is empty
Jude	A warning against immoral teachers and alarming heresies

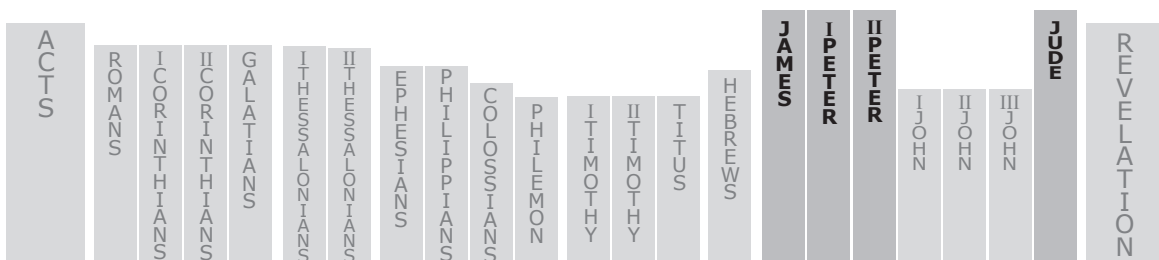
The General Letters are written to a general audience on issues common to the early church and followers of Christ.

Suffering and rejection were common experiences among early Christians. Worship of the emperor and state gods of Rome was popular, and allegiance to Christ was viewed as a lack of patriotism. Peter understands this struggle and writes I Peter to encourage believers to endure. In I Peter he warns believers of the external trials in their faith walk. He calls Jesus “the living Stone rejected by men but chosen by God” and says that believers are also “living stones” knit together and built into a spiritual house on this earth for the Lord. He calls Christians to be aliens to worldly sins and desires, choosing the way of good deeds to glorify God. Believers are a “a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light” (2:9). The ground is level at the foot of the cross for all believers.

In I Peter he warns believers of the external trials in their faith walk.

II Peter begins by describing the inward journey of the believer. Peter exhorts believers to add to their faith goodness, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, kindness, and brotherly love. If we possess these qualities in increasing measure, he says, we will be effective and productive witnesses for Jesus Christ. We must avoid false teachers and always be prepared for the day of the Lord “which will come like a thief” (3:10).

II Peter begins by describing the inward journey of the believer



James and Jude were likely written by half-brothers of Jesus. Jesus had four half-brothers and at least two sisters (Mark 6:3). Catholic tradition teaches that James, Joseph, Judas, and Simon were Jesus' cousins, thus perpetuating Mary as a virgin. Jesus' brothers did not follow him as Lord during his earthly ministry (Mark 3:31-35 and John 7:3-5). His brothers met the Risen Christ and became believers by the Acts 1:14 meeting of believers. Meanwhile, Jesus had chosen the beloved disciple, John, into his family to care for his mother (John 19:26-27).

Jesus must have been tender with his brothers and their unbelief. Jesus' mission was to do God's work on the earth. The decision to follow him and "sup" with him (Revelation 3:20, RSV) was a free human decision with the Lord.

James became titular head of the church in Jerusalem. (Acts 15)

James became titular head of the church in Jerusalem (Acts 15), and wrote a book on the importance of practicing and expressing one's faith in Christ. James was written early (late '40s A.D.) among New Testament books. Tradition teaches that James was martyred about 62 A.D. in Jerusalem. He emphasized that faith without deeds is empty. He taught that wisdom is shown by a good life, control of one's tongue, being a good listener, and not boasting or bragging.

Jude realized the heresy problem needed immediate attention.

Jude was eager to write about salvation but heard of false teachers and realized the heresy problem needed immediate attention. He reminded readers that the apostles foretold of "scoffers who will follow their own ungodly desires"avoid them!



Selected verses from the General Letters help us understand the teaching emphasized by each author:

I Peter 1:22, 23a — “Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for your brothers, love one another deeply, from the heart.”

I Peter 4:8 — “Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers a multitude of sins.”

II Peter 1:5-7 — “For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love.”

James 1:12 — “Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him.”

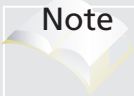
James 1:19-20 — “My dear brothers, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, for man’s anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires.”

James 2:14 — “What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save him?”

Jude 1:19-20 — “These are the men who divide you, who follow mere natural instincts and do not have the Spirit. But you, dear friends, build yourselves up in your most holy faith and pray in the Holy Spirit.”

James 2:14
“What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save him?”





Note

Discussion – General Letters

- 1.** Peter wrote to persecuted people. What encouragement did he give?

- 2.** James is considered a practical letter. What are some of his ideas?

- 3.** What were Jude's concerns for the church?



STUDY 9

GENERAL LETTERS

- I, II, III JOHN -

Review the following Bible passages:

I John

II John

III John



At the foot of the cross Jesus turned the care of his mother over to the disciple he loved, John (John 19:25-27). John held a special place in the heart of Jesus. After Paul, John authored more books than any other New Testament writer. He wrote the Gospel bearing his name and four letters (Revelation and I, II, III John).

John shared Paul's great love of the early church. As we read excerpts from his three general letters to followers in early churches in Asia Minor, we understand the love teachings emphasized by John:

I John 3:1a — “How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God!”

I John 3:11 — “This is the message you heard from the beginning: We should love one another.”

I John 3:18 — “Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth.”

II John 1:6 — “And this is love: that we walk in obedience to his commands. As you have heard from the beginning, his command is that you walk in love.”

III John 1:6 — “They have told the church about your love. You will do well to send them on their way in a manner worthy of God.”

The general themes of John's letters also bear the stamp of this great disciple of Jesus.

- | | |
|----------|---|
| I John | Be joyful, beware of sin and false teachers, be assured in Christ |
| II John | Love and truth are keys, avoid false teachings |
| III John | Christian hospitality |

John shared Paul's great love of the early church.

In I John he warns believers of the external trials in their faith walk.

The general themes of John's letters also bear the stamp of this great disciple of Jesus.

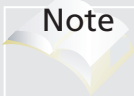


In summary, John addresses his “dear children” to walk in the light and not love the world. We are reminded as children of God to love one another and avoid false beliefs. II and III John are short epistles encouraging believers to avoid deceivers, focus on Christ, and show hospitality to each other.

It is fitting that John’s words conclude our study of the First Followers. John (along with Peter) were probably Jesus’ closest disciples. John followed Jesus’ in his life, and after Jesus’ death he tried to continue in the life of love that Jesus taught. But encouraging others in this life was not easy. Many false teachers and conflicts arose in the early churches and sowed confusion. Different churches struggled to apply Jesus’ teachings in their own unique cultures outside of Judea. John and the other Epistle writers needed to remind the churches about the simple truths that Jesus taught, about loving God and loving neighbor.

Our faith journey today is not so different from those early Christians. It is easy to forget God’s hand on our lives in a world where secular influences reign. It is easy to forget God’s promises and hope in a world where wars and disease still persist. However, God never promised us an easy road. Instead, he promised that he would never leave us and that his love was forever. He made this same promise to the Israelites, always providing them with leaders, prophets and instructions. He brought these promises to full life with Christ. Ever since then, from the times of the First Followers until now, he and the Spirit are guiding us to work out these promises in our own life. I pray that you may continually dwell in Christ’s love and on the “heart of the Bible.”





Note

Discussion – General Letters/John I, II, III

1. How did John express his love for his fellow believers?
2. What is a favorite passage from I, II, or III John?
3. What is the difference between a Personal and General letter?
4. In looking back over the studies in this book, what new insights did you gain about God? What might help you to focus on the heart of the faith: loving God and loving neighbor? What might distract you?



APPENDIX

1

Meditation

172 Scripture Subjects –
Ordered by 32 Key Events in the Life of Jesus

The four base locations approach to the life of Jesus started while I was facilitating a group pilgrimage to the Holy Land in 1998. On that trip our group traveled throughout the entire Holy Land. The area in which Jesus ministered is about 150 miles long and 50 miles wide. During the trip I observed that Jesus' ministry focused around four base locations. Three of the four locations are cities: Nazareth (his early years through age 31); Capernaum (the 1 ½ year great Galilee ministry); and Jerusalem (Passion Week). The fourth location is two provinces, Judea and Perea. The provinces are divided by the Jordan River. Provinces are used (rather than cities) because Jesus and his disciples were traveling and on the move for a six-month period from his transfiguration to the triumphal entry into Jerusalem for Passion Week.

The "four base camps" of his ministry provide an overall chronological grouping of events in the life of Jesus. This is unique in relation to other more academic works I have studied, however it is a concept to which we can all relate. Base locations are associated with major moves in our lives. Sometimes major moves occur within a city, state, across a country or around the world.

For example, I was born in Sioux City Iowa. My family moved to Aberdeen, South Dakota during my junior high school years. In high school we moved to the Chicago, IL area in 1954. The Chicago area provided the base location for my schooling and career until we moved to Northern California in 1978.

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Jesus visited 18 places; he moved 54 times, and was connected to at least 144 different events. There are many ways to define and count the number of events and encounters in Jesus' life. My study of more than ten sources showed a range of approaches and divisions to order and harmonize events in the life of Jesus. Sources studied used from five to fourteen "periods" or "divisions" and featured from 98 to well over 200 sub-sections, events, or experiences in the life of Jesus. I have chosen to focus on 32 key "events" ordered around four base locations of Jesus' life.

Note that key "events" may encompass several related events or encounters. As example: Infant Birth (Study 1 event 2) covers related stories about: angel Gabriel visiting the Virgin Mary; Mary visiting Elizabeth; birth of John the Baptist; explanation of Mary's pregnancy to Joseph; birth of Jesus in Bethlehem; visits of shepherds and Magi; presentation of Jesus in Temple; family escaping to Egypt; and returning to Nazareth after Herod's death.

Key "events" are "chunked" around the base locations of Jesus' life using alliterations. These alliterations can help readers retain his biography. Jesus traveled from each base location in his life. The four areas divide his life into four broad chronologies leading to a biographical reading.

It is interesting to note that all four Gospel writers record the major “moves” in Jesus’ life. The moves or transitions provide the “book ends” or cut-off points for events or encounters studied within each of the four base location study sections. The following is a list developed by the author of 172 mini events, subjects, or experiences grouped under the 32 key events. This list does not attempt to outline or order an exhaustive list of subjects or experiences the Gospel writers provide about Jesus. Also note that this list harmonizes events or subjects that are mentioned in more than one Gospel. Similar subjects or stories are listed by each Key Event, noting the multiple references from the Gospels. Appendix 1 provides an interested reader one way, (not the only way) to break down or order subjects, events and experiences in the life of Jesus. Perhaps Pastors and Bible teachers will find these outlines useful for in preaching, teaching, and bringing a chronology framework to the life of Jesus.

(Used with permission from: *A Biography of Jesus*)

“In’s” of Nazareth

7 Key “In” Events

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1. In the Beginning was the word – John 1:1-18, Matthew 1:1-17, Luke 3:23-38

- The Logos (God’s word) became flesh and dwelt among us – *John 1:1-18*
- Jesus’ lineage through Joseph and Mary – *Matthew 1:1-17, Luke 3:23-38*

2. Infant Birth – Matthew 1:18-2:23, Luke 1:5-2:40

- Birth of John the Baptist told to Zechariah – *Luke 1:5-25*
- Angel Gabriel visits the Virgin Mary in Nazareth – *Luke 1:26-38*
- Mary visits Elizabeth in Judean Hill country – *Luke 1:39-45*
- Mary’s Song – *Luke 1:46-56*
- Birth of John the Baptist – *Luke 1:57-66*
- Zechariah filled with the Holy Spirit praises the Lord – *Luke 1:67-80*
- Circumstances of Mary’s pregnancy explained to Joseph – *Matthew 1:18-25*
- Birth of Jesus in Bethlehem, Shepherds and angels praise, Visit of Magi
– *Matthew 2:1-12, Luke 2:20*
- Presentation of Jesus in Temple to Simeon and Prophetess Anna – *Luke 2:21-40*
- Joseph, family to Egypt, Herod dies, Joseph to Nazareth – *Matthew 2:13-23*

3. Increase in Wisdom and Stature

- Jesus first Passover in Jerusalem temple at age twelve – *Luke 2:41-52*

4. Inspiration – Matthew 3:1-17, Mark 1:1-11, Luke 3:1-22, John 1:19-34, 3:22-36

- Public ministry of John the Baptist
– *Matthew 3:1-12, Mark 1:8, Luke 3:1-20, John 1:19-28*
- Baptism of Jesus – *Matthew 3:13-17, Mark 1:9-11, Luke 3:21-22*
- John the Baptist denies being the Christ – *John 3:22-36*
- Jesus comes as the Lamb of God – *John 1:29-34*

5. Inner Strength – 40 Days in Wilderness – Temptations

– *Matthew 4:1-11, Mark 1:12-13, Luke 4:1-13*

- Stones could become bread – Man lives by God's Word
– *Matthew 4:1-4, Luke 4:1-4, Mark 1:12-13*
- Throw self down from pinnacle of Temple – Do not put god to a test
– *Matthew 4:5-7, Luke 4:9-13*
- All the Kingdoms of the world – Worship and Serve the Lord
– *Matthew 4:8-11, Luke 4:5-8*

6. Initial encounters – John 1:35- 3:21, John 4:1-54

- Jesus calls first disciples – *John 1:35-51*
- Changes water into wine at wedding in Cana – *John 2:1-11*
- Clears the temple in Jerusalem – *John 2:12-25*
- Nicodemus comes to Jesus by night – *John 3:1-21*
- Woman at well at Sychar – *John 4:1-42*
- Heals Nobleman's son from Cana – *John 4:43-54*

7. Inauguration year ends – Luke 4:14-30

- Rejection in Home Synagogue in Nazareth

“C’s” of Capernaum – New Covenant

10 “C” Key Events

8. **Come** follow me – **Matthew 4:12-25, 9:9-13, Mark 1:14-20, 2:13-17, 3:13-19, Luke 5:1-11, 5:27-31, 6:12-16, John 1:35-51**

- Jesus begins to Preach – repent the Kingdom of God is near – Calling followers
– *Matthew 4:12-17 Mark 1:14-15*
- Come follow me and I will make you fishers of men
– *Matthew 4:18-22, Mark 1:16-20, 2:13-17, 3:13-19, Luke 5:1-11, 5:27-31*
- Further calling of Disciples
– *Matthew 4:23-25, 9:9-13, Mark 1:21-39, Luke 6:12-16, John 1:35-51*

9. **Changed** attitudes – **Matthew 5:1-16, Luke 6:17-26** – Sermon on the Mount – 1st Study

- The Beatitudes – Blessed are you when...Kingdom Attitudes
– *Matthew 5:1-12, Luke 6:17-26*
- Salt and Light – You are salt of earth, Light of the world that cannot be hidden
– *Matthew 5:13-16*

10. **Commandments** of Love

- **Matthew 5:17-48, Luke 6:27-36, Gen. 2:24, Exodus 20:13-17** – Sermon on the Mount
- 2nd Study

- “You have heard” – Old testament Laws → New Covenant of Love
– *Matthew 5:17-48, Luke 6:27-36*
- Fulfillment of the Law – *Matthew 5:17-20*
- Murder – *Matthew 5:21-26, Exodus 20:13*
- Adultery – *Matthew 5:27-30, Exodus 20:14*
- Divorce – *Marriage is two becoming one Matthew 5:31-32, Genesis 2:24*
- Oaths – *Matt. 5:33-37, Exodus 20:16*
- Eye for an Eye – *Matthew 5:38-42*
- Enemies treat with Love, as your Neighbor – *Matthew 5:43-48, Luke 6:27-36*

11. Construction on the Rock **Matt. 6:1-7:29, Luke 6:37-49, 11:2-4, 12:22-34**

– Sermon on the Mount – 3rd Study

- “Building on the Rock” – Way to Love God – *Matthew 6-7, Luke 6:37-49*
- Giving to needy, in secret, Father knows – *Matthew 6:1-4*
- Pray, to your father who is in heaven – *Matthew 6:5-14, Luke 11:2-4*
- Fasting privately, Father knows – *Matthew 6:16-18*
- Treasures of value; earthly, heavenly – *Matthew 6:19-24*
- Do not worry, live life a day at a time – *Matthew 6:25-34, Luke 12:22-34*
- Judge and you will be judged – *Matthew 7:1-6, Luke 6:37-42*
- Ask, seek, the Father, do unto others as you would have them do to you
– *Matthew 7:7-12*
- Narrow and wide gates – *Matthew 7:13-14*
- Fruit inspection in the Kingdom – *Matthew 7:15-23, Luke 6:43-45*
- Conclusion: wise builders construct on God’s foundation
– *Matthew 7:24-29, Luke 6:46-49*

12. Compassion, Caring, and Curing (selected healings, miracles)

Matthew, Mark, Luke, John

- Man with Leprosy – *Matthew 8:1-4, Mark 1:40-45, Luke 5:12-15*
- Centurion’s servant – *Matthew 8:5-13, Luke 7:1-10*
- Demon possessed men – *Matthew 8:28-34, Mark 1:1-17, Luke 8:26-39*
- Paralytic – *Matthew 9:1-8, Mark 2:1-12, Luke 5:17-26*
- Lord of the Sabbath healings – *Mark 2:23-3:6, Matthew 12:9-14, Luke 6:1-11*
- Questions, Fasting – *Matthew 9:14-17, Mark 2:18-22, Luke 5:33-39*
- Jesus and Beelzebul – *Mark 3:20-30, Matthew 12:22-29, Luke 11:14-23*
- Calms storm – *Matthew 8:23-27, Mark 4:35-41, Luke 8:22-25*
- Heals demon possessed man – *Mark 5:1-20, Matthew 8:28-34, Luke 8:26-39*
- A dead girl, and a Sick Woman – *Mark 5:21-43, Matthew 9:18-26, Luke 8:40-56*
- Feed five thousand – *Mark 6:30-44, Matthew 14:13-21, Luke 9:10-17, John 6:5-13*
- Walks on water – *Matthew 14:22-36, John 6:16-24, Mark 6:45-56*

13. Centrifugal v. s. Centripetal Faith / Confirmed Ministry – Matthew 9:35-11:19

- The workers are few – Jesus sends out the Twelve – *Matthew 9:35 -10:42*
- John the Baptist in prison sends his disciples to confirm ministry of Jesus
– *Matt. 11:1-19*

14. Cultivation of the Word – Clean within

Matthew 13, 15:1-20, Mark 4:1-32,7:1-23, Luke 8:4-21, 13:18-21

- Sower – *Matthew 13:1-23, Mark 4:1-12, Luke 8:4-15*
- Weeds – *Matthew 13:24-29, 36-43*
- Mustard seed – *Matthew 13:31-32, Mark 4:30-32, Luke 13:18-21*
- Yeast – *Matthew 13:33-35*
- Hidden treasure – *Matthew 13:44*
- Fine Pearl, of great value – *Matthew 13:45-46*
- Net to separate kinds of fish – *Matthew 13:47-52*
- Clean Within – *Matthew 15:1-20, Mark 7:1-23*

15. Church defined at Caesarea Philippi

Matthew 16:13-20, 18:1-20, Mark 8:27-30, Luke 9:18-27

16. Children important, the greatest, a spiritual model

Matthew 18:1-9, 19:13-14, Mark 9:33-37

17. Conclusion – Ministry in Galilee – Jesus turns to Jerusalem

Matthew 16:21-17:13, Mark 8:31-9:13, Luke 9:28-36

- Transfiguration – *Matthew 17:1-13, Mark 9:2-13, Luke 9:28-36*
- Jesus predicts death, turns towards Jerusalem – *Matthew 16:21-28, Mark 8:31-9:1*

Judea / Perea Ministry
– “D’s” - Discipleship coached, Divinity declared
7 Key “D” Events

18. Deny self - selected passages Luke 9, 13, 16:19-31

- Least among you, the greatest – *Luke 9:46-50*
- Take nothing on your journey – *Luke 9:1-6*
- Make every effort to enter through the narrow door – *Luke 13:22-30*
- The Rich Man and Lazarus – *Luke 16:19-31*

19. Decision / Demands focus - selected passages Luke 9, 12, 16:1-15, 19:1-27

- No man put his hand to the plow and looks back – *Luke 9:57-62*
- Where treasure is heart is also – *Luke 12:27-34*
- Rich fool, tonight your life will be demanded – *Luke 12:13-21*
- No servant can serve two masters – *Luke 16:1-15*
- Zacchaeus, today salvation has come to house – *Luke 19:1-10*

20. “Do it”, dust off oneself - selected passages Luke 10, 14, 15

- Who is your neighbor – story of Good Samaritan – *Luke 10:25-37*
- Banquet, go into roads and fill my house – *Luke 14:15-24*
- Carry your cross to be His disciple – *Luke 14:25-35*
- Rejoice in heaven for finding lost sheep, lost coin, lost son – *Luke 15:1-32*

21. Dwelling with Him daily – Luke 17 - 18

- The kingdom of God is within you – *Luke 17:20-21*
- What is impossible with man is possible with God – *Luke 18:27*

22. Discourage divorce - Not laws, but where the heart is; goal; two become one

Matthew 19:1-12, Mark 10:1-12, Genesis 1:27, 2:24

23. Dignity for women (various events, encounters from all four gospels listed below)

- Mary, mother of Jesus, chosen – *Matthew 1:18-25*
- All women – adultery defined – *Matthew 5:27-30*
- Canaanite Mother – Daughter healed – *Matthew 15:21-28*
- Bleeding woman – touches Jesus' garment – *Mark 5:25-34*
- Daughter of Jarius healed – *Mark 5:21-24, 35-43*
- Poor widow – *Mark 12:41-44*
- Widow of Nain, Jesus heals dead son – *Luke 7:11-17*
- Sinful Woman – anoints Jesus – *Luke 7:36-50*
- Crippled woman – Healed on Sabbath – *Luke 13:10-17*
- Samaritan woman – at well in Sychar – *John 4:1-26*
- Woman caught in adultery – let man without sin 1st stone – *John 8:1-11*
- Woman anoints Jesus in Bethany – *John 12:1-11, Matt. 26:6-13, Mk. 14:1-13*
- Mary Magdalene – Helps Ministry, First at tomb – *Lk. 8:1-3, John 20:10-18*

24. Divinity Declared – Feasts of Tabernacles / Dedication / Lazarus Healed
John 7-11

- My teaching is not my own, it comes from him who sent me – *John 7:16*
- I am not here on my own, but he who sent me is true – *John 7:28b*
- I am with you a short time, and then I go – *John 7:33*
- I am the light of the world, follow me...have light of life – *John 8:12*
- I am not alone; I stand with the Father who sent me – *John 8:16b*
- I am from above - I am not of this world – *John 8:23-24*
- I am not possessed by a demon – *John 8:49*
- I am not seeking glory for myself – *John 8:50*
- Before Abraham was born...I am – *John 8:58b*
- I am the gate for the sheep – *John 10:7*
- I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down his life – *Jn. 10:11*
- I am the good shepherd, I know my sheep and they know me – *Jn. 10:14*
- I and the Father are one – *John 10:30*

“T” Treks, travels – with Jesus in Jerusalem Passion Week to Pentecost

8 Key “T” Events

- 25. Triumphal Entry** – Humble servant on donkey -
Matthew 21:1-11, Mark 11:1-11, Luke 19:28-44, John 12:12-19
- 26. Temple** Cleared for Prayer, Fig tree noted -
Matthew 21:12-22, Mark 11:12-25, Luke 19:45-48
- 27. Teaching:**
Temple - **Matthew 21:23-23:39, Mark 11:27-12:44, Luke 20:21:4, John 12:20-50**
- Jesus Authority questioned – *Matthew 21:23-32, Mark 11:27-33, Luke 20:1-8*
 - Parable of the Tenants and Wedding Banquet
– *Matthew 21:33-22:14, Mark 12: 1-12, Luke 20:9-24*
 - Paying taxes to Caesar – *Mark 12:13-17, Luke 20:20-26*
 - The Greatest Commandment – *Matthew 22:34-40, Mark 12:28-31*
 - Woes of Pharisees and Sadducees, Hypocrisy
– *Matthew 23:1-39, Mark 12:35-39, Luke 20:45-46*
 - Jesus predicts death; Jews continue unbelief – *John 12:20-50*
- 28. Teaching** Mount of Olives: End times – **Matthew 24-25, Mark 13, Luke 21:5-38**
- Ends of the Age – *Matthew 24:1-51, Mark 13:1-37, Luke 21:5-38*
 - Sense of Urgency Parables – *Matthew 25*

29. Time had come – **Matthew 26:1-46, Mark 14:1-42, Luke 22:1-53, John 13:1-17:26**

- Jesus, predicts his death, Anointing in Bethany – *Matthew 26:1-13, Mark 14:1-9*
- Judas plots with Priests – *Matthew 26:14-16, Mark 14:10-11, Luke 22:1-6*
- Upper Room – with disciples *Matthew 26:17-35, Mark 14:12-31, Luke 22:7-38*
- Washes Feet of disciples – *John 13:1-17*
- Judas Betrays Jesus – *Matthew 26:17-25, John 13:18-30*
- Bread my Body, Cup of New Covenant – *Matt. 26:26-30 Mk. 14:12-26, Lk. 22:7-30*
- Predicts Peter's Denial – *Matt. 26:31-35, Mk. 14:27-31, Lk. 22: 31-38, Jn. 13:31-38*
- Comforts disciples, In my Father's house there are many mansions – *John 14:1-13*
- Promises comforter, the Holy Spirit – *John 14:15-31*
- Walks past temple – *John 15-16*
- I am the vine you are the branches – *John 15:1-8*
- Love one another, now I call you my friends – *John 15:9-15:17*
- World hated me first, power of Holy Spirit – *John 15:18-16:16*
- Grief will turn to joy – *John 16:17-33*
- Gethsemane - Jesus prays for himself – *John 17*
- What is impossible with man is possible with God – *Luke 18:27*

30. Trials, Crucifixion, Death and Burial

Matthew 26:47-27:66, Mark 14:43-15:47, Luke 22:54-23:56, John 18:1-19:42

- Jesus arrested – *Matthew 26:47-56, Mark 14:43-52, Luke 22:47-53, John 18:1-11*
- High Priest, Sanhedrin – *Matt. 26:57-68, Mk. 14:53-65, Lk. 22:54-71, Jn. 18:12-27*
- Peter disowns Jesus – *Matt. 26:69-75, Mk. 14:66-72, Lk. 22:56-62, Jn. 18:16-18, 25-27*
- Judas hangs self – *Matthew 27:1-10*
- Before Roman leaders: Pilate, Herod
– *Matthew. 27:11-31, Mark 15:2-20, Luke 23:1-25, John 18:28-19:16*
- Crucifixion, Death – *Matt. 27:32-44, Mark 15:21-41, Luke. 23:26-49, John 19:17-37*
- Burial – *Matthew 27:45-66, Mark 15:42-47, Luke 23:50-56, John 19:38-42*

31. Tomb is Empty – Matthew 28, Mark 16, Luke. 24, John 20-21, selected verses Acts 1, 9, 15, 22, 26, I Corinthians 9, 15

- Appearances Resurrection Sunday
 - *Matthew 28:1-15, Mark 16:1-13, Luke 24, John 20:1-20:23*
- Mary Magdalene – *Matthew 28:1-7, Mark 16:1-8, Luke 24:1-12, John 20:1-9*
- To other women; Mary, Mother of James, Salome – *Matthew 28:9-10, Mark 16:1-11*
- Two people on road to Emmaus – *Mark 16:12-13, Luke 24:13-32*
- To Simon Peter in Jerusalem – *Luke 24:34, I Corinthians 15:5*
- To ten disciples in Upper Room – *Luke 24:33-49, John 20:19-23*
- Later Appearances noted in Gospels
 - *Matthew 28:16-20, Mark 16:14-18, John 20:24-21:23*
- Thomas plus 10 in Upper room – *Mark 16:14, John 20:24-31*
- Disciples fish on Sea of Galilee – *John 21:1-23*
- Disciples on Mountain in Galilee – *Matthew 28:16-20, Mark 16:15-18*
- Appearance noted by Paul – *Acts 9:1-19, I Corinthians 15:5-11*
- To Saul, Paul on road to Damascus – *Acts 9:1-19, 22:3-16, 26:9-18*
- To James, half brother of Jesus – *I Corinthians 15:7*
- To more than 500 – *I Corinthians 15:6*

32. Teach and Talk – Matthew. 28:16-20, Acts 1, 2, 15 (selected verses)

- Disciples on mountain in Galilee – Great Commission
- Make Disciples of all nations, Teach them to obey my commandments
 - *Matthew 28:16-20*
- On Mount of Olives – Ascension – Talk, be my witnesses – *Acts 1:1-8*
- Pentecost – Power of Holy Spirit with disciples including Peter – *Acts 2:1-47*
- Jerusalem Council – *Acts 15*

APPENDIX

2

Meditation

The Twelve Apostles –

An Overview

THE TWELVE APOSTLES* - AN OVERVIEW						
Apostle	City of Birth	Occupation	Father	Relatives	Encounters with Jesus	Defining Moments
Andrew	Bethsaida on the Sea of Galilee	Fisherman	Jonah or John, a prosperous fisherman	Brother of Simon Peter	Matt 4:18-19 John 2:35-40	*First foreign missionaries of the Christian faith when, with Philip, introduced group of Greek men to Jesus. John 12:20-22 * Introduced his brother, Simon Peter to Jesus (John 1:41) *Preached in Scythia, along the Black Sea as far as the Volga and Kiev *Crucified on X shaped cross now known as St. Andrew's Cross *Patron Saint of Scotland
Simon Peter Simeon/ Cephas/Peter	Bethsaida on the Sea of Galilee	Fisherman	Jonah or John, a prosperous fisherman	Brother of Andrew	Matt 16:13-20 John 13:8-9 Mark 14:29, 71	*Simeon (Hebrew) Acts 15:14 □ *Simon (Greek form of Simeon) *Cephas (Aramaic for "rock") *Peter (Greek) for "rock" *faith enabled him to walk on water (Matt 14:28-31) *denied and cursed Jesus (Mark 14:71) *Encounters Paul in Jerusalem, Antioch (Gal. 2:11) Corinth (I Cor. 1:11) and possibly Rome. *Author of I & II Peter □ *crucified upside down
James "Sons of Thunder" or Boanerges/ James the Greater/ James the Younger	Galilee	Fisherman	Zebedee	Brother of John	Mark 1:19 Mark 3:17	*first to suffer martyr's death; executed with a sword (Acts 12:2) *always mentioned with John *not mentioned in Gospel of John *also known as James the Greater
John "Sons of Thunder"	Galilee	Fisherman	Zebedee	Brother of James	Mark 1:19	*tradition--mother was Salome, sister of Jesus' mother *always mentioned after brother James *wrote John, I, II, III John, Revelation *cared for mother of Jesus *Pastor of Ephesus church *died in exile at Patmos, buried at Ephesus
Matthew (Levi) Hebrew: Gift of God	Galilee	Publican	Alphaeus	Brother of James the Less (Matt 10:30, Mark 2:14)	Matt 9:9 Lk 5:27-29	*collected tolls for Romans on the road between Damascus and Accho; booth was located outside Capernaum and might have collected taxes from the fishermen for their catches *usually paired with Thomas in New Testament *affluent owned his own house Lk 5:29 *Gospel was most influential--Second century Christian literature quotes from Matt. more than any other *Gospel of Matthew placed at beginning of the New Testament Canon b/c of its significance *preached in Ethiopia & Parthia (NE Iran) *martyred in Nabadab

Philip "Lover of Horses"	Bethsaida on the Sea of Galilee			Jn 1:28 Jn 6:7 Jn 12:20-22 Jn 14: 8	*called individually *introduced Nathanael to Christ (Jn 1:45-51) *with Christ in feeding the 5,000 (Jn 6:7) *with Andrew, introduced Christ to some Greek men (Jn 12:20-22) *unclear where he preached - France, southern Russia, Asia Minor, India. *not to be confused with Philip , the Evangelist Acts 21:8
Bartholomew (Nathaniel) "Son of Tolmai"	Cana in Galilee			Jn 1:45	*introduced to Christ by Philip *an Israelite in whom nothing is false Jn 1:47 *mentioned only in the lists of apostles
Thomas "twin"	fisherman			Jn 20:24-29	*called Didymus/Greek for "twin" Jn 21:2 *joined 6 other disciples who returned to fishing boats after crucifixion Jn 21:2-3 *devoted and courageous when Jesus wanted to return to the hostile political climate in Judea Jn 11:16 *known for his doubts Jn 14:4-5 *Jesus gives physical proof to Thomas of his resurrection *(St Augustine: "He doubted that we might not doubt.")
James, "James the Less"	fisherman	Alphaeus	Possibly brother of Matthew (Mk 2:14, Matt 10:3)		*may have been Jesus' cousin Matt. 27:56, Jn 19:25 *may have resembled Jesus which could explain why Judas Iscariot had to identify Jesus on the night of His betrayal (Mark 14:43-45; Lk 22:47-48)
Judas (not Iscariot), Thaddeus, Lebbeus	Legend: Paneas, later known as Caesarea Philippi	Son of James		Matt 14:18-22 Jn 14:22 Lk 6:16	*several possible identities *Judas, not Iscariot Jn 14:22 *Lebbaeus who was surnamed Thaddaeus Mt 10:3 *seen as apostle Jude Jn 14:22 *Generally identified as THADDEUS, but generally called JUDE of JAMES, JUDE THADDEUS, JUDAS THADDEUS, JUDAS, son of JAMES, or LEBBBAEUS.
Simon the Zealot / Simon the Canaanite	Cana or Canaan			Matt 14:18-22 Lk 6:15 Acts 1:13	*member of the Jewish sect known as Zealots *called with Andrew, Peter, James & John, Judas Iscariot, & Thaddeus *Preached in Egypt, Africa, Great Britain, and Persia
Judas Iscariot	Judea	Son of Simeon (Jn 6:71)			*Iscariot in Aramaic means 'man of Kerioth' *acted as treasurer of the disciples (Jn 12:5, 6) *Christ knew Judas would betray him Jn 13:27 *Disciples were unaware of what Judas was to do John 13:28-29 *Returned money to captors, then hung himself Matt 27:5

*Compiled from THE BIBLE ALMANAC by J.I. Packer, Merrill C. Tenney, William White, Jr. Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1980 ISBN 0-8407-5162-1

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