

THE BIG IDEA

A SURVEY OF THE BIBLE

BY

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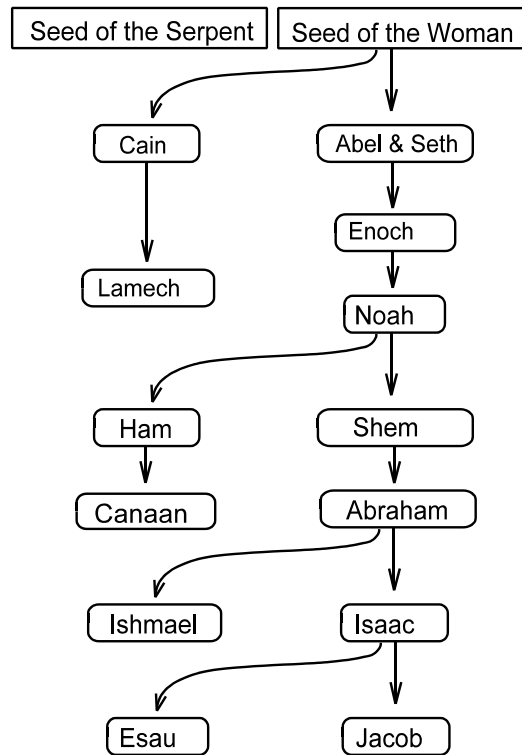
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GENESIS - THE BOOK OF BEGINNINGS

Genesis presents the story of two seeds:
Those who follow the Lord versus those
who follow in the rebellion of the Serpent



The rest of the book of Genesis is the story of these two seeds. In each generation, there is a decision made whether an individual and his family is going to remain true in his covenant relationship with the Lord or whether he is going to depart and follow in the footsteps of the Serpent.

GENESIS 1 - 11	GENESIS 12 - 50
Events predominant <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creation The Fall into sin The Flood The Tower of Babel 	Persons predominant <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Abraham Isaac Jacob Joseph
The Race as a Whole	The Family of Abraham
Over 2000 years	250 years

The person of Abraham is central to the story of Genesis:

Adam	Abraham	Israel
Genesis 2:4 - 11:26	Genesis 11:27 - 50:26	
Five Generations from Adam to Noah	Five Generations from Abraham to Israel	

The story of Abraham is arranged in a chiastic format that begins with the promise and then runs full circle to its fulfillment in the final test of Abraham's faith.

Abraham's call: Promise of a Seed (12:1-9)
Sojourn in Egypt and denial of Sarai (12:10-20) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lot separates (13)
War on Sodom; Rescue of Lot by Abraham (14:1-24)
Covenant Ceremony: God passes between the pieces (15)
Ishmael born (16)
Covenant Ceremony: Circumcision (17)
Destruction of Sodom; Rescue of Lot by Angels (18:1 - 19:38)
Sojourn in Gerar and denial of Sarah (20:1-8) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ishmael separates (21)
Abraham's Test: Blessing of the Seed (22:1-19)

Genesis begins with God creating the heavens and the earth and it ends with Joseph in a coffin in Egypt.

EXODUS - REDEMPTION & THE PRESENCE OF GOD

Author: There is evidence to indicate that the Mosaic History was not a single unified work. Genesis ends with the death of Joseph. But then Exodus recaps the Joseph story in Exodus 1:1-7. Moses writes the book of Exodus to the Israelites in the Wilderness. He tells the story of their liberation from slavery in Egypt and how God gave them the Law and the Tabernacle.

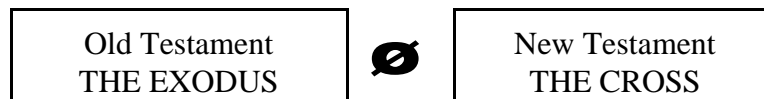
Movement: The book of Exodus begins in Egypt and takes us to the foot of Mount Sinai.

DELIVERANCE				WORSHIP	
Preparation of the Deliverer	Pharaoh & The Plagues	Through the Red Sea	Provision in the Wilderness	The Giving of the Law	Regulations for the Tabernacle
Israel in Egypt		En route to the Sinai		Israel at the Sinai	
Bondage and Oppression		Deliverance & Provision		Law & Pattern for Worship	
1 - 6	7 - 12	13 - 15	15 - 18	19 - 24	25 - 40

Theme: Exodus begins with the rise of a Pharaoh who did not know God and it ends with the presence of God moving into His Tabernacle.

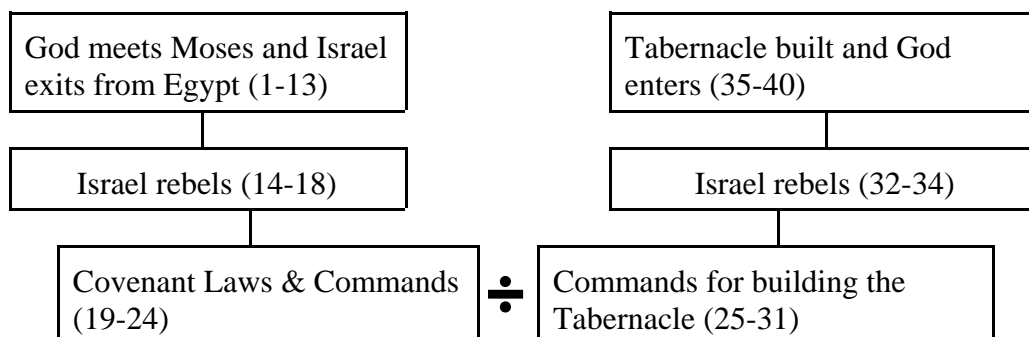
The Exodus from Egypt was the redemptive event of the Old Testament. It is not stating the matter too strongly to say that what the cross is to the New Testament, the Exodus Event was to the Old Testament.

1. Liberation from Egypt (1-18).
10 plagues
2. Giving of the Law (19-24).
10 commandments
3. Building the Tabernacle (24-40).
10 items to be built



This book will be the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of Israel all rolled up into one. It is here that we find out how God feels about His covenant people.

Structure: The book of Exodus follows a commonly-used parallel known as a *chiasm* in which the first three points are in parallel with the second set of corresponding points:



LEVITICUS - THE BOOK OF WORSHIP

Title: The Greek Septuagint uses the title *Leuitikon*, meaning "that which pertains to the Levites." This title was given because so much of the book deals with the ministry of the priesthood which descended from the tribe of Levi.

Genesis - Man Ruined
Exodus - Man Redeemed
Leviticus - Man Cleansed

Date and Location: The Book of Leviticus takes place in its entirety at the foot of Mount Sinai. The Israelites had come out of Egypt and were preparing to attempt entry into the Promised Land. But before that could take place, they needed a lesson in the holiness of God. Leviticus provides that lesson.

Contrast with Exodus: The book of Leviticus is a book about the rituals of WORSHIP and HOLINESS. In this, it is a continuation of the Law which is set forth in Exodus.

Exodus ends with the construction of the Tabernacle.



Leviticus tell us about the worship which takes place within that Tabernacle.

The way in which Leviticus begins sets the stage for the material that shall be found in this book: *Then the Lord called to Moses and spoke to him from the tent of meeting...* (Leviticus 1:1). Exodus ends with the glory of the Lord moving into the Tabernacle. Leviticus picks up with the presence of the Lord calling out to Moses from inside the Tabernacle.

Theme: Leviticus teaches God's people how they are to approach Him and live pleasing in His sight. Its central command is to be holy: *You shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy* (Leviticus 19:2).

Outline of Leviticus

- A. Laws of the Offerings (1-7).
- B. Laws of the Priests (8-10).
- C. Laws of Purity (11-15).
- D. Day of Atonement (16).
- C. Laws of Holiness (17-20).
- B. Laws of Priests (21-22).
- A. Appointed Times (23-25).
- E. Conclusion dealing with...
 - 1. Penalties (26).
 - 2. Vows (27).

GENESIS	EXODUS	LEVITICUS
Origins of the Nation	Deliverance of the Nation	Life of the Nation
Theocracy Born	Theocracy Established	
Begins with creation - it depicts the rise of God's people	Begins in bondage - it tells of the redemption from Egypt	Begins in sacrifice - it sets forth the ritual of worship

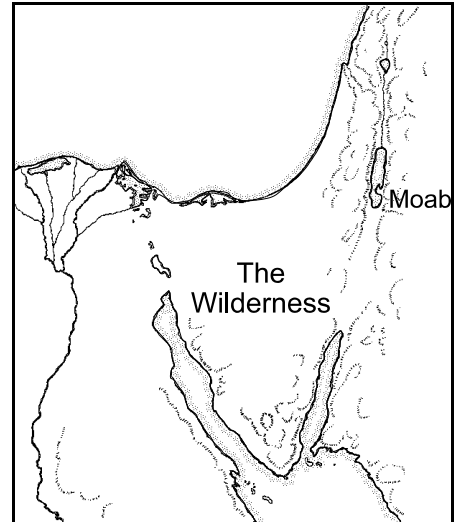
It has been noted that many of these dietary requirements had value with regard to the kinds of diseases which could be caught. However, the purpose given for these laws was that God's people might be holy (Leviticus 11:44).

NUMBERS - THE BOOK OF WANDERINGS

What do you think of when I speak of the book of Numbers? A lot of boring genealogy? The taking of a census? A book for tax accountants and mathematicians? It sounds about as exciting as falling off a log. And yet, this IS an exciting book. The book receives its name from the two numberings which took place within its pages. And yet, there is a lot more in this book than the mere recording of a census. There are 36 chapters in this book. Each census takes up only one chapter.

The Hebrew title for this book is *BaMidbar* ("In the Wilderness"). This original title is taken from the first verse of the first chapter: *Then the Lord spoke to Moses in the wilderness of Sinai...* (Numbers 1:1). This is an appropriate title.

Numbers is the book that tells us what happened during the 40 years of wandering in the wilderness. It is a book of successes and a book of failures. It is a book of endurance under testings. It is a book which teaches us lessons for wisdom for our journey in the wilderness.



Numbers begins with the Israelites at Mount Sinai and ends on the Plains of Moab

Movement of the Book: Numbers begins where Exodus left off. The people of Israel are still at the foot of Mount Sinai. This book spans the years that were spent in the wilderness.

1:1 10:10 MOUNT SINAI	10:11 14:45 FROM SINAI TO KADESH	15:1 21:41 KADESH TO MOAB	22:1 36:13 THE PLAINS OF MOAB
Preparation for the Journey	The Test	Wilderness Wanderings	End of the Journey
The Old Generation			A New Generation
Several Weeks	38 Years		Several Months
<i>Mt Sinai</i>	<i>Mt Hor</i>		<i>Mt Nebo</i>

Occasion for Writing: The book of Numbers is written on the plains of Moab at the close of the Wilderness Wanderings. It covers both the history and the reason for those wanderings.

The book begins with the numbering of the people of God as they are called to His service. The standard of holiness for that service is outlined in the following chapters. The people of God failed in that service and, as a result, were condemned to die in the wilderness. Now a new generation has arisen. They are also numbered. They are also called to the service of the Lord. They will also be tested. And they will also be given a standard of holiness.

This book is written to prepare this second generation of Israelites for that service. The first generation has failed and died. What will the second generation do?

DEUTERONOMY - THE COVENANT RENEWAL

There are 80 references to the book of Deuteronomy in the New Testament. It is quoted in 17 out of the 27 books in the New Testament. Deuteronomy ranks with Genesis, Psalms and Isaiah as the four most quoted Old Testament books in the New Testament.

Title: Our English title is taken from the Greek Septuagint. It is a compound word, coming from the two Greek words *duo* (“two”) and *nomos* (“law”). Deuteronomy, then, means “second law.” This book records a second giving of the Law as the Lord renews His covenant.

As we go through the book of Deuteronomy, we will see very little chronological movement. Nearly the entire book takes place within a single month’s time. Likewise, there is no geographic movement. This is in stark contrast to the book of Numbers which records all of the wilderness wanderings. The entire book of Deuteronomy takes place upon the plains of Moab.

The Reformers taught that the Law has three possible uses for Christians today.

1. Civicus Usus: This is the use which keeps you from doing something that you should not be doing.
2. Pedagogious Usus: This is the use of the law which convicts you of your sin and which turns you to Christ as you realize that, apart from Him, you have no hope.
3. Didacticus Usus: The law is used to teach us about the righteousness of God.

Purpose: Deuteronomy records the reaffirmation of the Covenant and the second giving of the Law. The fact that the law was being given again is significant. It means that God is the God of second chances.

The Israelites had broken God's law in the wilderness. They had rebelled against the Lord. God said, “Go into the land,” and they retorted, “We won't do it!” They refused to trust in Him. They broke the terms of their covenant with Him. And as a result, they were condemned to die in the wilderness. That could easily have been the end of the nation of Israel. God was under no further obligation to these people. The descendants of Abraham could have passed into extinction and God would have been just and righteous in making it happen. But instead, God responded in grace. He allowed for a new generation with whom He again makes His covenant.

Deuteronomy and the Suzerain Treaties: The book of Deuteronomy consists of several sermons given by Moses. It has been noted that these sermons are arranged in a structure that is similar to the order of ancient suzerain treaties (Mededith Kline, “*By Oath Consigned*”). A suzerain was a mighty king. The suzerain would be the victor of the treaty. The vassal would be the loser. Deuteronomy presents God as the king of Israel who established His covenant with His client people. As they keep the covenant, they will be blessed. But if they break the covenant they will suffer judgment. The good news of the Gospel is that Jesus kept the terms of God’s covenant on our behalf.

Suzerain Treaty Outline of Deuteronomy

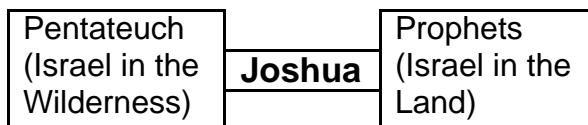
1. Preamble (1:1-4).
2. Historical Prologue (1:5 - 4:49).
This prologue was typically designed to portray the past relationship of the suzerain with his vassal.
3. Stipulations (5:1 - 26:19).
These were the terms of the treaty. The terms of God’s covenant are that His people should live lives that are holy and set apart unto Him.
4. Blessing, Curses, and Ratification of the Covenant (27:1 - 30:20).
God calls the people to bind themselves to Him with a covenant of cursing and blessing, a covenant of life and death.
5. Succession (31:1 - 34:12).

JOSHUA - THE BOOK OF CONQUEST

The book of Joshua heads the Nabi'im - the collection of books known as "the Prophets." These books cover the period of Israel's history from the entrance into the promised land to the Babylonian Exile.

Joshua - The Book of Conquest			
1:1	6:1	13:1	22:10
Preparations to take the Land	CONQUEST of the Land	DISTRIBUTION of the Land	Living in the Land
Remembrance	Action	Inheritance	Remembrance
Initial Appeal	In the Land		Closing Appeal

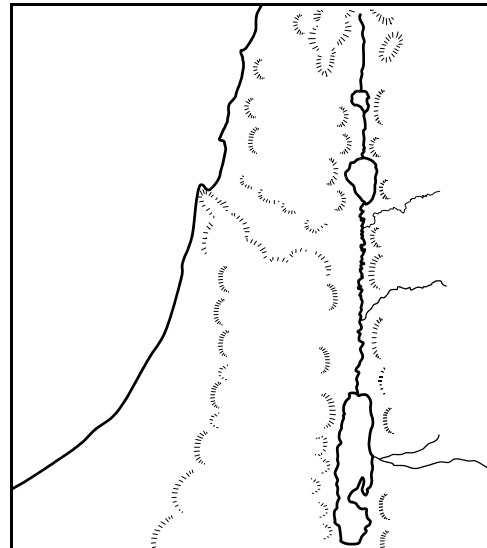
Joshua is the bridge which brings the people of God from the Wilderness wanderings into the land.



Joshua is a tremendous type of Christ. We can see a continuing flow of parallels throughout this book in the ministries of Joshua and Jesus.

Joshua	Jesus
Servant to Moses	Took on the role of a servant
His public ministry begins at the Jordan	His public ministry began at the Jordan
He proclaims death to the nations	He proclaims the gospel to the nations
All against whom this message is directed are under the ban	All to whom this message is proclaimed are called to be baptized

Key Verse: *"Be strong and courageous, for you shall give this people possession of the land which I swore to their fathers to give them." (Joshua 1:6).*



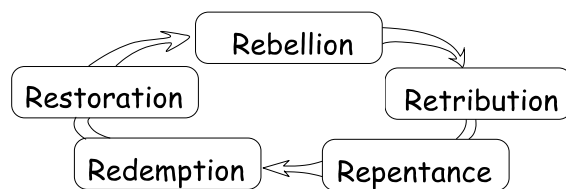
6:1	Central Campaign	Jericho	Victory thru faith
7:1		Ai	Failure thru sin
8:1			Restoration
9:1	Southern Campaign	Gibeon	Deception
10:1		Jerusalem, Lachish, Hebron, Jarmuth, Eglon	The sun and moon are commanded to stand still
11:1	Northern Campaign	Hazor, Madon, Shimron, Achshaph	Surprise attack by the waters of Merom

JUDGES - THE BOOK OF HEROES

The book of Judges is a book of action. It contains great deeds as well as great failures. It is a book of both victory and defeat. Often graphic in its contents, it is not a book for the squeamish.

Judges - The Book of Heroes		
1:1	3:1	17:1
The Pattern of Failure Established	The Career of the Judges <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Othniel ○ Deborah ○ Gideon ○ Jephthah ○ Samson 	The Pattern of Sin Illustrated in two parallel accounts of Heinous Sins.
The entire period is presented in summary form	Chronological accountings of the period	Non-chronological accounts which characterized the period

The book of Judges contains a number of regular cycles in which the people rebelled and suffered retribution, only to repent and to be restored through the ministry of a judge. This pattern is set forth in Judges 2:10-17 and is followed in the career of most of the judges.

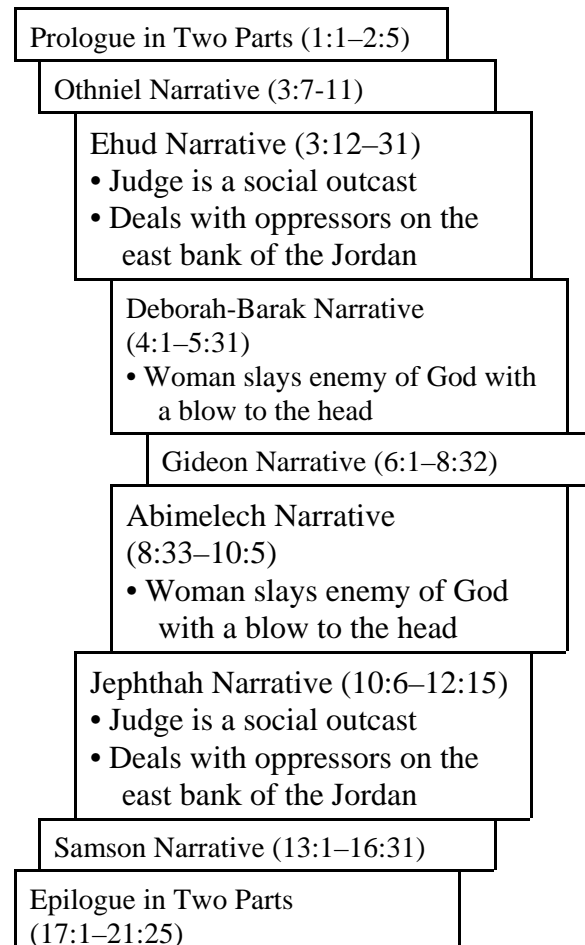


The judges themselves served as both judge in peacetime and as military leader in time of crisis. They were the ones whom God would raise up to lead in those difficult times.

The epilogue contains two stories about this time when there was no king in Israel and when every man did what was right in his own eyes (Judges 17:6; 18:1; 19:1; 21:25). This description is characteristic for the entire era of the book of Judges and sets the stage for the coming of the kings of Israel.

The entire book of Judges lends itself to a chiastic arrangement beginning with a two-

part prologue and ending with a two-part epilogue that is centered around the Gideon Narrative.



RUTH - THE ROMANCE OF REDEMPTION

In the Hebrew Bible, the book of Ruth does not appear after Judges. Instead, it is found in the Writings as one of the five Megilloth (“Scrolls”), each of which was read at one of the feasts of the nation of Israel. Ruth was read at Pentecost.

Naomi’s Bitterness (1:1-22)

Ruth discovers a potential Kinsman Redeemer (2:1-23)

Boaz agrees to be a Kinsman Redeemer (3:1-18)

Boaz acquires right to be a Kinsman Redeemer (4:1-12)

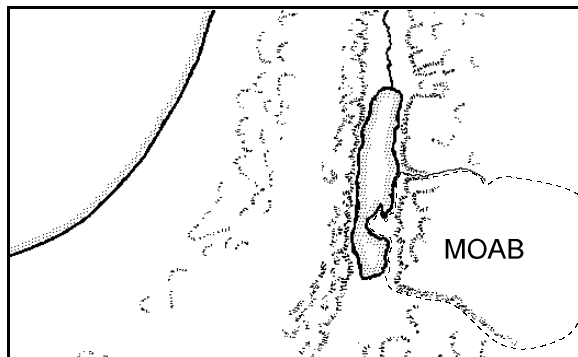
Naomi’s Blessing (4:13-21)

In Josephus’ accounting of the books of the Hebrew Scriptures, Ruth is deemed as a part of the book of Judges.

Judges 17 - 21		Ruth
Says four times that “ <i>there was no king in Israel.</i> ”		Begins with the words, “ <i>when the judges governed...</i> ”
Levite from Bethlehem	Concubine from Bethlehem	Naomi and her family were from Bethlehem
A Spiritual Desert		An Oasis amidst the Desert
Depicts the need of a King		Presents the lineage of the King

Although there is an association with the Judges, Ruth does not share any of the great and momentous deeds, the clamor of battle, or the spiritual failings which are so prevalent in that book. If Judges is a book of failure, then Ruth is a book of quiet victory.

The book of Ruth ends with an announcement of Naomi’s redemption. *Then the women said to Naomi, “Blessed is the Lord who has not left you without a redeemer today, and may his name become famous in Israel. (Ruth 4:14).*



Naomi and her family leave their home in Bethlehem to find refuge in Moab

Note that the redeemer is not Boaz. The redeemer is the child which had been born. It is the birth of this child that would take away Naomi’s reproach of childlessness. It is this child who would take care of her in her old age. And it is this child of whom it is said, “*May his name become famous in Israel.*” It is through the birth of a baby born in Bethlehem that Naomi is going to find her redemption. This baby has a name which shall be proclaimed both in Israel and throughout the world.

1st SAMUEL - THE RISE AND FALL OF SAUL

The Book which we know as First Samuel can be divided into three parts, coinciding with the careers of its three principle characters. It reflects the movement from the judges to the kings and traces the rise and fall of Israel's first king.

First Samuel - Rise & Fall of Saul						
Main Character	1:1		8:1		16:1	
	Samuel Prophet, Priest, Judge		Saul Man after man’s heart		David Man after God’s heart	
	Priest	Eli				
Prophet	Birth & Call		Judgeship	Later Ministry		
	Samuel					
Kings			Reign	Decline & Death		
			Saul			
					Anointed	Exiled
					David	

Even though we are treating 1st and 2nd Samuel separately, it should be remembered that these were penned as a single unit. This is seen in the songs that serve as bookends for the entire work.

Song of Hannah (1 Sam 2:1-11) - Promise of anointed king in verse 10.	Song of David (2 Sam 22) - Eternal promise to descendants of David in verse 51.
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The early chapters of 1st Samuel detail the need for a king. Saul's reign begins on a glorious note, but he is rejected for his disobedience. The rest of the book moves toward his eventual demise.

Viewed in this way, the first 15 chapters constitute a rising action culminating with Saul's disobedience and the rise of David.

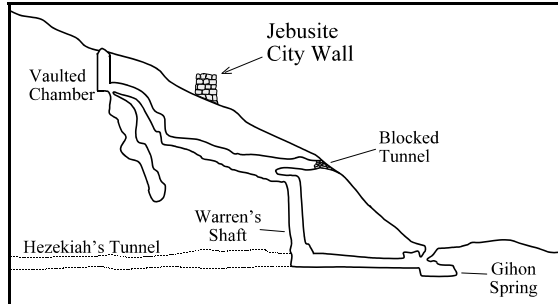
David	Jesus
The Lord instructed Samuel to anoint one who would be revealed.	The Lord instructed John the Baptist that One who he would anoint would be Messiah.
Samuel anointed David with oil.	John baptized Jesus with water.
At this anointing, the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon David.	As He came out of the water, the Spirit descended upon Jesus in the form of a dove.
In both cases, following the anointing there was no immediate movement toward kingship. The promise continued to be unrealized for a long period.	

2nd SAMUEL - DAVID'S TRIUMPHS AND TRAGEDIES

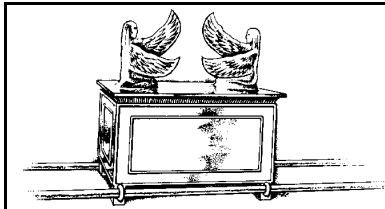
As we come to 2 Samuel, we should be reminded again that this is the second portion of a complete and unified book. While the focus of 1 Samuel is upon the rise and fall of Samuel and Saul, the focus of 2 Samuel is upon the rise and fall of David.

2 SAMUEL - The Triumphs & Troubles of David					
1	5	11	13	19	21
David's Triumphs		David's sin	David's Troubles		Chiasm
Reign over Judah	Reign over all Israel	Sin	Punishment	Restoration	Last Acts & Words
David in Hebron	David in Jerusalem				
7½ Years	33 Years (5:5)				

The first seven years of David's reign is only recognized in Judah. To bring unity, David moves his capital to Jerusalem.



Once Jerusalem has been established as the place of David's throne, he has the ark of the covenant brought here so that it might also be the place of God's throne.



Lord enters into a covenant with David in which He promises to build an abiding house for David.

David's great sin of taking Bathsheba and having her husband murdered is mirrored in three of his sons.

Amnon	Will rape Tamar (2 Samuel 13:8-14).
Absalom	Will take the royal harem (2 Samuel 16:22).
Adonijah	Will seek to take his deceased father's concubine (1 Kings 2:13-17).

David's intercessory prayer in the midst of a famine (21:1-14).

The accomplishments of David's "giant-killers" (21:15-22).

David's Song of Praise (22)

David's Words of Praise (23:1-7)

The accomplishments of David's "mighty men" (23:8-39).

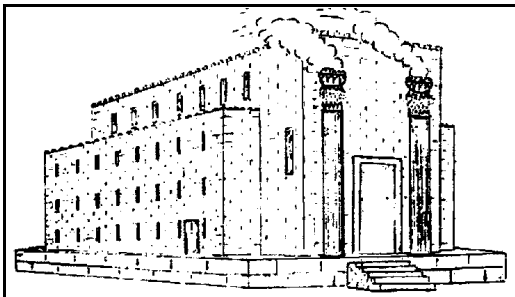
David's intercessory prayer in the midst of a plague (24).

1st KINGS - THE KINGDOM UNITED AND DIVIDED

1st and 2nd Kings are a single book. The narrative runs smoothly in 1 Kings 1-11 because we are following the history of only one kingdom. But from 1 Kings 12 to 2 Kings 17 the author deals with both the Northern Kingdom of Samaria and the Southern Kingdom of Judah, shifting back and forth between these two. After 2 Kings 17 and the fall of the Northern Kingdom, the flow of history is again smooth as we read only of the Southern Kingdom.

1 Kings 1-11	1 Kings 12 - 2 Kings 17	2 Kings 18-25
United Kingdom under Solomon	Northern Kingdom	
	Southern Kingdom of Judah	

Solomon's Reign: Solomon is known chiefly for his great wisdom and for the constructing of the Temple.



The climactic portion of this narrative takes place when the presence of God moves into the Temple.

Pharaoh's Daughter (3:1)

Sacrificing at High Places (3:2)

1st Appearance of the Lord to Solomon (3:4-15)

Solomon's Wisdom at Work (3 - 4)

Solomon's Building Projects (5 - 8)

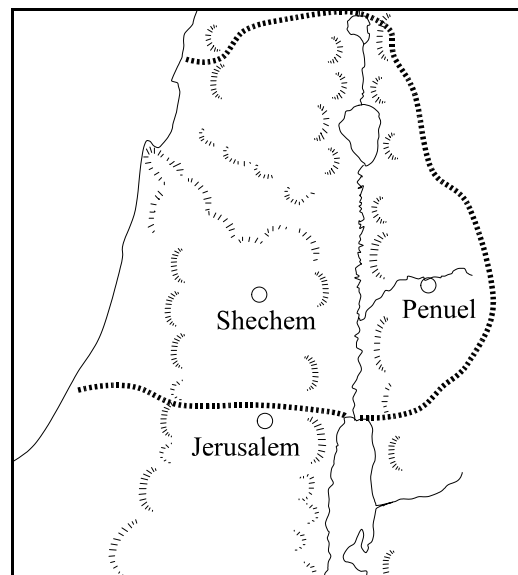
2nd Appearance of the Lord to Solomon (9:1-9)

Pharaoh's Daughter (9:24)

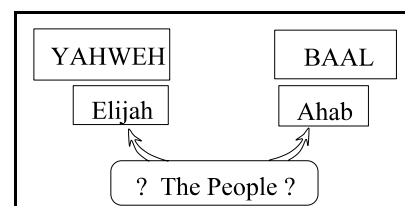
Sacrificing at the Temple (9:25)

As a result of Solomon's idolatry, the ten northern tribes are taken from his descendants.

The Divided Kingdom



The story of the Northern Kingdom is one of continuing rebellion against God. This comes to a climactic confrontation in the days of Elijah as the prophet stands before the king and the nation and calls them to turn to the Lord..



Following this incident, Elisha is chosen to be the eventual successor to Elijah.

2nd KINGS - KINGDOMS IN CRISIS

1st and 2nd Kings are a single book. At the center of this collective work is the ministry of Elijah and Elisha.



MINISTRIES OF ELIJAH & ELISHA

The narratives of Elijah and Elisha echo with the account of Moses and Joshua. Elijah and Elisha are pictured as a type of Moses and Joshua.

- Elijah confronts the king as Moses confronted Pharaoh.
- There is a battle of the gods from which the Lord emerges as the clear victor.
- Elijah goes over a period of 40 days to Mount Sinai where he has an encounter with God.
- Elijah divides the Jordan and crosses over on dry ground.
- The sons of the prophets conduct a search for Elijah's body, but it cannot be located.

In the passing of the mantle, Elisha takes up the ministry of his former mentor. In doing this, he is playing the part of Joshua.

- He crosses the Jordan River to return to the Land of Canaan.
- His first stop is at Jericho.
- At his spoken word, those who mock him are attacked by bears and killed.

- He rejects the gifts of Naaman who is healed, but his servant Gehazi secretly accepts these gifts and suffers punishment as a result.

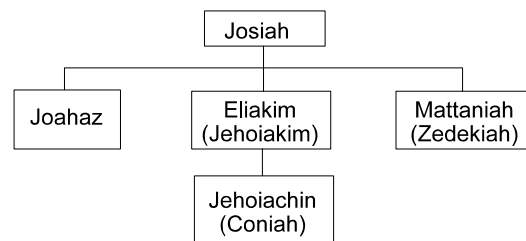
THE FALL OF ISRAEL

- The fall of the House of Ahaz
- The fall of Samaria

Northern Kingdom of Israel	Southern Kingdom of Judah
Taken by Assyrian in 721 B.C.	Taken by Babylon in 586 B.C.

THE FALL OF JUDAH

- Hezekiah and the Judah Revival.
- Hezekiah and the Assyrians.
- Josiah's Revival.
- The Babylonian Captivity.



1st CHRONICLES - HAVING A HEART FOR GOD

1st Chronicles takes us back all the way to Adam and sets forth the chronology of God's chosen people, bringing us at last to David the king.

Chapters 1-9	Chapter 10	Chapters 11-20	Chapters 21-29
Genealogies	Histories		
	Death of Saul	Reign of King David	
		David's Rise	David's Later Years

The relationship of the books of Samuel and Kings to Chronicles is similar to the relationship of the Synoptic Gospels to the Gospel of John.

Samuel and Kings	Relates historical fact with little commentary	Synoptic Gospels
Chronicles	Tells meaning of the fact	John

If the books of Samuel and Kings have their focus upon the kings and prophets of Judah and Israel, the books of Chronicles have their focus upon the tabernacle and the temple. Kings relates the political and royal fortunes of the nation while Chronicles focuses upon the sacred and ecclesiastical aspects of the nation.

Kings	Chronicles
Prophetic Perspective: Judgments	Priestly Perspective: Hope
Wars prominent	Temple is prominent
History of the thrones	Continuity of the Davidic line
Record of both Israel & Judah	Mostly Judah
Morality	Redemption

ARK BROUGHT TO JERUSALEM

A part of David's rise to power is seen in his bringing the ark of the covenant to Jerusalem.

Unfortunately, proper care is not taken in the moving of the ark and Uzza is stricken when he touches it.

DAVID'S DESIRE FOR A TEMPLE

David indicates his desire that a permanent place of worship be established - a House of God. He begins making plans to build such a house for the Lord. The Lord comes in chapter 17 and indicates that it is He who will build a house for David.

Solomon	Jesus
Son of David	Ultimate son of David
Established united monarchy	Established God's kingdom on earth
Built the temple	He WAS the temple
His kingdom lasted until 586 B.C.	His kingdom shall have no end
Chastened because of his iniquity	Took our sins upon Himself

2nd CHRONICLES - THE VIEW FROM THE TEMPLE

2nd Chronicles contains a parallel history with that which is found in 1st and 2nd Kings with one very important difference. Its perspective is always from the vantage point of the Temple. That means the focus will tend to be on the Southern Kingdom of Judah.

		United Kingdom	1 st Chronicles	1 Adam (Genealogies)
				10 Reign of David
1 st Kings	1 Reign of Solomon	Divided Kingdom	2 nd Chronicles	1 Reign of Solomon
	12 Jeroboam			10 Focus on the Southern Kingdom of Judah to the Captivity
	17 Elijah & Ahab			
2 nd Kings	1 Elijah & Ahaziah	No mention of the ministries of Elijah or Elisha		
	2 Elisha			
	17 Fall of Samaria			
	18 Hezekiah		Judah Alone	
	25 Babylonian Captivity	Exile		36:22 Return from Babylon

The writer of the Chronicles draws our attention to the importance of a right relationship with the Lord in the area of worship. The high points of the book are those time when God's people are devoting themselves to returning to a worship of the

Lord. That an entire book of the Bible is concerned with the history of worship suggests how we ought to evaluate our own lives. Do we count success in terms of worship?

1 Chronicles 1-9	1 Chronicles 10-29	2 Chronicles 1-9	2 Chronicles 10-28	2 Chronicles 29-36
Genealogies of Israel	The United Kingdom		Divided Kingdom	Reunited Kingdom
	King David	King Solomon	Kings of Judah	
	Preparations for the temple	Construction of the temple	Temple forgotten	Temple restored & destroyed

EZRA - RETURNING AND REBUILDING

Ezra is a book about returning and rebuilding and restoring one's relationship with the Lord. Such a journey is not necessarily an easy one. It can be fraught with pitfalls and temptations. But the journey home is worth the effort. Are you headed for home? There is a message here for you.

1	First Return under Sheshbazzar and Zerubbabel	Return from Babylon	The Edict of Cyrus
2			The Exiles who returned
3		Rebuilding of the Temple	Construction begun
4			Construction opposed
5			Construction delayed
6			Construction completed
7	Second Return under Ezra	Return from Babylon	Decree of Artaxerxes
8			The Journey
9		Restoration of the People	Problem of mixed marriages
10			Solution to the problem

Chap.	Author	Purpose
Ezra 1:2-4	Cyrus	Permission granted for Jews to return to the land and rebuild their Temple
Ezra 4:11-16	Rehum & Shimsha	Report to the King against the Jews
Ezra 4:17	Artaxerxes (Cambyses)	Order to halt construction of the Temple
Ezra 5:7-17	Tattenai	Report to the King that the Jews had resumed construction
Ezra 6:1-12	Darius	A summary of Cyrus' original edict and a new order that the work on the Temple is to be resumed
Ezra 7:12-26	Artaxerxes	A decree granting Ezra authority to lead a second return to the Land to establish the teaching of the Law among the people of God

And the sons of Israel who returned from exile and all those who had separated themselves from the impurity of the nations of the land to join them, to seek the LORD God of Israel, ate the Passover. 22 And they observed the Feast of Unleavened Bread seven days with joy, for the LORD had caused them to rejoice, and had turned the heart of the king of Assyria toward them to encourage them in the work of the house of God, the God of Israel. (Ezra 6:21-22).

The closing chapters of Ezra details a problem involving intermarriage.

Ezra 9	Ezra 10
The Problem: Intermarriage with people of the land	The Solution: Divorces from those wives
Prayer of Repentance	Proposal of Divorce

The Biblical account does not tell us whether or not the solution that was chosen was one that was sanctioned by God. In later years, the issue of divorce was addressed by the prophet Malachi.

NEHEMIAH - REBUILDING THE WALLS

The focus in Nehemiah is upon the rebuilding of the walls of the city of Jerusalem and the subsequent restoration of those things that had lapsed in the house of the Lord.

1:1-11	2:1-10	2:11-20	3:1 - 6:19	7:1-73	8:1 - 12:47	13:1-31
Nehemiah talks to God	Nehemiah talks to the King	The work planned	The work completed	Number of the people	Covenant renewal	Further reforms
Conception			Completion	Consecration		
Work				Worship		
Rebuilding the Wall				Revival of the People		

The book begins and ends with prayer. At the beginning of the book, Nehemiah gives a prayer of repentance on behalf of the people of God and asks that God might remember His promise to restore the nation.

Nehemiah was the cupbearer to the king of the entire Persian Empire. This involved more than merely the handling of the king's cup in the same way the Secretary of State of the United States is more than a mere secretary.

NEHEMIAH'S PRAYERS

The book of Nehemiah serves not only as a book of historical narrative; it also serves as Nehemiah's private prayer journal. There are sections when the narrative lapses into prayer without any introduction. In one place, an entire chapter is given over to Nehemiah's prayer.

NEHEMIAH'S PLAN

When Nehemiah is asked by the king how long he would need to accomplish the task of rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem, Nehemiah is able to give him a definite time (2:6). This suggests some careful planning on Nehemiah's part. This again becomes apparent when Nehemiah arrives in Jerusalem and then conducts a reconnaissance by night to plan out the work before him.

REBUILDING THE WALL

Nehemiah approaches the people of Jerusalem and presents to them the vision and the goal of rebuilding the wall. He delegates various portions of the work to different family groups so that all will coordinate their efforts.

The enemies of God try to bring the work to a halt, planning attacks against the workers and also by plotting to assassinate Nehemiah.

RENEWING THE COVENANT

Once the work of rebuilding is completed, Nehemiah enlists the aid of Ezra the scribe to lead the people in a covenant celebration. This renewal becomes the basis for a spiritual revival among the people of God.

The problem of intermarriage that was introduced at the close of the book of Ezra is still an issue in Nehemiah's day. Whereas Ezra plucked out his own hair at the hearing of the problem (Ezra 9:3), Nehemiah pulls out the hair of the offenders (Nehemiah 13:25).

ESTHER - GOD'S PROVIDENTIAL SALVATION

The book of Esther follows a chiastic outline with the central actions of Esther being the pivotal point of the book. As such, there is both a rising action and a descending action.

1:1 - 2:18	2:19-23	3:1-15	4:1 - 7:10	8:1 - 9:17	9:18-32	10:1-3
Esther becomes Queen	Mordecai saves the King's Life	Haman plots against Jews	Esther acts to deliver her people	Jews to defend themselves	Jews celebrate	Mordecai rewarded
Esther & Mordecai in the Persian Court		Trouble for the Jews		Victory for the Jews	Esther & Mordecai in the Persian Court	

Esther is the only book of the Bible that makes no mention of God. Yet the Lord is seen behind the scenes throughout this entire narrative. There are four main characters in this narrative. Two of them are Jewish and two are Gentiles.

ESTHER

Esther is a Jewish orphan who is living in the kingdom of Persia. She is raised by her cousin Mordecai and finds herself at the center of events where she is able to play a key role in the delivering of her people from the threat of destruction.

The name Esther sounds similar to the Persian word for "star." Her Jewish name is Hadassah. It is similar to the Akkadian word hadassatu, meaning "bride."

AHASUERUS

This king has traditionally been taken to refer to the Persian King known in Greek writings as Xerxes. He is known in Greek writings because he conducted an invasion of Greece in 480 B.C. While the account in Esther makes no mention of this invasion, it is likely that the events in this book take place after the forces of Xerxes had been repulsed in Greece.

Secular writings make no mention of Esther. Herodotus and Ctesias identify the wife of Xerxes both before and after the Persian expedition into Greece as Amestris. This is

presumably a reference to the Biblical Vashti. This fits in with the Biblical account that tells us Esther did not become queen until the seventh year of the reign of Ahasuerus (Esther 2:16).

MORDECAI & HAMAN

Haman	Mordecai
A descendant of Agag (Esther 3:1), the king of the Amalekites whose life Saul spared in disobedience to the command of God	From the tribe and family of Saul (Esther 2:5).
Enemy of the people of God	Savior of the people of God

Saul did not recognize the danger that Agag posed to the people of God. He was blind to the real issues. By contrast, Mordecai was alert to the real issues and overheard that which brought salvation to the people of God and death to the evil Haman.

JOB - THE BOOK OF SUFFERING

The book of Job is made up of a historical narrative at both the beginning and at the end of the book that serve as bookends for the extensive dialogue and discourses that make up the central body of the book.

Chapter 1-2	Chapters 3-31	Chapters 32-37	Chapters 38-41	Chapter 42
Historical Prologue: Job's test	Job's three friends	Elihu's speeches	God speaks	Historical Epilogue: Job's restoration
	Dialogue and Discourses			

The prose sections at the beginning and at the end of the book contain very simple and archaic Hebrew in contrast to the central section that is highly ornate in its language.

The story begins with a man named Job. No mention is made of Israel or the temple, so we are led to assume this story to take place in the patriarchal period.

THE HEAVENLY CHALLENGE

Unbeknown to Job, a challenge was issued in the heavens. It came from Satan and God allowed it to play out at Job's expense. Satan was permitted to take away his property holdings and his family and his health until Job had nothing. Yet Satan's limitations are seen in that he is not permitted to take Job's life. We see that it is God who is ultimate control of all things.

As far as we can tell in the narrative, Job never does learn of these heavenly events or how they have had an impact upon his life. We are reminded that our earthly is limited and that we see only a small part of the big picture.

JOB'S FRIENDS

Job is joined by his friends who offer their insights on suffering. They have some good things to say, but their advice misses the mark because they also lack the heavenly perspective and they come to some wrong conclusions.

WHEN GOD FINALLY SPEAKS...

- He does not give Job any answers to his questions.
- He does not give Job any comfort in his situation.

Instead, God challenges Job, showing the distinction between the creature versus the Creator. The remarkable thing is that Job is satisfied with this presentation. The book ends without him having all the answers, but it is okay because he has stood before his Redeemer.

If you could take all the pain from your children's lives, would you do it? You are inclined to think, "Yes." But if they have no pain, then...

- They have no gain.
- They have no reason to be drawn to the throne to seek the comforting hand of the Great Physician. The truth is that we do not go to the throne naturally.

LESSONS FROM JOB

- There are no simple answers
- Expression of grief & trouble is appropriate, but not to pass judgment on God
- God is in control, even when it is not obvious to our eyes
- God has a purpose in what he allows, even if we do not know what it is.

PSALMS - THE BOOK OF WORSHIP

The book of Psalms has an internal structure that divides it into five books. It has been noted that this division can be compared to the five books of the Torah.

Book 1	Book 2	Book 3	Book 4	Book 5
Chapters 1-41	Chapters 42-72	Chapters 73-89	Chapters 90-106	Chapters 107-150
Mostly written by David		Mostly by Asaph	Mostly anonymous	Mostly by David
Genesis	Exodus	Leviticus	Numbers	Deuteronomy
Begins with man by a tree (1); then a picture of the raging of the nations (2); near the end we see the Psalmist as a sojourner (39:12).	Begins with a thirst for God (42); and a prayer for God's salvation against an ungodly nation (43); ends with God as a rock and a refuge (71).	Begins with a promise of God's blessing to those who are pure in heart (73). Ends with the Davidic Covenant	Begins with prayer of Moses and a reminder of man's frailty (90). Ends with a confession of Israel's sins in the wilderness (106) as well as in the land.	Begins with a reminder of God's past faithfulness (107). Psalm 119 has a special emphasis upon the word of God.

AN OLD TESTAMENT COMMENTARY

The Psalms often help us to "fill in the gaps" as they tell us the emotions behind the narratives of the Old Testament. This is especially true of those Psalms that contain historical superscriptions. There superscriptions are to be found in our earliest Hebrew texts and therefore reflect a very ancient tradition.

LITURGY FOR WORSHIP

Many of the Psalms are designed for the leading of public worship. They take us beyond a mere "head knowledge" to draw us near to the heart of God.

At the same time, they remind us that praise does not only take place in a "feel good" setting. Praise can also take place in time of trouble and trial and when the worshiper is dealing with a heaviness of soul. The Psalms teach us to worship in every season of life.

A PATTERN FOR PRAYER

I know of no better way to learn how to pray than to pray through the Psalms. There are prayers here for every occasion and there is a depth of spiritual insight that takes you before the throne of God.

WISDOM FOR LIVING

We don't normally think of finding wisdom in the Psalms. That is normally found in the wisdom literature. But there are some of the Psalms that are designed to teach us.

*Hear this, all peoples;
Give ear, all inhabitants of the world,
Both low and high,
Rich and poor together.
My mouth will speak wisdom;
And the meditation of my heart will be
understanding. (Psalm 49:1-3).*

PROVERBS - THE BOOK OF WISDOM

The book of Proverbs does not follow a specific outline. Much of it is presented in short, pithy sayings. Yet there is an overall pattern that can be seen.

1:1	1:7	10:1	21:1	30:1	31:1
Prologue	Appeal to Wisdom	One-verse maxims		Larger Couplets	Good Woman
Purpose of the Proverbs	Wisdom Personified	Proverbs of Solomon	Proverbs collected by Hezekiah	Words of Agur	Words of King Lemuel

Proverbs tells a story. It is the story of a young man. He begins by deciding which school he shall attend -- the School of Wisdom or the School of Folly. Recruiters from both schools come and make their pitch. The young man decides to enroll in the School of Wisdom. From chapters 10-29 he takes classes (graduate and post graduate level). Upon graduation, he goes out and he finds a good woman to be his wife.

PROVERBIAL GENERALIZATIONS

Proverbs are generalizations. They point out what is **GENERALLY** true. There are exceptions to these generalizations. For example...

- *The fear of the LORD prolongs life, but the years of the wicked will be shortened* (Proverbs 10:27), but Abel died early.
- *When a man's ways are pleasing to the LORD, He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him* (Proverbs 16:7), but Paul's enemies never ceased their efforts to destroy him.

We do not see these as contradictions, but only as exceptions to general principles.

UNIVERSAL ARENA OF WISDOM

You do not have to read very far into Proverbs to find that it deals with a great many topics and a great many circumstances.

There is a principle here. It is that the Scriptures have something to say about every arena of life. Sometimes we get the idea that the Bible only tells us what we ought to do on Sunday morning and that the rest of the week is ours. The fact that wisdom has a universal arena means that we all must seek to apply the wisdom of the Scriptures to all areas of life. There is no distinction between the sacred and the secular.

Furthermore, there are several of the Proverbs that have striking parallels in the secular literature of antiquity. This ought not surprise us as all true wisdom is God's wisdom.

A REALISTIC WORLD VIEW

The Book of Proverbs do not give us a rose-colored view of the world. It presents the world as a place where bad things really do happen. Tragedy strikes and trouble comes and Proverbs doesn't make those things go away, but it does give you wisdom on how to deal with it.

ECCLESIASTES - THE QUESTION OF LIFE

This book is a sermon. It includes bad news and good news. The “bad news” has given the book a bad name because the Preacher does not give simple pat answers to complex problems. The main question asked in this book is this: What is life all about? The Bible is not afraid to raise the hard issues. It asks why should I try to be good? Does it matter?

The book can be divided into five “sermons.” It has been noted that there is something of a corollary between these sermons and the five books of the Pentateuch.

1-2	3	4-5	6-9	10-12
1st Sermon	2nd Sermon	3rd Sermon	4th Sermon	5th Sermon
All of life is emptiness, but man ought to enjoy goodness because it is from God	There is profit in seeing God as the giver of all of the seasons of life	Instead of being fearful, enjoy life while it lasts because it is a gift from God	Man sees life as a struggle, but God gave life to be enjoyed	Because of the emptiness of this life, man ought to fear the Lord and follow His word

EMPTINESS OF LIFE WITHOUT GOD

We are treated to the diary of a man who had it all, who knew it all, and who did his best to enjoy it all. At the end of the story, his conclusion is summed up in a single word -- emptiness. It is a message that resounds in our 21st century. People want meaning to their lives and it cannot be found “under the sun.”

SEASONS OF LIFE

Life is a precious gift from God, but we only have a little time here in which to enjoy it. We ought to number our days and to make the most of them, living purposefully and passionately. Life is precious. And it is short. And eternity is long. Make the most of the NOW.

A part of this enjoyment of life is found in the “one another principles.” No man is an island. We will not find fulfillment in isolation. We were made for community.

The Preacher lists four reasons why it is better not to be alone.

4:9	4:10	4:11	4:12
Two are better than one because...			
Good results in labor	Pick up one another in trouble	Warm one another in cold	Hold up one another in adversity
Work	Falling	Cold	Adversity

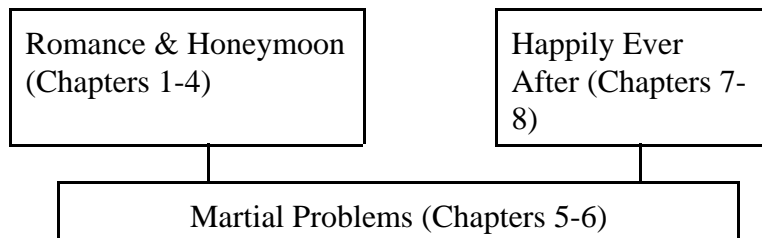
PRINCIPLES OF PRIORITY

Because of the brevity of life under the sun and because of the emptiness of such a life without God, we are to set our priorities in order.

11:9	11:10	12:1
Rejoice... in young manhood	Remove vexation from your heart pain from your body	Remember your Creator in the days of your youth

SONG OF SONGS - THE BOOK OF LOVE

Title: *The Song of Songs, which is Solomon's* (Songs 1:1). From this title, it has been traditionally concluded that Solomon is the author of the song. But it could also be that the song is ABOUT Solomon and that the author is unknown. There are within the book several Greek and Persian words. This means that if Solomon were the original author, then it is likely that a later editor updated the language and, in doing so, added the Greek and Persian words.



The Song of Solomon has been approached in a variety of ways.

Allegorical Interpretation: The entire book is seen as an allegory dealing with the Lord's love for His people Israel. That view began among the rabbis and has passed over into the Christian Church, making it an allegorical view of Christ's love for the Church.

The problem in this view is that an allegory typically attempts to assign meanings to all of the different parts of the story and this simply will not work in this song.

Cultic Interpretation: The poems in the book are poems that were used in the ritual of marriage and were read or sung at the ceremony. The Song of Solomon is then seen as a part of the ancient liturgy and is a reflection of the ritual of a poetic people, but without any specific plot.

Shepherd Interpretation sees the Song of Solomon as a drama or a story depicting King Solomon trying to woo a Shulamite maiden to become a part of his palace harem. However, the Shulamite maiden is in love with a hometown boy, a shepherd. At the end of the story, she rejects all of the splendor of the palace and returns to the hometown boy. In this view, Solomon is the villain of the story. There are several problems with this view:

- A The Song itself only describes two people and not three. They speak to one another as "my beloved" and "my love." Both delight in one another and there is no hint of a secret lover hiding in the wings.
- A Making Solomon out to be the villain takes all of these passages that speak of love as merely the lustful urgings of an evil and twisted man.
- A To view the Shulamite as leaving her legal husband to return to her shepherd lover would make her an adulteress rather than a heroine.

Typical Interpretation: Sees King Solomon as a type of Christ and the bride as a type of the Church. This interpretation is different from the allegorical view in that an allegory has meaning in every phrase, while the typical view does not necessarily have to do that.

Natural or Literal interpretation: This view simply takes the book at face value. It is a series of very beautiful, lyrical love poems with much to teach the people of God. It was a love story, but it also carried with it certain spiritual connotations. The love story between this man and this woman was mirrored in the love story of God and His people.

ISAIAH - THE FIFTH GOSPEL

The book of Isaiah has the same general outline as that of the entire Bible. The Bible is composed of 66 books with 39 books in the Old Testament and 27 books in the New Testament. In the same way, Isaiah is composed of 66 chapters with 39 falling in the first section and 27 in the second.

Chapters 1-35	Chapters 36-39	Chapters 40-66
Judgments in the Present	Historical Interlude	Glory in the Future
The Judgment of God		The Comfort of God
Messiah the Judge		Messiah the Servant
Groan		Glory
God's Government "A throne" (6:6)		God's Grace "A Lamb" (53:7)

The first half of the book deals with judgment while the second half of the book deals with the glory of God's future hope.

This first section begins and ends the same way. It begins with the woe of judgment and ends with the woes of judgment. Sandwiched between these sections are a long list of woes.

Woes of Judgment against Judah (1-5)
A Son and A Song of Salvation (6-12)
<p>Woes to the Nations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Babylon (13:1 - 14:23). • Assyria (14:24-27). • Philistia (14:28-32). • Moab (15-16). • Damascus (17). • Cush (18). • Egypt and Cush (19-20). • Babylon (21:1-10). • Edom (21:11-12). • Arabia (21:13-17) • Jerusalem (22). • Tyre (23). • A warning (24).
A Song of Salvation (25-27)
Woes of Judgment (28-35)

Chapters 36-39 contain a historical interlude, relating a series of events that took place during the reign of Hezekiah.

36	37	38	39
Invasion of Sennacherib of Assyria		Hezekiah without an heir interacts with Babylon	

The chronology of the Historical Section is reversed. The events of chapter 38-39 took place BEFORE the events of chapter 36-37. Why did Isaiah do this? It was because he wanted to link the historical sections to the two corresponding messages of judgment and of comfort.

Isaiah vividly presents the life and ministry of the Servant of the Lord, the Messiah.

- His Virgin birth (7:14).
- His Ministry in Galilee (9:1-2).
- The Son on David's throne (9:6-7).
- The Ministry of His Spirit (11:1-5).
- The Servant of the Lord (42{1-7).
- The Suffering Savior (52:13 - 53:12).

JEREMIAH - THE WEEPING PROPHET

Jeremiah has been known as the "weeping prophet." It isn't that he was a crybaby. It is that he loved his countrymen and saw what they were going through and it brought him to tears.

Call of Jeremiah. (1)

Prophecies of Judah and Jerusalem (2-35)

Historical Narrative: Prior to the Fall of Jerusalem (36-38)

Historical Narrative: Fall of Jerusalem (39).

Historical Narrative: After the Fall of Jerusalem (40-45)

Prophecies of other Nations (46-51)

Fall of Jerusalem (52)

Jeremiah and Isaiah are among two of the largest of the prophetic books.

Isaiah	Jeremiah
Prophesied during the time of the fall of the Northern Kingdom of Israel	Prophesied during the time of the fall of the Southern Kingdom of Judah
Assyrian Invasion	Babylonian Invasion
Popular with king Hezekiah and with the people	Unpopular with the kings of Judah and with the people
Married and had children	Forbidden to marry or have children (Jer 16).
Contemporary to Hosea, Amos and Micah	Contemporary to Zephaniah, Habakkuk and Obediah

Following the death of Josiah, the people of Israel placed Jehoahaz on the throne of Judah. His reign was to be short-lived, for Necho of Egypt moved in to place a king of his own choosing in Judah. For this position he selected another of Josiah's sons.

Ultimately, all three of Josiah's sons and one of his grandsons would sit on the throne of Judah before the nation was taken into captivity.

Jehoahaz	Installed by the Israelites after Josiah's death	Removed by Pharaoh Necho after only 3 months
Eliakim (Jehoiakim)	Set on the throne by Necho	Reigned for 11 years and deposed by Nebuchadnezzar
Jehoiachin (Coniah)	Son of Jehoiakim set on throne by Jews	Nebuchadnezzar removed him after only 3 months
Zedekiah	Youngest son of Josiah put on throne by Babylon	Reigned 11 years before being taken by Nebuchadnezzar

LAMENTATIONS - THE SORROW OF REPENTANCE

This is not the most popular book in the Bible. We normally prefer books with happy endings. This isn't one of them. It is a book about deep sorrow.

There are five chapters to the book, just as there are five books to the Torah. Unlike most chapter divisions in our English Bible, these chapter divisions find their origin in the Hebrew text. They are evidenced by the fact that each chapter forms an acrostic.

Chapter 1	Chapter 2	Chapter 3	Chapter 4	Chapter 5
3rd person plural ("they")		1st person singular ("I")	1st person plural ("we")	
Each verse begins with an acrostic		Each line begins with an acrostic	Each verse begins with an acrostic	No acrostic
Writer addresses himself to his readers				Writer prays to God
Jerusalem is a weeping widow	The Lord's anger has burned against the city	The writer is a man afflicted, yet a man with hope	The plight of the enslaved citizens of the city	A prayer for restoration

It has been noted by scholars that the language of Lamentations is deliberately reflective of the 28th chapter of Deuteronomy.

Lamentations	Deuteronomy 28
<i>She dwells among the nations, But she has found no rest (1:3).</i>	<i>Among those nations you shall find no rest, and there shall be no resting place for the sole of your foot (28:65)</i>
<i>Her adversaries have become her masters (literally, "her head" - 1:5).</i>	<i>He shall be the head, and you shall be the tail (28:44)</i>
<i>Her little ones have gone away As captives before the adversary (1:5b).</i>	<i>Your sons and your daughters shall be given to another people (28:32).</i>
<i>My virgins and my young men Have gone into captivity (1:18).</i>	<i>You shall have sons and daughters but they shall not be yours, for they shall go into captivity (28:41).</i>
<i>Should women eat their offspring, The little ones who were born healthy? (2:20).</i>	<i>You shall eat the offspring of your own body, the flesh of your sons and of your daughters (28:53).</i>
<i>On the ground in the streets Lie young and old (2:21).</i>	<i>...a nation of fierce countenance who shall have no respect for the old, nor show favor to the young (28:50).</i>
<i>We are worn out, There is no rest for us (5:5).</i>	<i>And among those nations you shall find no rest (28:65).</i>

EZEKIEL - THE PROPHET-PRIEST

The Lord had warned His people that their sin would result in their removal from the promised land. This took place in three successive deportations.

First Deportation	603 B.C.	Jehoiakim left in power by Nebuchadnezzar	Sons of nobility including Daniel taken hostage
Second Deportation	597 B.C.	Jehoiakim and Jeconiah both deposed and Zedekiah placed on throne	Nobility, warriors and craftsmen taken
Third Deportation	586 B.C.	Zedekiah deposed and Gedaliah left as governor	All the inhabitants of Jerusalem and surrounding areas taken

Ezekiel was a part for this second group. They were taken to Mesopotamia and relocated by the River Chebar. This was one of the many canals that crisscross southern Mesopotamia. It is here that our story opens.

1:1	25:1	33:1
God's Judgment on Judah	Oracles against the Nations	Oracles of Salvation
Message of Judgment		Message of Restoration

The entire first part of Ezekiel deals with the subject of the judgment of God. This section is divided into two parts:

- Chapters 1-24 deal with the judgment of God against His own people.
- Chapters 25-32 turn to God's judgment against the enemies of His people.

There is a lesson here. It is that when judgment first comes, it begins with the people of God. He judges His own people first.

Ezekiel's Vision	John's Revelation
Rebuilt Temple	New Jerusalem
Ezekiel is taken in this vision to a very high mountain (40:2)	John is carried in the Spirit to a great and high mountain (21:10)

A man measures the temple with a rod (40:5-ff)	An angel measures the city with a rod (21:15-17)
Entire temple area is a perfect square (42:15-20)	Entire city is a perfect cube (21:16)
Glory of the Lord enters the temple (43:3-4)	Lord illumines His city instead of sun and moon (22:5)
No foreigner is admitted into the temple (44:9)	Nothing unclean allowed into the city (21:8, 27)
River of water flows out of the temple (47:1)	River of the water of life from the throne (22:1)
12 gates(48:30-34)	12 gates to the city (21:21)

DANIEL - PROPHECIES OF THE NATIONS

Daniel was a contemporary with Ezekiel, but their messages were very different. While Ezekiel looked to God's dealings with Israel, Daniel expanded that view to include God's dealings with the nations.

1:1	7:28	8:1	12:13
Written in the Third Person		Written in the First Person	
Seven Historical Narratives		Four Prophetic Visions	
Hebrew	2:4 Written in Aramaic	Written in Hebrew	
Prologue	Prophetic History relating to the Gentiles	Prophetic History relating primarily to the Jews	

The portion of Daniel that is written in Aramaic is given in the form of a chiastic parallel.

Dream of image of four kingdoms (2)
Rescue of Daniel's friends from fiery furnace (3)
Nebuchadnezzar's dream of the tree <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daniel's interpretation • Nebuchadnezzar's humiliation (4)
Belshazzar's feast and handwriting on wall <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daniel's interpretation • Belshazzar's death (5)
Rescue of Daniel from lion's den (6)
Night vision of four beasts (7)

As the vision of chapter 7 opens, Daniel sees the four winds of heaven that are driving the sea. Remember that the word for "wind" and the word for "spirit" are the same. Daniel would be reminded of a time when *the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters* (Genesis 1:2). Now God is again moving the waters.

Daniel 7	Daniel 8
Dream in the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon	Vision in the third year of the reign of Belshazzar the king
Successive beasts rise up out of the ocean <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Babylon • Medea-Persia • Greece • Other Kingdom 	A ram is standing by the canal; a goat comes from the west <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medea-Persia • Greece
Terrible beast has ten horns	Large horn followed by 4 smaller horns
Out comes a small horn... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three previous horns pulled up • Great boasts • Alterations in times and in law • Saints are given into this hand for a time, times and half a time • Saints win in end 	Out comes a small horn that... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grows exceedingly • Magnifies itself • Removes the regular sacrifice and the sanctuary is thrown down • 2300 mornings & evenings • Holy place will be restored

HOSEA - PROPHECIES OF THE NATIONS

Hosea writes from the heart. His book is full of passion and emotion. As you read his words, you hear the sobs of a broken heart. While Jeremiah tells us that he is weeping, Hosea reflects this attitude in short, broken sentences. As a result, there is a distinct absence of the normal rhythm and parallelism that is common to Hebrew writing. This makes it a bit harder for us to understand his message.

Hosea 1-3	Hosea 4-13	Hosea 14
Hosea's Marriage	Hosea's Message	
Gomer's Unfaithfulness Gomer's Discipline Gomer's Restoration		Ultimate restoration

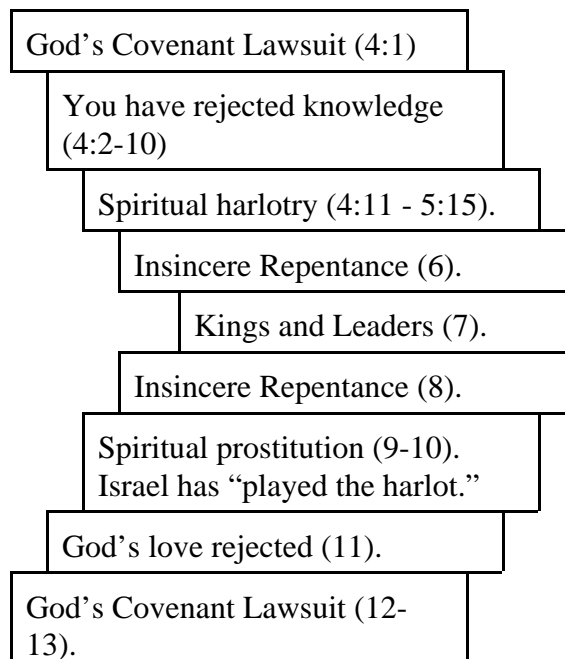
The first three chapters utilize Hosea's marriage as a living parable of God's relationship with Israel. The remainder of the book consists of a large circuit that begins and ends with a Covenant Lawsuit. Both at the outset and at the close of this section the Covenant is specifically mentioned (compare Hosea 6:1, 7 with Hosea 12:1).

Hosea was told to marry a woman who would reflect the same level of purity and devotion that Israel demonstrated toward God. He was to marry a prostitute as a picture of the people of the promise land who had prostituted their spiritual lives.

Hosea's marriage would become a paradigm for God's relationship with His people. By looking at Hosea's unfaithful wife, they would see themselves.

THE COVENANT LAWSUIT

A closer examination of the central chapters of Hosea suggest the possibility of a chiastic order to those central chapters.



JOEL - PROPHECIES OF THE NATIONS

The book contains no historical narrative. Because of this, we know virtually nothing of Joel or his readers. We do not even know when it was written.

- Joel makes no mention of the northern kingdom of Israel as a separate entity.
- When he does speak of Israel, he uses it in a sense where it seems to refer to a united covenant people of God.

Joel does not say anything about God reaching out to the Gentiles. You can read about God's program toward the Gentiles in some of the other prophetic books, but not in Joel. He is speaking to those who are family. There are times when the Lord does this. He turns to those who are family and He conducts a family time and speaks to those who are family.

1:1	2:1	2:12	2:28	3:1	3:17
Locusts	Lord’s Army	Call to Repentance	Lord’s Spirit	Judgment	Promise
Judah			Nations		
Present	Imminent		Future	Ultimate	
B.C.			A.D.		

As can be seen from this chart, the center point of Joel's book is the call to repentance.

Book Begins: Mourning
over Present Desolation



Book Ends: Rejoicing
over Future Deliverance

THE LOCUST PLAGUE

This book begins a graphic description of a locust plague. That probably does not mean much to you if you do not live in an agricultural economy, but it was devastating to those to whom Joel addressed himself.

The story of the Old Testament is a story of the people of God falling away and then being judged for their sins and then coming back in repentance. It happened again and again in a repeating cycle.

If you are a parent, then you understand this process. We went through it when we were raising our daughter. She would be warned of the consequences of disobedience. Then she would disobey. Then would come "the Day of the Father." The church experiences the

same thing. God warns and sends His prophets and eventually He says, "Enough is enough."

THE PROMISE OF THE SPIRIT

Peter identifies what is happening with a prophecy from the book of Joel. It is a prophecy of the Day of the Lord. Peter quotes this prophecy. Notice the elements of the prophecy.

- God's Spirit to be poured out.
- Sons and daughters to prophesy.
- Dreams and visions.
- Blood and fire, and vapor of smoke.
- The sun will be turned into darkness and the moon into blood.
- Call on the name of the Lord.

AMOS - THE PROPHET OF SOCIAL INJUSTICE

Amos tells us when this book was written. It was 2 years before the earthquake (1:1). This would give us an exact date if only we knew when the earthquake took place. We don't. What we do know is that this was during the time of the Divided Kingdom and that both Israel and Judah were in a time of relative prosperity.

Amos speaks against crimes against humanity. He speaks of the privilege of being a part of the people of God and the responsibilities that go with such a position.

1 - 2	3 - 6	7:1 - 9:6	9:7-14
Judgment Proclaimed	Fivefold Indictment	Five Visions	A Promise of Hope
<i>"For three transgressions and for four..."</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Israel is God's Chosen • You have not returned • Seek me and live • Religion vs. Reality • Promise of Judgment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Locust swarm • Fire • Plumb line • Summer Fruit • Altar judgment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Remnant of Israel • A Redemption for the Nations • A Restoration from Captivity

The book of Amos begins with the words with which the book of Joel end—a reference to the roaring of the Lord from Zion.

*The LORD roars from Zion
And from Jerusalem He utters His
voice (Amos 1:2; see also Joel 3:16).*

We are not entirely sure when the book of Joel was written, but it is possible that Amos picks up where Joel left off. It is for this reason that the books have this arrangement in our Bibles.

Nations	Relation to Israel
Damascus Gaza Tyre	Pagan nations with no relation to Israel
Edom Ammon Moab	Cousins to Israelites through Esau and Lot
Judah Israel	Northern & southern tribes of Israel

Amos was a shepherd by trade. He is using shepherd language. Shepherds usually protect their flocks from lions and things that go roar in the night. The Psalms present the Lord as the Shepherd of Israel. But this time it is the Lord who is doing the roaring. He is the Lion who is going to gobble up the straying sheep.

JUDGMENT PROCLAIMED

The book begins with a series of judgments against the pagan nations and then slowly makes its way closer and closer to Israel until they are also condemned.

PROMISE OF HOPE

Amos closes his prophecy with a promise of how God will ultimately *raise up the fallen booth of David* (9:11). Who is this "booth and tabernacle of David"? It is the same One who became flesh and "tabernacled" among us (John 1:14). It is a reference to Jesus. It is through His coming that we have a rebuilding of the tabernacle of David and a restoration of the people of God.

OBADIAH - PROPHECY AGAINST EDMOM

Obadiah writes to the nation of Edom in the same way that Jonah and Nahum prophesied against Assyria. Edom would be tempted to gloat over the defeat of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar and the ensuing Babylonian Captivity. This book is a warning against such gloating.

1:1	1:12	1:15
Vision against Edom	Warning against Edom	Israel's Victory
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Edom defeated despite her present strength and security (1-4) • Edom will be thoroughly plundered (5-7) • Edom will be cut off forever (8-10) 	Do not... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gloat over your brother's day • Rejoice over the sons of Judah • Enter the gate of My people • Gloat over their calamity • Loot their wealth • Stand at the fork of the road to cut down their fugitives • Imprison their survivors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Day of the Lord coming against the nations (15-16) • Israel will retake their own land (17) • Victorious Israel will rule over the surrounding nations (18-21)

Like the book of Habakkuk, the book of Obadiah addresses the issue of divine justice. In this case, the focus is specifically upon the kingdom of Edom and their mistreatment of Judah during the Babylonian conquest of Jerusalem.

*The arrogance of your heart has deceived you,
 You who live in the clefts of the rock,
 In the loftiness of your dwelling place,
 Who say in your heart, 'Who will bring me down to earth?'
 "Though you build high like the eagle,
 Though you set your nest among the stars,
 From there I will bring you down,"
 declares the LORD. (Obadiah 1:3-4).*

This language calls to mind the ancient city of Petra. By the end of the 4th century B.C., Petra would become the capital of Edom. It characterized the words of this prophecy as a city "in the cleft of the rock."

This prophecy was fulfilled quite literally in the days of the Maccabees and the Hasmonean kings. The tables were turned and Judah eventually conquered Edom. You can go today to the ancient capital city of Petra -- a great fortress built into solid rock. But you will be hard-pressed to find the Edomite.

However, if you read this short book and see only the tiny kingdom of Edom, you miss the point of the book. It is that God will judge the nations. In this regard, Edom is seen as a mere representative of all of the nations. What is true of Edom is true of all nations. This is taught in verse 15 where we read: For the day of the LORD draws near on all the nations. As you have done, it will be done to you. Your dealings will return on your own head.

The purpose of this prophecy is not merely to chastise Edom. It is so that men will repent of their wrongdoing and return to the Lord. It is so that men repent and thereby stop this prophecy from coming to pass.

Prophecy always has that purpose. It is not meant for you to use to draw a futuristic timeline. It is given for you to change your life.

JONAH - STORY OF COMPASSION

The story of Jonah is quite different from the rest of the prophets. Instead of being a book filled with prophecies and visions, this is a narrative telling the story of Jonah and his own experiences with the Lord.

Jonah commissioned to go to Nineveh (1:1-3) • Jonah arose to flee		Jonah commissioned to go to Nineveh (3:1-3) • Jonah arose and went	
Jonah and the pagan sailors (1:4-16)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yahweh threatens judgment • Sailors respond immediately • Sailors cry out to God for mercy • Captain participates in effort • The Lord spares their lives 	Jonah and the pagan Ninevites (3:3-10)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yahweh threatens judgment • Ninevites respond immediately • People cry out to God for mercy • King participates in effort • The Lord spares their lives
Jonah's prayer of repentance (1:17-2:10)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speaks of the Lord's love • Thanks God that his life and soul have been spared 	Jonah's prayer of complaint (4:1-5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complains of the Lord's love • Resentful and wishes that his life and soul would be taken
The Lord's Lesson for Jonah (4:5-11)			

The story of Jonah is a living parable. We are told of his experiences traveling to Nineveh because these will come a day when the Israelites will also find themselves “rubbing shoulders” with the Assyrians and the people of Nineveh.

If you ask most people what is the topic of the book of Jonah, they will say something regarding his being swallowed by a great fish. This is the portion of the story that is most memorable, but it is hardly the climax of the narrative. To the contrary, it merely sets the stage so that we can approach what turns out to be the climactic event.

The second half of the book of Jonah tells of his travel to Nineveh and the repentant response to his preaching. Jonah's reaction to this tremendous repentance is anger. He is angry because he does not want Nineveh's repentance; he wants Nineveh's destruction.

This brings us to what is the big idea of the book. It is focused upon God's compassion, not only for the people of Nineveh, but for all the peoples of the world. The book ends with a question and that question is meant to be asked by the reader as well as by Jonah. Is it right for God and for God's people to seek vengeance or to seek compassion? What is to be our attitude toward the people of the world?

The counterpart to Jonah is Jesus Christ who spent three days, not in the belly of a fish, but in the heart of the earth. This was God's great act of compassion, not only for Nineveh, but for all the world.

MICAH - JUDGMENT AND RESTORATION

Micah begins his prophecy with a thundering proclamation. God is coming and His coming will shake the earth. These were some troubled times from the kingdom of Judah. It was a time that saw the threat of a terrible invader from the north. The Assyrian Empire was preparing to come down upon the nation of Israel. The northern kingdom of Israel would shortly be taken into a captivity from which she would never return. The southern kingdom of Judah would also be surrounded and threatened. A great many of her cities would be carried off until only a small remnant remained.

1:1	First Oracle: Promise of Judgment and Eventual Regathering	God coming to judge Israel and Judah because of idolatry
2:12		The Lord will eventually regather His people and be their Shepherd
3:1	Second Oracle: Judgment against leaders and Israel's future glory	Judgment against Rulers and False Prophets in the Land
4:1		Future glory of the Mountain of the House of the Lord
6:1	Third Oracle: God's Covenant Lawsuit against Israel and the Ultimate Triumph of the Kingdom	The Lord charges the nation with disloyalty to the Covenant
7:8		The Lord will restore the nation, judge the earth and forgive past iniquities

Dillard and Longman's book, Introduction to the Old Testament, relate Moffatt's paraphrase of Micah 1:10-15 to capture some of the word plays:

*Tell it not in Tellington!
Wail not in Wailing!
Dust Manor will eat dirt,
Dressy Town will flee naked.
Safefold will not save,
Allchester's walls are down,
A bitter dose drinks Bitterton.
Toward Jerusalem, City of Peace,
The Lord sends war.
Harness the war-steeds,
O men of Barstead!
Zion's beginning of sinnging,
Equal to Israel's crimes.
To Welfare a last farewell!
For Trapping trapped Israel's kings.*

There a point to this literary device. Israel was a place that had all the right names, but they

had not lived up to their names. They had the labels, but there was no life behind the labels.

The Messiah from Bethlehem

Micah 5:2 contains a prophecy of the coming Messiah and foretells that He would be born in Bethlehem Ephrathah. This was the city from which David had come. This was its primary claim to fame, as it was really only a small village. Ephrathah was the place of the general area; a name that went all the way back to the days of the judges (Ruth 4:11).

Just as David had come from Bethlehem, so also the future ruler of Israel would also come from Bethlehem. He would be the One whose coming had been promised from ages past.

NAHUM - JUDGMENT ON NINEVEH

The book of Nahum is a prophecy directed at Nineveh, the capital city of Assyria. It is the sort of book that we can imagine Jonah to have penned. Indeed, the similarities between these two books are striking.

- A Both Nahum and Jonah focus upon Assyria and their capital city of Nineveh.
- A Both Nahum and Jonah contain prophecies of Nineveh's destruction.
- A Both Nahum and Jonah close their books with a question. The question at the end of the book of Jonah points to God's compassion. The question at the end of the book of Nahum points to Nineveh's continued lack of compassion for others.

The Lord takes vengeance against Nineveh (1:1-9)

- His anger poured out like fire (1:6)
- Mountains quake before Him (1:5)
- He pursues His enemies into darkness (1:8)

The Lord will destroy Nineveh (1:11-15)

- Assyrians are like drunks in their drink (1:10)
- They are consumed like stubble (1:10)
- The Lord will tear off the shackles (1:13)

Vivid description of attack on Nineveh (2:1-10)

- Warriors and shields in scarlet (2:3)
- Chariots rushing back and forth (2:3-4)
- Appear as lightning flashes (2:4)
- They stumble in their march (2:5)

Lament over fall of Nineveh, the Lion's Den (2:11-13)

Vivid description of attack on Nineveh (3:1-7)

- A mass of corpses and dead bodies (3:3)
- Bounding chariots (3:2-3)
- Swords flashing, spears gleaming (3:3)
- They stumble over the dead bodies (3:3)

Nineveh will be destroyed (3:8-13)

- Assyrians will become drunk (3:11)
- Fire consumes their gates (3:13)
- Her great men bound with fetters (3:10)

Nineveh consumed

- They are consumed with fire (3:15)
- They are scattered on the mountains (3:18)
- The sun rises and her armies flee (3:17)

The fall of Nineveh took place in 612 B.C. when a coalition of Chaldeans, Medes and Scythians attacked the city. Nahum's prophecy is vivid in its language and he utilizes a number of word pictures to describe the destruction of the city.

HABAKKUK - PROBLEM & PRAISE

The book of Habakkuk serves as that prophet's prayer journal. He looks at the problems of his day and he is driven to his knees. He asks God some very hard questions and God answers those questions, bringing from Habakkuk a response of praise.

1:1	1:12	3:1
Habakkuk's Problem		Habakkuk's Praise
Problem #1: Why does God allow wicked practices to continue in the land?	Problem #2: Why will God use wicked people to punish others?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For the Person of God (3:1-3) • For the Power of God (3:4-7) • For the Purpose of God (3:8-16) • Because of Faith in God (3:17-19)
God's Answer: I will eventually bring judgment (1:5-11)	God's Answer: I will judge even those whom I use for judgment (2:2-20)	

Habakkuk's prayer begins with a question: Why does God allow evil to continue? God's reply is that judgment will eventually come at the hands of invading Babylon. You have to know and understand that the capital city of the Chaldeans was Babylon and every time you see Babylon in the Bible from the Tower of Babel in Genesis 11 to the Harlot that is called Babylon in Revelation 17-18, the name "Babylon" is villified and serves as an image of all that is bad with the world. Now we read that it is Babylon that comes and takes the people of God into captivity. God says to Habakkuk, "I am not merely allowing this to take place, I am the one *raising up the Chaldeans* (1:6). This is a picture of the sovereignty of God. He is in control, not only when good things happen, but when bad things happen, too.

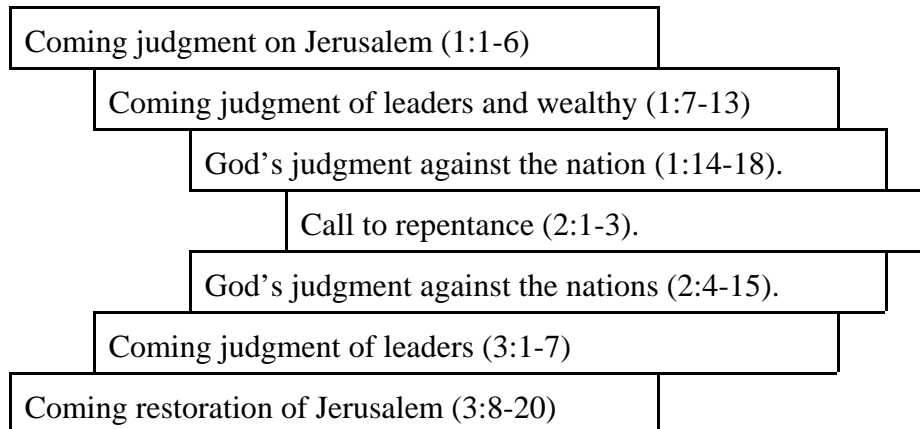
This brings Habakkuk to a new question: How can God use evil people to do His work? It is true, the people of Israel had turned away from God. But the Babylonians were even worse. The answer is that God will ultimately bring judgment upon Babylon. Five woes or curses are pronounced against Babylon. These woes serve as a reminder that the people of Judah had become just as guilty as the people of Babylon.

There are five woes proclaimed...	
2:6	<i>Woe to him who increases what is not his</i>
2:9	<i>Woe to him who gets evil gain for his house, to put his nest on high</i>
2:12	<i>Woe to him who builds a city with bloodshed, And founds a town with violence!</i>
2:15	<i>Woe to you who make your neighbors drink, Who mix in your venom even to make them drunk So as to look on their nakedness!</i>
2:19	<i>Woe to him who says to a piece of wood, "Awake!" To a mute stone, "Arise!"</i>

This picture of the judgment of God brings about a song of adoration and praise from the prophet.

ZEPHANIAH - JUDGMENT AND RESTORATION

Zephaniah came on the scene only slightly before Jeremiah. While Jeremiah prophesied over a space of many years, the book of Zephaniah is only three chapters. They both speak of the judgment that is soon to befall Jerusalem.



From the very beginning Zephaniah says that judgment is coming against the land. He tells us that the Lord is going to remove all things from the face of the earth. In poetic fashion, he then lists those things upon the face of the earth that shall be removed. His list calls to mind a reverse listing of that which was described in the six days of creation.

*"I will completely remove all things
From the face of the earth," declares the
LORD.
I will remove man and beast;
I will remove the birds of the sky
And the fish of the sea,
And the ruins along with the wicked;
And I will cut off man from the face of the
earth," declares the LORD. (Zephaniah
1:2-3).*

In chapter 2, the prophet addresses Judah as that "nation without shame." This is the language of non-repentance. It is a description of those who are still in their sin and who are proud of it. Verse 3 gives three commands to such a nation:

- Seek the Lord
- Seek righteousness
- Seek humility

The prophecy ends with a promise of eventual restoration. The restoration is seen, not only in terms of God's burning anger, but also a time when people are given "purified lips" that they may call upon the name of the Lord. Where do we see this fulfilled in Scripture? I believe that we see this fulfilled in Acts 2.

- People are gathered from around the nations.
- God gives the sign of tongues — purified lips.
- As a result, they call upon the name of the Lord
- From there, the message of the Gospel goes out to the world.

In verses 11 and 12, we see the results of God's saving work in the lives of His people:

- They will feel no shame
- They will be a humble and lowly people
- They will take refuge in the name of the Lord.

They are without shame because their sin has been removed. This is not shameless pride. Rather it is the absence of shame of one who has the Lord as his refuge.

HAGGAI - CALL TO REBUILD THE TEMPLE

The prophets Haggai and Zechariah were contemporaries, both living in Judah in the days following the return from Babylon. The work of rebuilding the temple had been halted and it was the preaching of these two prophets that motivated that work to be resumed.

1:1-15	2:1-9	2:10-19	2:20-23
First Sermon	Second Sermon	Third Sermon	Closing words to Zerubbabel
People's Work Prominent	God's Work Prominent		
Question: <i>Should the house of God continue to be desolate?</i> Twofold Response: • Reverence • Work	Question: <i>How does this temple compare with the former temple?</i> Twofold Response: • Nations will come • The glory will come	Question: <i>Is holiness contagious?</i> Twofold Response: • People are unclean • Blessings will come	
People reluctant to restore covenant fellowship	People unconvinced of restoration possibilities	People unfit to take part in restoration	Zerubbabel as symbol of the people
Charge to begin Building	Encouragement to Finish		

Haggai lived in a day of past glory. The Temple was being rebuilt, but it fell far short of the glory of the former Temple. The people who were working on its rebuilding could not help but to compare it to Solomon's Temple and note that it did not measure up to the original.

It is hard to continue in faithfulness when you can't see the results. This book is written to combat that kind of discouragement.

"And I will shake all the nations; and they will come with the wealth of all nations; and I will fill this house with glory," says the LORD of hosts. 8 The silver is Mine, and the gold is Mine," declares the LORD of hosts (2:7-8).

Haggai prophesies that silver and gold will be brought to the Lord by the nations.

This was very literally fulfilled in Haggai's day. The very people who had opposed the rebuilding of the Temple were ordered by the Persian King Darius to pay the full cost of the rebuilding of the Temple from the royal revenues in their own taxation district (Ezra 6:8).

On that day,' declares the LORD of hosts, 'I will take you, Zerubbabel, son of Shealtiel, My servant,' declares the LORD, 'and I will make you like a signet ring, for I have chosen you,'" declares the LORD of hosts. (Haggai 2:23).

The closing promise of this book is that Zerubbabel would be made like a signet ring. A signet ring had a special use:

- It served as a person's legal signature
- It validated royal authority.
- It was a guarantee of a future promise.

ZECHARIAH - VISIONS OF VICTORY

The name Zechariah means, “The Lord Remembers.” This is an appropriate name for the giver of this prophecy, for he tells us of how the Lord will remember His people.

1:1	Eight Visions	Four Horsemen
1:18		Horns and smiths: Judgment goes forth
2:1		Measuring Line: Flee from Babylon
3:1		Joshua the Priest
4:1		Zerubbabel and the Lampstand
5:1		Flying Scroll: Judgment goes forth
5:5		Woman and Basket: Build in Shinar
6:1		Four Chariots
7:1	Two Sermons	A Call for True Justice
8:1		A Promise of Future Restoration in Jerusalem
9:1	Two Burdens	Judgment on the Enemies of Israel
12:1		The Coming of the Lord

Zechariah and Haggai were contemporaries. The result of their preaching is that the people were motivated to resume the work of rebuilding the Temple. This tells me an important lesson about prophecy. Biblical prophecy is given to motivate us to action.

The book of Zechariah is paralleled in the New Testament by the book of Revelation. As seen in the following chart, there are a number of things that are introduced in Zechariah that are paralleled in the book of Revelation.

Zechariah	Revelation
Four horsemen/chariots (1 & 6)	Four horsemen (6)
Man with a measuring line measures Jerusalem (2:1-2)	Man with a rod measures the Temple Mount (11:1-2)
Picture of Satan ready to accuse Joshua the high priest (3:1)	Satan described as accusing the brethren (12:10)
Lampstand and two olive trees said to represent the two anointed ones (4:1-14)	Lampstand and two olive trees said to represent the two witnesses (11:3-12)
Flying scroll signifies the curse that is going over the land (5:1-3)	Seals of the book bring forth judgments upon the land (6:1-17).

The book ends with a vivid picture of the coming of the Lord in victory. This echoes the big idea of the book of Revelation—it is that Jesus wins!

MALACHI - THE LAST MESSAGE

The book of Malachi can be outlined in two major points:

- God's love for Israel and her unfaithful response (1-2).
- The Day of the Lord and the purging of Israel (3-4).

The book is made up of a series of statements and corresponding questions between God and the people of Israel.

1:1	God says: "I have loved you"	People answer: "How have you loved us?"	God has blessed Israel above other nations
1:6	God says: "If I am a father, where is my honor?"	People answer: "How have we despised your name?"	The people have not offered their best to the Lord
2:10	People ask: "If we are brothers, why do we deal treacherously with one another?"		The people have defrauded one another, especially in the area of divorce
2:17	God says: "You have wearied the Lord with your words"	People answer: "How have we wearied Him?"	The people have asked for justice, but have not acted justly. God wants justice.
3:1	Promise of a Coming Messenger.		
3:6	God says: "Return to Me and I will return to you"	People answer: "How shall we return?"	The people are to bring the whole tithe into the storehouse
3:13	God says: "Your words have been arrogant against Me"	People answer: "What have we spoken against you?"	They have taken the attitude that it is vain to serve the Lord ("What's in it for me?")
3:16	Epilogue: Promise of Coming Judgment and Restoration		

Following the rebuilding of the temple, the people waited for the presence of the Lord to come as it had in the days of Solomon. Time went on and the promise remained unfulfilled. This promise that the Lord would come to His temple is repeated here in Malachi. But here we are told of the coming of one who would precede the coming of the Lord. It is the MESSENGER - the "Malachi" of God.

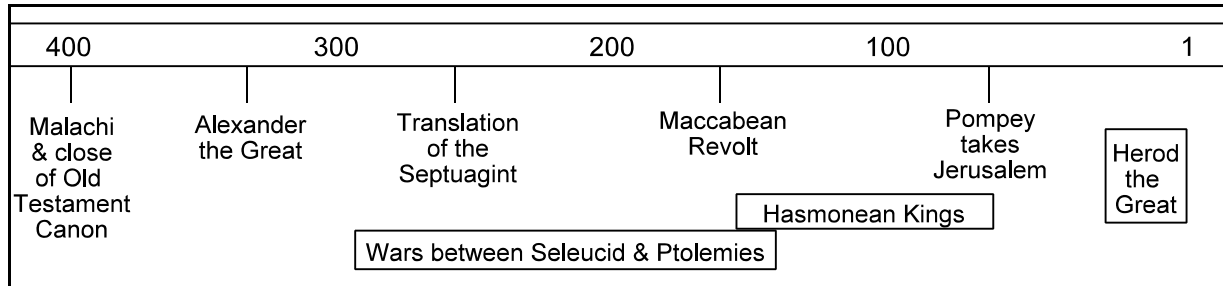
The duty of this messenger would be to clear the way before the Lord. He would be a forerunner. He would get the people ready to

meet the Lord. They would meet Him when He comes suddenly to His temple. We can recall the vividness of the description with which the Gospels describe the entrance of Jesus into the Temple. Coins clatter. Tables are overturned. A whiplash cracks. The Lord has come suddenly to His Temple.

The warning here is evident. It is that when the Lord comes, He is to come in judgment. His judgment is against those whose relationship with Him has been characterized by mediocrity.

BETWEEN THE TESTAMENTS

From the close of the Old Testament to the beginning of the New Testament is a space of roughly 400 years. These 400 “silent years” were only silent in the sense that there were no prophets from God who were writing Scripture. They were years which brought about dramatic and sweeping changes throughout the ancient world.



400 B.C. — Malachi, the last of the Old Testament prophets, pens the final book of the Old Testament.

333 B.C. — Alexander the Great begins his conquest of the ancient world. Within ten years he has conquered everything from Greece to India. This has a dramatic impact upon the language and the culture of the ancient world.

323 B.C. — Alexander dies and his empire is broken up between many rival generals and kingdoms. After 20 years of fighting, Ptolemy is in control of Egypt and Seleucus is ruling Mesopotamia and Anatolia. Israel becomes a buffer state between these two rival superpowers.

250 B.C. — Building of the Library at Alexandria and the translation of the Septuagint, the Hebrew Scriptures translated into Greek.

202 B.C. — Hannibal loses to the Roman general Scipio at the Battle of Zama, resulting in the defeat of Carthage.

190 B.C. — The Seleucid king Antiochus III loses the Battle of Magnesia to Rome and his son, Antiochus IV taken as a hostage to Rome.

175 B.C. — Antiochus IV escapes from Rome and becomes new king of Seleucid Kingdom. He begins Hellenization program in Israel. He fights against Ptolemies until ordered out of Egypt by Rome.

167 B.C. — Maccabean revolt begins in Judah. The resulting war continues to escalate until Judah gains its independence from the Seleucids.

142 B.C. — The Hasmonean Kings (descendants of the Maccabees) begin to reign in Jerusalem.

63 B.C. — Roman general Pompey takes Jerusalem and makes Judah into a Roman province, renaming it Judea. Idumean prince Antipater is made the power behind the throne. His sons, Phaesel and Herod, become local governors.

43 B.C. — Jews revolt at the death of Antipater. Herod flees to Rome.

40 B.C. — Herod the Great recognized by the Roman senate as the King of the Jews.

37 B.C. — Herod retakes Judea, Samaria, and Galilee by force of arms. His construction projects include a massive rebuilding of the temple.

MATTHEW - JESUS THE KING

The book of Matthew is the first of the four Gospel Accounts. The word *gospel* means “good news” and we call them by this designation because they relate the good news narrative of how Jesus lived, taught, and died on the cross and rose again.

Matthew 1:1 - 4:11	Matthew 4:12 - 25:46	Matthew 26-28
Introductory narratives	Five narratives & resulting sermons	Death & Resurrection narratives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Genealogy • Birth narrative & assassination attempt (2) • Forerunner and Baptism of the King (3) • Temptation (4) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Call of disciples / Sermon on the Mount (4-7) • Miracles / Discipleship (8-10) • Unpardonable sin / Parables of the Kingdom (11-13) • Transfiguration / Forgiveness (14-18) • Road to Jerusalem / Olivet Discourse (19-25) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Last Supper and arrest (26) • Trial & Crucifixion (27) • Resurrection (28)

The central portion of the book of Matthew consists of five discourses, each of which is preceded by a long introductory narrative and each of which closes with the same phrase: “When Jesus had finished these words...” (7:28; 11:1; 13:43; 19:1; 26:1).

Introductory Narrative	Passage	Discourse Topic
Calling of first disciples (Matt 4)	Matthew 5-7	Sermon on the Mount
Miraculous works of Jesus (Matt 8-9)	Matthew 10	Instructions to the Twelve
Unpardonable sin (Matt 12)	Matthew 13	Parables of the Kingdom
Confession & Transfiguration (Matt 16-17)	Matthew 18	Teachings on Forgiveness
Rejection in the Temple (Matt 19-23)	Matthew 24-25	Olivet Discourse

Matthew presents Jesus as the King of the Jews. He begins his book with the genealogy of the king, showing Jesus to be the legal heir to Abraham and David through the royal lineage. He then presents a contrast between Jesus and Herod, the earthly king of the Jews. The magi come and recognize the true king.

Because Matthew is a Jew writing to other Jews, he speaks of how the kingdom of God will be taken away from them, and be given to a nation producing the fruit of it (21:43). He

refers to a number of Gentile women in the genealogy of the King and he tells of how the chief priests bribed the guards into relaying a false story of how the disciples had stolen the body of Jesus (28:12-15).

The book ends on a kingdom theme as the disciples are told by the risen King to go and make disciples of the nations.

Matthew speaks of the Kingdom of Heaven while the other Gospel accounts refer to the Kingdom of God.

MARK - JESUS THE SERVANT

Mark is the shortest of the four Gospels and takes us on a quick pace through the ministry of Jesus. In traditional Jewish style, he links his sentences with the conjunction “and.” It is full of action as well as of short, vivid details. Mark is notable for his use of the term “immediately.” We feel as though we are rushing through the ministry of Jesus at breakneck speed. He is particularly fond of using the historic present (noted in the NAS by the use of an asterix).

1:1	1:14	7:24	8:27	8:31	11:1	14:1
Prologue	Public Ministry		“Who do men say that I am?”	Private Ministry	Public Ministry	Death & Resurrection
Baptism & Temptation	Galilee	Gentile Regions		Road to Jerusalem	Jerusalem	
Service of the Servant				Suffering of the Servant		

Mark presents Jesus as the servant of God. One needs not know the genealogy of a servant, so Mark omits any genealogy. Neither does he tell us any of the birth or childhood of Jesus, for that is not significant to the role of a servant. The important thing about a servant is what he does. Therefore, Mark has as his focus the works of Jesus. There are only three chapters in Mark that contain extended sermons and teachings (chapters 4 and 12-13).

Mark gives attention to short, vivid details. At the feeding of the 5000, he tells us that the people sat down in groups of 100's and 50's.

Mark does not presuppose that his readers are familiar with the Old Testament. Indeed, he only quotes from the Old Testament once, though he often indicates that Jesus quoted from it regularly. It is commonly thought that Mark directs his message to the Romans.

When Mark gives the instructions to the twelve as they are sent out, he makes no mention of the prohibition against preaching to the Samaritans or to the Gentiles.

Mark presents the most human picture of Jesus. His focus is often upon the emotions of Jesus. For example, it is only in Mark that we learn that Jesus loved the rich young ruler.

The movement in the first part of the book is designed to bring us to the question asked by Jesus in Mark 8:28 — “Who do you say that I am?” We are to answer with Peter, “You are the Christ.”

The second half of the book tells us what it means to believe that Jesus is the Christ.

- It means that Jesus is the Son of God whose glory has only temporarily been veiled. That glory peeks out for a moment in time at the Transfiguration (9:1-9).
- It means that John the Baptist fulfilled the promise of how Elijah would come before the arrival of the Lord (9:11-13).
- It means that you should remove anything in your life that stops you from following Jesus (9:35-50).
- It means that the followers of Jesus are called to serve others as He came to serve and to give His life (10).

There has been some disagreement among scholars regarding the last chapter of Mark. Several of the oldest manuscripts do not contain all of those verses, yet they do show indications that this ending was known even at the time they were copied.

LUKE - JESUS THE MASTER TEACHER

Luke's account has its focus upon the teachings of Jesus. While several of the Gospel accounts relate parables of Jesus, Luke is distinct in giving the longest parables of Jesus.

- The Parable of the Prodigal Son.
- The Parable of the Unjust Steward.
- The Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus.
- The Parable of the Good Samaritan.

Luke 1 - 3	Luke 4 - 9	Luke 10 - 18	Luke 19 -24
Birth and Baptism of Jesus	The Identity of Jesus	Jesus... set His face to go to Jerusalem (9:51)	The Parables and Teachings of Jesus
Judea & Jordan	Galilee		Death, Burial, and Resurrection of Jesus
Preparation	Miracles		On the Road to Jerusalem
30 years	2½ Years	6 Months	At Jerusalem
			Sacrifice
			1 Week

Luke is unique in giving us the exact dates for the beginning of the ministry of John the Baptist. He does so by tying it into the reigns of the Roman emperors.

Luke does not speak much about Jesus having fulfilled Old Testament prophecies. Though a number of the prophecies are mentioned, they do not have the same emphasis of which we find in Matthew where we hear that: "This took place that it might be fulfilled..."

Luke tends to avoid the use of Hebraisms.

- He uses "Master" or "Teacher" instead of "Rabbi."
- He describes a "Lawyer" instead of a "Scribe."
- He usually has Jesus say, "Truly" instead of "Amen."
- He speaks of the "Lake" rather than the "Sea" of Galilee. Only the Jews would have referred to a body of water eight miles across as a Sea. This is not surprising. Luke is a Greek and he addresses his book to one who has a Greek name.

Luke often speaks of those who are social outcasts.

- Matthew speaks of the Magi coming

to see the baby Jesus, but Luke's focus is on the visit of the shepherds.

- Luke highlights tax collectors like Zaccheus (19:2-8), Levi (5:27-29), and even tells a parable about a Pharisee and a tax collector (18:10-13).
- Luke speaks of Samaritans in the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:33-ff) as well as telling of the thankful leper who was a Samaritan (17:16).
- Luke speaks of the ministry of Jesus to the poor—he relates the story of the rich man and a poor man named Lazarus (16:20-ff). He relates the instructions of Jesus that when you throw a party, you should invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind (14:13) and he tells us that Jesus was anointed to preach the gospel to the poor... to proclaim release to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to free the downtrodden (4:18).

JOHN - JESUS THE SON OF GOD

John gives a concluding purpose statement at the close of the account: *Many other signs therefore Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; ³¹ but these have been written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name. (John 20:30-31).* This double purpose forms an outline of the book:

1:1	1:19	12:1	21:1
<i>Written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God...</i>		<i>...and that believing you may have life in His name</i>	
Prologue	Period of 3 years	Passion Week	Epilogue
Focus upon the ministry and miracles of Jesus		Focus upon Jesus teaching his disciples and the events of the death, burial & resurrection	
Public Ministry		Private Ministry	
Throughout Palestine		Jerusalem	Galilee

Throughout the first portion of the book, there are seven signs that are presented. These miraculous signs are meant to show us that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. The final and eighth sign is of the resurrection of Christ.

2:1-11	4:46-54	5:1-18	6:1-14	6:16-21	9:1-41	11:1-44	20:1-28
Water to wine	Son healed	Lame man at pool	Feeding of 5,000	Walking on water	Blind man healed	Lazarus raised	Christ raised
Seven selected signs							Supreme sign

We are meant to see these signs through the eyes of the disciples. They are said to be growing in their belief as they see the signs and we are meant to grow with them.

- *“We have found the Messiah” (1:41).*
- *“We have found Him of whom Moses in the Law and also the Prophets wrote” (1:43).*
- *His disciples believed in Him (2:11).*
- *Jesus said therefore to the twelve, “You do not want to go away also, do you?” ⁶⁸ Simon Peter answered Him, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have words of eternal life. ⁶⁹ And we have believed and have come to know that You are the Holy One of God.” (John 6:67-69).*
- *“Now we know that You know all things, and have no need for anyone to question You; by this we believe that You came from God” (John 16:33).*
- *So the other disciple who had first come to the tomb entered then also, and he saw and believed (John 20:8).*
- *Then He said to Thomas, “Reach here your finger, and see My hands; and reach here your hand, and put it into My side; and be not unbelieving, but believing.” ²⁸ Thomas answered and said to Him, “My Lord and my God!” (John 20:27-28).*

ACTS - THE WITNESS OF THE CHURCH

The Gospel of Luke and the book of Acts are written as companion volumes. They are part one and part two of the work of Jesus. Both volumes are addressed to one named Theophilus. Acts fills in the gap between the Gospels and the Epistles.

The Gospels	Acts BRIDGES the Gap	The Epistles
End in Jerusalem with no church		Directed to churches throughout the Roman world
The gospel is given mainly to the Jews		Churches filled with Gentile believers
Ends in Jerusalem		Ends in Rome

The focus in Acts begins with the ministry of Peter and gradually shifts to focus upon Paul and his ministry as the gospel goes out from Jerusalem to eventually make its way to Rome. A number of imprisonments take place, but the book ends with Paul preaching the gospel unhindered.

1	Primarily Peter	Church Established	Preparation	Church Foretold
2				Church Born
3			Persecution	Church Witnessing
6				Church Organized
7	Peter and Others	Church Scattered		Church Expanding
9				Church Dispersed
10			Gentiles in the Church	
13			First Missionary Journey	
15	Primarily Paul	Church Extended	Church in Conference	
16			Second Missionary Journey	
19			Third Missionary Journey	
21			Paul Imprisoned	Paul in Jerusalem
24				Paul in Caesarea
27				Paul in Rome

In Acts 1:8, Jesus tells His disciples that they shall be witnesses of Him and that this witness will begin in Jerusalem and then make its way to Judea, Samaria, and to the uttermost parts of the world. This movement is followed throughout the book as the disciples bear legal testimony in various courts.

Two separate trials are described before proconsuls and a number of other trials take place before other magistrates. In each of these trials, the Christians are found to be innocent of any wrongdoing. This suggests one of the purposes of this book is to be a legal defense of Christianity.

ROMANS - THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD

The epistle is divided into two major parts. The first 11 chapters form the first section. They set forth Paul's teaching on the righteousness of God, particularly as it relates to salvation and to the people of God. The second section (chapters 12-16) gives us the practical ramifications of the doctrines presented in the preceding section. This part tells us how we ought to live and conduct ourselves on the basis of the salvation provided on our behalf.

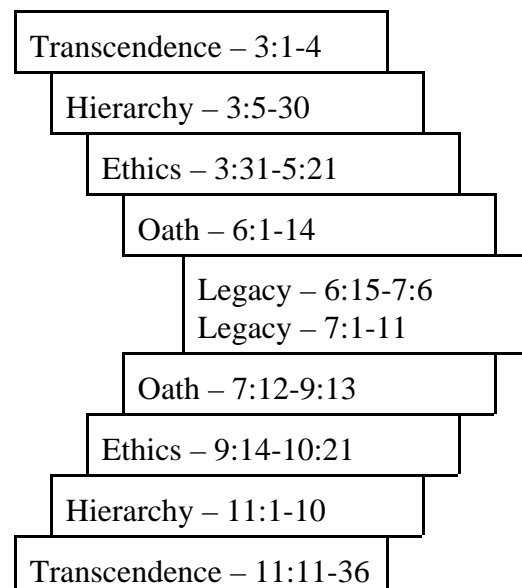
Prologue	DOCTRINAL				PRACTICAL	Epilogue
1:1	1:17	3:19	6:1	9:1	12:1	15:14
Forward	Man’s Sinful State	Justified: Reckoned as righteous	Sanctified: Living as righteous	Israel and the Church	Instructions in Righteous Living	Final Word
	Sin	Salvation	Sanctification	Sovereignty	Service	
God’s Justice	In the Law	Imputed	Obedied	In Election	Displayed in Life	
	Life By Faith				Service By Faith	
	Need of Salvation	Way of Salvation	Life of Salvation	Scope of Salvation	Service of Salvation	
	Penalty deserved	Pardon granted	Power given	Promises fulfilled	Partnership in ministry	

Romans is the most doctrinal and the most systematic of all of Paul's writings. There are personal notes in chapter 1 and in chapters 15-16, but virtually none in the central part of the epistle.

The major focus of this book is on the righteousness of God. It looks at how God is a righteous judge and how his righteousness operates in our salvation.

The first seven chapters are characterized by an argumentative style as seen by the repeated expression: "What shall we say then?" (Romans 4:1; 6:1; 7:7; 8:31; 9:14; 9:30). Paul anticipates objections that will be posed by his readers and then he answers them. This gives the book a "question and answer" format. Such a format is designed to have you think along with the author and to follow his train of arguments.

An interesting pattern is seen when we examine the "God forbid" Statements in Romans:



1 CORINTHIANS - STRIVING FOR UNITY

Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians is addressed to a church beset with a variety of problems. The issues ranged from a yearning to secular philosophy to pride to moral questions, marriages, ritual observances, speaking in tongues, and the resurrection. At the heart of all of these issues was a need for unity.

Chapters 1-6	Chapters 7-10	Chapters 11-16
Unity	Questions	Errors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Problem of Divisions • Need for Unity • Necessary Divisions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single & Married • Meat and Idols 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women & Worship • Lord's Supper • Gifts • Resurrection

In 1 Corinthians 16:8 Paul mentions his plans to *remain in Ephesus until Pentecost*. While waiting at Ephesus, Paul receives news from Corinth by way of a visit from several Corinthian believers. There seem to have been at least two groups who visited Paul and who reported of the situation at Corinth.

An Official Delegation: *And I rejoice over the coming of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus; because they have supplied what was lacking on your part. (1 Corinthians 16:17).*

From what Paul says a few verses earlier, it is evident that Stephanus was one of the founding members of the church at Corinth. He seems to have headed up an official delegation from the church that carried a letter to Paul asking key questions that were at issue in the church: *Now concerning the things about which you wrote... (1 Corinthians 7:1).*

This letter from the church at Corinth to Paul asks questions about divorce and remarriage (chapter 7), about the eating of foods that had been sacrificed to idols (chapters 8-10), about the proper use of spiritual gifts (chapters 12-14) and about the doctrine of the resurrection (chapter 15).

An Unofficial Delegation: *For I have been informed concerning you, my brethren, by Chloe's people, that there are quarrels among you. (1 Corinthians 1:11).*

Another group of people had also paid a visit to Paul. This groups had been sent by Chloe, possibly members of her family or her servants. They reported problems that were in the church that may have been omitted by the official delegation. This problems included...

- Divisions within the church (1:11).
- An exaltation of secular philosophy (3:18).
- Spiritual arrogance (4:18).
- Immorality within the church (5:1).
- Christians bringing lawsuits against other believers (6:1).
- Disorder in the Lord's Supper (11:18-21).
- Abuse of spiritual gifts (12:1 - 14:40).

Paul writes this epistle in response to these problems and questions, sending it with Timothy who is charged with making certain that his teachings are carried out (4:17).

2 CORINTHIANS - MINISTRY AND GIFTS

Paul's second epistle to the Corinthians gives us more insights on the life and ministry of Paul than any other of the epistles. He does this for two reasons; first, to teach us about the grace of God in salvation, secondly, to vindicate his message and ministry to those who were questioning its truthfulness.

Chapter 1-7	Chapters 8-9	Chapters 10-13
A Presentation of Paul's Apostolic Ministry	An Encouragement of the Corinthians' Financial Ministry	The Defense of Paul's Apostolic Ministry
Personal	Practical	Personal

A Persecuted Apostle

Paul has gone through some difficult times. There has been persecution and it has gone on for years. He writes in this epistle about comfort and affliction and he speaks from personal experience. He knows how to be comforted. If you want to know how to deal with a problem, sometimes it helps to find one who has struggled with that same problem and who has overcome it.

Between Two Worlds

This epistle contains a great deal of biography, yet it also speaks a great deal of spiritual and heavenly realities. That is because Paul was a man who lived in two worlds. On the one hand, he was involved in the "nuts and bolts" of church planting. On the other hand, he was regularly mindful that there is a great deal more to reality than what we see with our eyes.

Introduction (1:1-11)

Travel Plans: Why Paul didn't come to Corinth (1:12 - 2:13)

Presentation of Paul's Apostolic Ministry (2:14 - 7:16)

Collection of a Love Gift for the Jerusalem Church (8-9)

Defense of Paul's Apostolic Ministry (10:1 - 12:10)

Travel Plans: Paul's upcoming trip to Corinth (12:11 - 13:10)

Conclusion (13:11-14)

The center point of this epistle is upon the very practical application that would see a love gift collected for the believers in Jerusalem. The lesson is that our world view and our ministry perspective ought to drive us to action. Paul's apostolic ministry resulted in a call to the church at Corinth to give of their money to the needs of believers in other places.

GALATIANS - FREEDOM IN CHRIST

Galatians is the charter of freedom from externalism in worship and from frustration in the personal spiritual life. It is the book that sets the believer free.

Romans	Galatians
Calm reflection	Passionate and emotional
Christianity in the study	Christianity on the battlefield
One of the later epistles	One of the earlier epistles
Justification through faith set forth systematically	Justification through faith defended from attacks
Our Constitution	Our Declaration of Independence

Certain Jewish teachers had come from Jerusalem teaching that one had to become a Jew in order to be saved (Acts 15:1). They were stressing circumcision and the keeping of the Law. They presented themselves as having authority from the church at Jerusalem and they seem to have questioned the legitimacy of Paul's apostleship. Paul has several purposes in writing:

- To establish his apostleship as being independent of Jerusalem and the other apostles. He does this, not as an end in itself, but to show that his gospel came from the Lord, not from some church council.

- To demonstrate that a man is justified through faith alone. If salvation can come in any other way, then Christ died in vain.
- To establish the method of Christian living that is not according to the keeping of the Law, but through the Spirit's work in our lives as we live in faith and in love.

These three purposes correspond to an outline of the book. Paul takes two chapters to deal with each section.

Chapters 1-2	Chapters 3-4	Chapters 5-6
History	Doctrine	Practice
Paul's Apostleship and his Gospel come from the Lord	Man is Justified through Faith Alone	We are to walk by Faith and Love
Vindication	Exposition	Application
Testimonial and Apologetical	Doctrinal and Argumentative	Practical and Encouraging
Source of the Gospel	Defense of the Gospel	Application of the Gospel
The Gospel is from God, "not according to man" (1:11)	The Gospel is Superior to the Law in what it is able to Accomplish	The Gospel of the Spirit: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Live by the Spirit • Walk by the Spirit

EPHESIANS - THE BODY OF CHRIST

The epistle to the Ephesians is divided into two major sections. The first section tells you what you need to KNOW. The second section tells you what you need to DO about what you know.

1:1	1:15	2:1	3:1	4:1	4:17	5:17	6:10
Wealth of the Christian				Walk of the Christian			
Praise	Paul’s prayer	Past versus present	Paul’s prayer	Call for unity	Call for new walk		Call for new armor
Blessings in Christ		Experience of salvation	Growth	Christian Conduct			Armor
We in Christ				Christ in us			
Work of God				Walk of the Christian			
Heavenly Standing				Earthly Walk			
Know		Remember	Grow	Walk			Stand

The first three chapters describe the WEALTH of the Christian. Paul speaks seven times of the "riches" and the "inheritance" that we have in Christ.

- 1:7 "according to the riches of His grace"
- 1:11 "we have obtained an inheritance"
- 1:14 "a pledge of our inheritance"
- 1:18 "the riches of the glory of His inheritance"
- 2:7 "the surpassing riches of His grace"
- 3:8 "the unfathomable riches of His grace"
- 3:16 "the riches of His glory"

Chapters 4-6 give the WALK of the Christian. We are exhorted five times to walk in a proper way (in chapter 6 this is changed to "stand firm").

- 4:1 "walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called"
- 4:17 "walk no longer just as the

Gentiles also walk"

- 5:2 "walk in love"
- 5:8 "walk as children of light"
- 5:15 "be careful how you walk"
- 6:11 "stand firm against the schemes of the devil"
- 6:13 "stand firm"
- 6:14 "Stand firm"

Ephesians is a letter about the CHURCH - the body of Christ. The church is described here as...

- A body (Ephesians 1:22-23; 4:4; 4:16).
- A building (Ephesians 2:19-22).
- A bride (Ephesians 5:25-27; 5:32).

Characteristics of the Epistle

- There are very few personal notes or biographical references within the book.
- There are a number of very long sentences within the epistle.

Ephesians 1:3-14

- Ephesians 1:15-23
- Ephesians 3:1-7
- Ephesians 3:8-12

PHILIPPIANS - JOY IN THE JOURNEY

Paul is writing these words from prison. He is in prison and he has been in prison for a long time. He had first been arrested in Jerusalem. He had been transferred as a prisoner to Caesarea where he had languished in a dungeon for two years. More recently, he had been brought to Rome and there his imprisonment continued for another two years. It is from here that he writes this epistle that could be entitled, "Paul's Ode to Joy."

Chapter 1	Chapter 2	Chapter 3	Chapter 4
Paul's Thanksgiving in his Circumstances	Examples of True Servants	Warnings against False Servants	Final Exhortations and Rejoicing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thankfulness • Prayer • Exhortations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jesus • Timothy • Epaphroditus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paul (pre-salvation) • Enemies of the cross 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stand firm • Battling believers • Rejoice • Don't be anxious

Thanksgiving

Paul begins his message with thanksgiving. He is thankful to the Lord as he remembers the Philippian believers. He has been reminded of those Philippian believers by a gift that has come to him from them. Yet this is more than a mere thank you letter. Paul is thankful, not only for the fact of their gift, but that it means they are participating in the ministry of the gospel. It has been an ongoing participation. It started when they first came to Christ and it has continued through to the present.

There is a lesson here. It is that when someone really participates in the gospel through faith, the result will be that such a one will continue to participate in the gospel through their continuing actions.

Special Characteristics

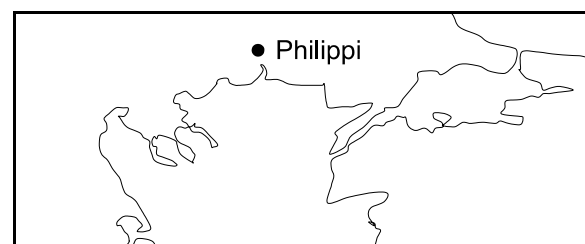
- Paul writes this epistle from prison, yet it is an epistle filled with joy. The words "joy" and "rejoice" are found throughout the epistle.
- This epistle contains no quotations from the Old Testament. The believers in

Philippi are mostly Greek and Roman and they are relatively unfamiliar with the Old Testament.

- Paul sends his thanks to this church for their gift of money to his ministry. At the same time, he shares how he has learned to be content both in poverty as well as in prosperity.

The Kenosis of Christ

Philippians 2:7 speaks of how Christ "emptied Himself." This description of the incarnation has been the source of debate with regard to our understanding of what was involved in the person of Jesus. Of what did He empty from Himself to take on flesh? To say that He emptied Himself of His deity would imply that He ceased to be divine. A better way of understanding it would be to say that Christ emptied Himself of His glorious prerogatives. This is explained in verse 8 that tells us "He humbled Himself."



COLOSSIANS - CHRIST AS HEAD OF THE BODY

Paul writes this epistle from prison. Although he is in prison, he delights in the fact that the Colossians have been redeemed and set free in Christ (1:14).

Chapter 1	Chapter 2	Chapter 3	Chapter 4
Doctrinal		Practical	
The Supremacy of Christ	The Fulness of Christ	The Image of Christ	Servants of Christ
What we are to believe about the person of Christ		How we are to live as a result of our union to Christ	

The epistles of Colossians and Ephesians have some marked similarities. They are written at the same time, are carried by the same person, and contain some similar themes. At the same time, there is a difference in approach between these two.

- Ephesians stresses the body of Christ.
- Colossians focuses on Christ as the head of the body.

Warning against False Teaching

Paul speaks to problems in the church of Colossae that suggest doctrinal battles going on within the church. These battles reflected both the issues of Jewish legalism as well as Greek philosophy.

Galatian Heresy	Colossian Heresy
Faith is not enough for salvation	Christ is not enough for salvation

See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ (Colossians 2:8).

In contrast to this threatened captivity, Paul presents the gospel, pointing out how Christ has made men free, having paid their debt upon the cross and raising them to a new life.

As a result, you are to let no one act as your judge in regard to food or drink or in respect to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath day.

Practical Applications

Based upon your position in Christ as one who has been raised to newness of life, you are called to *set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth* (3:2). This new way of thinking involves seeing yourself as having died to sin and putting on a new self that has its identity in the person of Christ.

Specific Instructions

Similar to the pattern found in the Epistle to the Ephesians, Paul gives specific instructions to a number of different groups within the church.

- Wives, be subject to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord (3:18).
- Husbands, love your wives, and do not be embittered against them (3:19).
- Children, be obedient to your parents in all things (3:20).
- Fathers, do not exasperate your children, that they may not lose heart (3:21).
- Slaves, in all things obey those who are your masters on earth (3:22).
- Masters, grant to your slaves justice and fairness, knowing that you too have a Master in heaven (4:1).

1ST THESSALONIANS - ENCOURAGING EXPECTANCY

Named for the daughter of Philip of Macedon to commemorate a great military victory at Thessaly (*nike* is the Greek word for “victory”), Thessalonica was a major commercial metropolis in the days of the New Testament and continues to be one of the three largest cities in Greece today.

Chapter 1	Chapters 2-3	Chapter 4	Chapter 5
A shared salvation history	Paul’s ministry in Thessalonica	Exhortation to walk in a worthy manner	Living in light of Christ’s return
What God has done in our lives		How we are to live as a result of what God has done	

Paul writes this epistle during his second missionary journey and only a while after he and Silas and Timothy had initially planted the church at Thessalonica. Paul has several purposes in writing this epistle:

- The Problem of Persecution: *For you, brethren, became imitators of the churches of God in Christ Jesus that are in Judea, for you also endured the same sufferings at the hands of your own countrymen, even as they did from the Jews (1 Thessalonians 2:14).*
- Encouragement in Holy Living: *For this is the will of God, your sanctification; that is, that you abstain from sexual immorality; 4 that each of you know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, 5 not in lustful passion, like the Gentiles who do not know God (1 Thessalonians 3:3-5).*
- Establishing a Christian work ethic: *Make it your ambition to lead a quiet life and attend to your own business and work with your hands, just as we commanded you; 12 so that you may behave properly toward outsiders and not be in any need (1 Thessalonians 4:11-12).* There were some in the church who, recognizing the giving spirit of Christians, thought that they could quit their jobs and live off the generosity of other Christians.

- Comfort for the Death of Loved Ones: But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve, as do the rest who have no hope (1 Thessalonians 4:13). The Christians at Thessalonica lived with an expectancy of the soon return of Jesus. They were looking forward to Jesus coming and gathering His people to Himself, just as He had promised in the Olivett Discourse (Matthew 24). There was only one problem. There were some who had died. What would happen to them? Would they miss out on the return of Christ because they had not "endured to the end"? Would they be lost because they were already dead? Paul explains that there will be a resurrection and that those who have died will actually precede those who are living at the time of Christ's return.

This is an epistle of quite victory. The church had come under persecution and opposition, but it was continuing to endure in the faith, in the love, and in the hope of Christ’s return.

The theme of Christ’s return is seen throughout the epistle. It is a theme that gives the believer confidence in the present and hope for the future.

2nd THESSALONIANS - FACING THE FLAME

The persecutions to which Paul alludes in his first epistle to the Thessalonians were now increasing and the believers were in need of comfort and clarification amidst the fiery trial in which they found themselves.

Chapter 1	Chapter 2	Chapter 3
A Promise of Relief to those under present Persecution	A Warning of troubles that must precede the day of the Lord	A Call to Staying Steadfast in Christ
What we are to believe regarding the future		How we are to live in the present
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Persevering faith and love • Promise of affliction • Paul's prayer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dangerous deception • Man of Sin • Prayer of Thanksgiving 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Call to Prayer • Separation from Unruliness • Closing Benediction

Each of these sections contain a prayer. That tells me something about the fires of persecution. They drive us to the throne of God. Paul has several purposes in writing this epistle. These purposes are suggested in each of the three sections of the book.

Purpose #1: He writes to comfort Christians who are in the midst of persecution.

A part of this comfort is seen in the pride with which he speaks to them of their endurance in the face of that persecution. It is an encouraging thing to hear from your spiritual mentor that he takes great pride in you. Such an encouragement is a motivation to continue doing that thing for which you are praised.

Purpose #2: He writes to correct some wrong thinking regarding the coming of the Lord.

Paul makes reference to “a spirit or a message or a letter as if from us” (2:2). This implication is that there was the possibility of someone or something pretending to be a legitimate messenger from Paul that was teaching the Day of the Lord had already begun. He goes on to show that there are other events that must take place prior to the coming of the Day of the Lord.

What is this “man of sin”? He is describes as taking his seat in the Temple of God and stating that he is God (2:4). There are several possibilities:

- The Roman emperor Caligula gave an order that a statue of himself was to be erected in the Temple in Jerusalem. He later rescinded the order before it could be carried out.
- The Roman General Titus entered the Holy of Holies in A.D. 70 and proceeded to burn the temple to the ground.
- The Roman emperor Trajan ordered a pagan temple built on the site of the old Jewish Temple in the second century.
- These all might be seen as precursors to a future antichrist who fulfills this prophecy.

Purpose #3: He writes to keep the church separate from improper conduct.

- (1) The falling away.
- (2) The Man of Sin must be revealed.

1st TIMOTHY - LEADERSHIP IN THE CHURCH

Paul's epistles to Timothy and Titus are known as the Pastoral Epistles. They give his instructions to young pastors. While many of Paul's epistles contain doctrine first and then proceed to the practical application of that doctrine, these epistles move directly to practical application.

Chapter 1	Chapter 2	Chapters 3-4	Chapter 5	Chapter 6
Instructions...				
In the face of false teachings	About men and women • Men to pray • Women submit	For leaders • Qualifications • False leaders • Instructions to Timothy	About the elderly • Widows • Elders	In the face of false teachings

The lack of personal and historical notations in 1 Timothy make it difficult for us to be definite as to when this epistle was written. The one thing that helps us in the regard is the reference in 1 Timothy 1:3 to one of Paul's visits to Macedonia during which Timothy was left in Ephesus: *I urge you, as I did when I was on my way to Macedonia, to remain in Ephesus so that you may instruct certain people not to teach any different doctrine.*

False Teachings

The epistle begins and ends with references to false teachers. The nature of their false teachings is seen in Paul's warnings:

- They liked to talk about myths and genealogies (1:4).
- They wanted to be teachers of the Law (1:7).
- They had a morbid interest in controversial questions and disputes (6:4).

Women in the Church

Paul says in 1 Timothy 2:12 that he does *not allow a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man, but to remain quiet*. These words are spoken, as is this entire epistle, in the context of leadership in the local church. Paul does not cite cultural reasons for this rule, but instead gives the order of creation and the details of the fall as reasons why this is to be observed.

He then goes on to say that women *shall be preserved through the bearing of children if they continue in faith and love and sanctity*

with self-restraint (2:15). The salvation spoken of here from the restriction described in the previous verses. Women find their role exalted in the raising of children.

Doctrinal Statement

1 Timothy 3:16 has what may have been an early Christian confessional statement.

*He who was revealed in the flesh,
Was vindicated in the Spirit,
Beheld by angels,
Proclaimed among the nations,
Believed on in the world,
Taken up in glory.*

Leadership in the Church

This book has a great deal to say about Christian leaders. The central section of the epistle contains qualifications for elders and deacons as well as personal instructions for Timothy who himself was a leader within the church. There is a lesson here. It is that the major defense against false teachings are godly leaders.

2nd TIMOTHY - FINAL WORDS

The Second Epistle to Timothy is the last and perhaps the most personal of all of Paul's epistles. It is made up of his reflections and fatherly advice to his young mentor.

The Unashamed Life: Focus on the Past (1)

The Life of the Faithful Teacher: Focus on the Present (2)

The Life of the False Teacher: Present and Future (3)

The Faithfully Finished Life: Focus on the Future (4)

This letter has been described as Paul's "Last Will and Testament." Paul's will involved a heritage of spiritual service. He bequeaths that service to his young protégé, Timothy. As we read through this inheritance, several things will be observed.

- This Epistle is Personal. We are reading someone else's mail. While they have some very specific application to us, they are directed to one specific individual. We will best be able to understand those applications if we will allow ourselves to step into the sandals of Timothy and to imagine his particular situation in receiving this letter.
- This Epistle is Pastoral. The two epistles to Timothy along with the epistle to Titus are known as the Pastoral Epistles. They

are written to young pastors in the ministry. They are not in need of doctrine. They need advice on practical matters. The truth is that most of us know a lot more theology than we apply.

- This Epistle is Practical. It is not a letter filled with deep theological treatises. If that is what you are looking for, go to Romans or Hebrews. This is a letter to see you through on Monday morning.

There will not be a lot of new theology revealed in this epistle. Instead there will be a reminder of a lot of things that have already been taught in the past.

In chapter 2 we are treated to a series of pictures of the faithful Christian teacher that Timothy is called to be.

	Illustration	The Call	The Reward
2:3	A Soldier	Suffer hardship	Please the One who enlisted you
2:5	An Athlete	Follow the rules	Win the prize
2:6	A Farmer	Work hard	Receive your share of the harvest
2:15	A Workman	Accurately handle the Word	Be approved to God
2:20	A Vessel	Be cleansed	Be useful to the Master
2:24	A Servant	Be at peace	God may grant repentance to those in opposition

TITUS - ADORNING THE DOCTRINE OF GOD

Paul writes this short epistle to Titus, his co-worker in ministry whom he had left on the Island of Crete. His purpose in writing is to give Titus instructions regarding leaders and laity in the church. This epistle will give Titus the written authority from Paul to appoint elders and give correction and training to the church.

1:1	1:5	1:10	2:1	2:11	3:1	3:12
Salutation & Introduction	Leaders		Laity		General	Conclusion
	Elders	False Teachers	Instructions to various groups	Living for the coming of Jesus	Christian Conduct	
	Leaders	Opponents	Followers			
	Orderly church		Healthy church		Practicing church	

Paul often follows a pattern in first giving those things we are to believe and then showing how we are to live on the basis of those beliefs. This time he does something different. He first gives practical instruction and then, later in the book, he gives the doctrinal reason for those practices. Why is this? It may be that the people of Crete already had the correct doctrine. Their problem was not one of ignorance, but of deliberate and willful disobedience.

The epistle to Titus does not contain a single reference or quote from the Old Testament.

Spiritual Health

The term “healthy” or “sound” is used four times in this epistle. Twice it is used to speak of “healthy doctrine” while the other two times it describes those who are “healthy in faith.” Perhaps there is a principle here. It is that there is a correlation between healthy teaching and healthy faith.

Qualifications for Elders

Timothy is instructed to appoint elders in every city throughout the Island of Crete. He is given a list of qualifications that must be met by such candidates. Most of these qualifications focus upon the character of the man rather than upon his education, his abilities or his giftedness.

A Motivation for Godly Living

The latter part of chapter 2 provides the source of the Christian’s motivation for godly

living. It is rooted in the grace of God that has entered time and space. When we look at the key phrases of this single, very long sentence, we see that it is grace that teaches to live in a way that looks to the coming of Christ.

THE GRACE OF GOD HAS APPEARED,
 bringing salvation to all men
 INSTRUCTING US
 TO DENY
 ungodliness
 and
 worldly desires
 and
 TO LIVE
 sensibly, righteously and godly
 in the present age,
 LOOKING FOR
 the blessed hope
 and
 the appearing of the glory of our
 great God and Savior,
 CHRIST JESUS

PHILEMON - FROM SLAVERY TO BROTHERHOOD

This short epistle is unique. Paul addresses this epistle, not to a particular church or even to the pastor or leader of a particular church, but to a man within the church who was a slave owner. He writes to him concerning his former slave.

Slavery was a common practice in the ancient world. When the New Testament gives instructions to believers within their various levels of society, it also gives instructions to slaves. This means that there were slaves who came to Christ in faith, who became associated with the Christian church, and who remained within the confines of their slavery.

One such slave was Onesimus. He had belonged to Philemon, but had escaped from his slavery and had run away, eventually coming to Rome. It was there that he met Paul and became a Christian. As chance would have it, Paul also knew Philemon and had a special relationship with both master and slave. Paul is now sending Onesimus back to his former master with a letter. The letter is our epistle to Philemon.

1:1-3	1:4-7	1:8-22	1:23-25
Opening Greetings	Prayer of thanks for Philemon	Paul's Appeal on behalf of Onesimus	Concluding farewells

Paul's epistle begins with typical greetings, though these are of a personal nature. They include names who we suspect are a part of the family of Philemon and they also include the church that meets in the house of Philemon.

Next Paul gives a prayer of thanks. He speaks of how he makes mention of Philemon in his prayers and how he is able to thank God for Philemon's love and his faith in Christ.

As Paul comes to the heart of the matter of his writing, he speaks of an appeal on behalf of a spiritual child he has sired while still a prisoner in Rome. This child is Onesimus. There is a slight play on words at the first mention of Onesimus. It is a play on the name of Onesimus. His name means "profit." Paul describes Onesimus as having been formerly useless to Philemon but now useful to Paul and to Philemon. Though a different Greek word is used here, there is a sense in which we could say that the profitable one had been formerly unprofitable to Philemon but was now profitable to both Philemon and to Paul.

Paul had found great use for Onesimus and his ministry, but Paul does not wish to keep Onesimus without Philemon's consent. Therefore he is sending Onesimus back to his former master.

Paul does not tell Philemon to free Onesimus. Instead, he suggests that Onesimus has come back to his former master, *no longer as a slave, but more than a slave, a beloved brother* (1:16). Yet this is not given as a command or by compulsion, but instead Paul appeals to Philemon's free will (1:14). He wishes Philemon to act in this matter as one who has the love of Christ and who demonstrates that love and faith toward all the saints.

HEBREWS - JESUS IS BETTER

The writer of this epistle is unnamed, but he was not unknown to the original recipients. Though the epistle begins on a formal note, plunging immediately into the topic at hand, it closes with personal notations and a planned visit.

The first three verses are a microcosm of the entire epistle, contrasting the way God had communicated with His people in the past with the better way in which He has spoken in His Son, Jesus Christ.

Purpose of the Epistle: This epistle is written to Jewish believers who have come to Christ in faith, accepting Him as the promised Messiah of the Old Testament. They are now undergoing persecution because of this faith and they are being tempted to abandon Jesus and return to the Old Testament sacrificial system as a way of approaching God. The writer wants to let them know that there is no going back, it is impossible to repent and to return to God by means of the Old Testament sacrifices.

GOD,

after He spoke long ago
to the fathers
in the prophets
in many portions
and in many ways,
in these last days

**HAS SPOKEN TO US IN HIS SON,
WHO**

He appointed heir of all things,
through whom also He made the world.
And He is
the radiance of His glory
and
the exact representation of His nature,
and
upholds all things by the word of His
power.

When He had made purification of sins,
He **SAT DOWN**
at the right hand of the Majesty on high
(Hebrews 1:1-3).

Chapt 1-2	Chapt 3-4	Chapt 5-7	Chapt 8-9	Chapt 10	Chapt 11-13
Jesus is Better...					
Than the angels	Than Moses or Joshua	As a High Priest	Providing a better Covenant	Offering a better Sacrifice	As a way of Living
Why we are to hold to Jesus					How we are to live

Warnings of Hebrews: There are a number of warnings given in this epistle. They warn of dangers ahead.

Warning #1: How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation (2:2-4).

Warning #2: Take care lest any should be falling away from the living God (3:12).

Warning #3: Fear lest you should come short of His rest (4:1; 4:11).

Warning #4: Those who have fallen away find it impossible to renew again to repentance (6:4-6).

Warning #5: If we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins (10:26-31).

These are all different aspects of the same basic warning. It is a warning against not holding onto Christ. These warnings comprise a spiritual road map. This road map will tell us of the right way to walk and it will warn us of the hazardous conditions which lie on the road to the Christian life.

JAMES - A FAITH THAT WORKS

The message of the book of James is that faith must include a living reality. James writes that faith cannot exist without works. Many people have misunderstood James to say that he contradicts the teachings of Paul — that he is teaching a gospel of works for salvation. This is not so. James does not teach works for salvation. He teaches works with salvation.

When you come to Jesus Christ in faith, trusting Him as your Savior and Lord, a process begins. The Bible calls it sanctification. The Holy Spirit begins to do a work within you, producing His fruit in your life and molding you into the character of Jesus Christ.

James 1	James 2	James 3	James 4	James 5
Faith and Perseverance	Faith and works	Faith and words	Faith and peace	Faith and Fortitude
Problem of various trials	Problem of partiality	Problem of the tongue	Problem of conflict	Problem of riches and sickness
Faith tested by trials	Faith tested by works	Faith tested by self control	Faith tested by humility	Faith tested by patience and prayer

There are a number of characteristics that set the Epistle of James apart from the other New Testament epistles.

- A Lack of Personal Notes.

James makes no mention of any personal contact between himself and any of his readers. This is not a personal letter. Rather it is an official exhortation to the early church that was spreading through the ancient world.

- Little Mention is made of Jesus.

Although Christ is mentioned both in James 1:1 and James 2:1, there is no mention of His death or His resurrection. James gives us the teachings OF Jesus rather than teachings ABOUT Jesus. A great many parallels can be seen between this epistle and the Sermon on the Mount.

- Absence of Gentiles in the Church.

There is no mention of Gentiles being within the church. In fact, James does not

mention Gentiles at all. It is likely that this epistle was written before the Jerusalem Council of Acts 15 and that Gentiles had not yet been accepted into the church.

- Christianity and Judaism.

Christianity is not presented in contrast with Judaism. There is no "us versus them" mentality. Instead Christianity is presented in a distinctly Jewish setting. The only distinction is that Jesus is recognized as the Messiah, the Lord of glory.

While Paul's focus in a number of his epistles is upon our justification by faith and apart from the works of the law, James emphasizes that a real and living faith will be evidenced by its corresponding works. At the same time, he lets us know that salvation is of the Lord and that *in the exercise of His will He brought us forth by the word of truth, so that we might be, as it were, the first fruits among His creatures (1:18).*

1 PETER - SUBMISSIVE SUFFERING

Peter addresses himself to *those who reside as aliens* (1:1). This is a term used to describe the Diaspora — those Jews who had been scattered abroad and who had settled down and made their homes throughout the various nations of the world. Indeed when he describes them as “*scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia*,” the specific word that he uses is *διασπορας* (*Diasporas*). These locations are all to be found in modern Turkey.

1 Peter 1:1 - 2:12	1 Peter 2:13 - 3:13	1 Peter 3:14 - 5:14
Call to Holy Living	Call to Submissive Living	Call to Suffering
As a Living Hope (1:1-11) Promised by Prophets (1:12-21) By the New Birth (1:22-25) To a Chosen people (2:1-12)	The General Call (2:13-17) Slaves (2:18-20) Christ's example (2:21-25) Wives (3:1-6) Husbands (3:7) To all (3:8-13)	Righteous Suffering (3:14-17) An Example of Suffering (3:18-4:11) Rejoicing in Suffering (4:12-19) Leadership in Suffering (5:1-5) Endurance in Suffering (5:6-14)

Peter's first epistle contains a mood of quiet victory in the face of submissive suffering. It is a call to holy and submissive living as a response to the message of the gospel.

The gospel is central to Peter's epistle. He presents the gospel as our way of salvation as well as the basis for our holy living and our endurance of suffering. Because of the gospel, our present suffering will culminate in a hope of glory.

- We were caused to be born again through the resurrection of Jesus (1:3).
- The prophets of the Old Testament predicted the suffering of the cross (1:10-11).
- We were redeemed by the blood of Christ (1:18-19).
- Christ bore our sins in His body on the cross (2:24).
- Christ died for sins once and for all that He might bring us to God (3:18).

We are familiar with Paul's typical teaching structure in which he first gives us the theology and then proceeds to the practical application of that theology. By contrast, Peter is practical throughout his entire epistle, yet also continues to give the theological basis for that practice throughout his epistle.

There are twin themes found in this epistle of suffering and glory. It involves a focus on both the now and the not yet. A symphony is being played between these two themes.



The point of these two themes is that we are in process. We are in the between times. We are between suffering and glory. We are being built into a holy house and a sanctified temple and a consecrated nation, but the building is not finished.

In the meantime, we experience suffering. Such suffering comes for different reasons, but Peter wants us to make certain that it does not come as a result of our wrongdoing.

By no means let any of you suffer as a murderer, or thief, or evildoer, or a troublesome meddler; 16 but if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not feel ashamed, but in that name let him glorify God. (1 Peter 4:15-16).

2 PETER - TRUE AND FALSE PROPHETS

Peter's second epistle takes us from the cross to the Mount of Transfiguration and ultimately to the Second Coming of Christ.

Chapter 1		Chapter 2	Chapter 3	
Focus on the Past		Focus on the Present	Focus on the Future	
Godly living	First Coming of the Lord	The danger of false prophets	Second Coming of the Lord	Godly living

The Scriptures

In 2 Peter 1:20-21 we read that *no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation*. Some have read this verse and thought that it forbids people from reading and interpreting the Bible. But it is not speaking of Biblical interpretation; it is speaking of the source of the Scriptures. The Scriptures were not clever ideas of men, but *men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God*.

The Patience of God

The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance. (2 Peter 3:9).

The reason God's judgment has not fallen is because God is patient. This patience is manifested by the fact that God's judgment seems to be on hold. Some might even think that God is never going to get around to judging evil, but that is not the case.

But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up. (2 Peter 3:10).

God's judgment WILL come and it will come like a thief. You know how a thief comes. He

comes unexpectedly. He doesn't call you up earlier in the evening and say, "Hello, I'm going to be robbing your house at 3:15 in the morning. Could you leave out some milk and cookies with all of your worldly valuables?" God's judgment will come unexpectedly and it will come completely, but in the interim it has not yet come because there is a period of patience.

Therefore, beloved, since you look for these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless, 15 and regard the patience of our Lord as salvation (2 Peter 3:14-15a).

We are to regard the patience of the Lord as the cause of our salvation. We are saved today because the Lord was patient with sin and evil in the first century and in the second century and in every century up to the present. Even today, He is patiently waiting for all to come to repentance. When all have come who are going to come, then judgment will come.

It has been suggested by some that this is not a prediction of the end of the world but that it only refers to the end of the Mosaic legal tradition. The point is made that the term "elements" is often used in the New Testament to describe the elementary principles of the law (Galatians 4:9; Colossians 2:8; 2:20; Hebrews 5:12). While this is a correct observation, it does not negate the face that this same term also carried the connotation of world elements in Jewish thinking (the same Greek term is used in the Apocryphal Book of Wisdom 7:17 and 19:18).

1 JOHN - WALKING IN THE LIGHT

John's first epistle doesn't sound much like an epistle. It does not have the salutation or the conclusion of an epistle. It sounds instead like a sermon. It could be considered a companion and a commentary to his Gospel account of Jesus. They start the same way, "In the beginning." They also end the same way, directing you to believe in Jesus.

Chapter 1	Chapter 2	Chapter 3	Chapter 4	Chapter 5
Your Walk in the Light will be Evidenced...				
In how you walk and in what you say	In how you obey	In how you live	In how you love	In how you believe

While John's gospel account was written in order that his readers might believe the gospel (John 20:20-21), his first epistle is written *that you also may have fellowship with us* (1:3) and *so that our joy may be made complete* (1:4). This fellowship and this joy are founded upon a personal relationship with God. That fellowship can only be enjoyed as *we walk in the light as He Himself is in the light* (1:7). How can one know whether he is walking in the light? John lists a number of indicators throughout his epistle. Your walk in the light will be evidenced...

In your walk & speech (Chapter 1)

We are to walk as God walks. How does God walk? He walks in the light. There is no darkness in Him at all. His righteousness is not partial. His truth is not relative. He speaks with true truth and we are to do the same.

That means we are to be completely honest when we speak about ourselves and the reality of sin in our own lives. A Christian is not one who hides the truth of his own sin; a Christian is one who confesses his sinfulness and trusts in the grace of God to cleanse him from all unrighteousness.

In how you obey (Chapter 2)

Another evidence of your walk in the light is in how you obey the commandments of the One whom you follow. At the root of the commandments is the commandment to love. It is for this reason that John says, "The one who says he is in the light and yet hates his brother is in the darkness until now" (2:9).

In how you live (Chapter 3)

The one who is born of God does not practice sin (3:9). That is not to say that he never falls into acts of sin, but it does mean that his life is not characterized by sin. Indeed, it is possible to look at the children of God and the children of the devil and to distinguish them by means of how they live (3:10).

In how you love (Chapter 4)

We have been greatly loved by God and, as a result, we are to demonstrate that great love to others. The outward sign of God's inward activity in us is that we love others (4:12).

In how you believe (Chapter 5)

John's final evidence of real relationship with God is seen in how you believe. Specifically, it is rooted in what you believe concerning Jesus Christ. *These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, in order that you may know that you have eternal life* (5:13).

2 JOHN - TRUTH VERSUS ERROR

The epistles of 2nd and 3rd John are very short, consisting only of a single chapter each. Yet they provide some important teachings for all their brevity.

1:1-3	1:4-6	1:7-11	1:12-13
Introduction	Walk in Truth	Warning against Error	Conclusion

There are two major thoughts given in this epistle. They are based upon what God has done on our behalf. Because God has loved us with a true love and a love in truth...

- We are to walk in truth.
- We are to watch for error.

This book starts with truth. Truth is mentioned three times in the first two verses. We see in verse 2 that truth has an enduring quality: It *abides in us and will be with us forever*. Truth lasts.

What does it mean that the truth abides in us? The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth. He is characterized by truth. He brought truth when He came to live within us. He brought us to believe the good news of the gospel.

I said that this book starts with truth, but really it starts with love. John says, “I love in

truth” (1:1). To what does this refer? It is possible to love apart from truth. We have a saying that love is blind. But true love is not blind. True love loves in truth. It sees everything there is to see and it still continues to love.

God’s love is like that. He looks at you and He sees everything that is to be seen. He knows everything there is to know about you; even those hidden things that you don’t admit to yourself. He knows and He loves you the way you really are. Then He comes into your life to change you into the person He wants you to be.

How do you “walk in truth”? John starts off talking about truth, but then he switches to the subject of love. There is a movement from the truth to the love that proceeds from that truth.

The Truth



The Commandment



Love

Here is the point. Truth is not only what you know; it is also what you do. In the western world, we’ve come to look at truth as just a series of facts. It includes facts, but it is more than that. If you have facts without love, you do not really have the truth and you are not walking in the truth.

How do you know whether you love God with a true love? One barometer of your love is how you obey. The obedience here is described in terms of the commandment. It is the commandment that was given from the beginning — the commandment to love one another.

John moves in verse 6 from talking about the single commandment to speaking of all the commandments. He switches from the singular to the plural, from the commandment to the commandments. Commandments are summarized by love. If you are doing good works without love, then you are not really doing good works and if you are keeping the commandments without love, then you are not really keeping the commandments.

3 JOHN - WALKING IN TRUTH

This epistle has the distinction of being the shortest book of the Bible. It is addressed to “the beloved Gaius.” This was a common Latin name held by several New Testament individuals. We have no way of knowing which Gaius this might have been.

Verses 1-8	Verses 9-11	Verse 12	Verses 13-14
Commendation for walking in truth	Negative example of Diotrephes	Positive example of Demetrius	Conclusion

John had heard news from Gaius when friends had passed through the place where Gaius lived. The news they brought was that Gaius was “walking in truth” (1:3). There is no greater satisfaction a parent can experience than to know that his children are walking in truth. What is true for physical parents is also true for spiritual parents.

Gaius: Example of Hospitality

The manner by which Gaius was seen to be walking in truth was through his display of hospitality to those Christian visitors to his area and how he sent them *on their way in a manner worthy of God*. (1:6). The support of such men was tantamount to a support of the truth.

Diotrephes: Example of Evil

There are instances where we can learn, not only from a positive example, but also by a negative example. Diotrephes provides such a negative example of what a Christian ought not to be.

- *He loves to be the first.* By contrast, we are called to seek to be servants to others. Our example is Jesus who did not cling to His rightful heavenly position, but who emptied Himself to take on the role of a servant.
- *He does not accept what we say.* This is an example of one who rejected the authority of the apostles and prophets.
- *Neither does he himself receive the brethren.* There seems to have been a lack of hospitality toward other believers and

perhaps a desire to stir up strife between various elements of the church.

Diotrephes presents the spirit of division that can seep into the church. Christianity today is beset by a great many denominations and sects. That was not the way it was from the beginning. The various local churches did not consider themselves to be separate or independent from one another. They felt that the church was bigger than the local congregation. They understood the concept of a universal church.

Demetrius: Example of Good

In strong contrast to the negative example of Diotrephes, we are given the positive example of Demetrius.

- He received a good testimony from everyone. The recognition of his good testimony was not limited to those in his own sect or denomination. It was universally acclaimed.
- He was positively appraised from the truth itself. This suggests that his life was lived in accordance with the truth of the word of God.

JUDE - THE DANGER OF DECEPTION

Jude describes himself at the beginning of his short epistle as *a bond-servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James*. He is commonly thought to have been, along with James, the half-brother of Jesus. His epistle is one of sober warning.

1:1-2	1:3-4	1:5-7	1:8-13	1:14-19	1:20-23	1:24-25
Opening Greeting	Occasion for Writing	Judgment of the Ungodly			Exhortation to the Godly	Closing Doxology
To you who are kept in Christ	Contend for the faith	In the past	In the present	In the future	Build yourselves up in the faith	To Him who is able to keep you
	I remind you (5)			Remember the apostles' warning (17)		

Jude begins his short epistle by telling his readers of his original plan to write to them concerning their common salvation. However a separate subject demanded addressing and he turns from his original intention to address this need — an appeal that his readers *contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints* (1:3). This appeal is necessary because there are those who have crept unnoticed into the church *who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ* (1:4).

Judgement of the Ungodly

This judgment is seen in three parts: Its past, its present, and its future:

1. In the Past.

Jude reminds his readers of the judgments that have come in the past upon the ungodly.

- The unfaithful Israelites who came out of Egypt were destroyed (5).
- The angels who did not keep their own heavenly domain are being held in eternal bonds (6).
- Sodom and Gomorrah who went after strange flesh and therefore became an example of eternal fire (7).

2. In the Present.

Jude addresses a number of present problems that were evident in his own day:

- Defiling of the flesh (8).
- Rejection of authorities (8).
- Reviling angelic majesties (8).

3. In the Future.

Jude tells us that the Lord is coming to execute judgment. It is a judgment against the ungodly. Jude uses this term “ungodly” four times. This repetition is meant to drive home the point that there is a continuing ungodliness among the ungodly.

Exhortation to the Godly

Having exposed the ungodly and set forth their final destination, Jude moves to give a practical exhortation as to how the godly are to live.

- Keep yourselves in the love of God (1:21). The angels did not keep their domain (1:5), but you are to keep your domain. It is the domain of the love of God.
- Have mercy on some who are doubting (1:22). We are waiting for the mercy of Jesus Christ (verse 21) and we are to extend that same mercy to others.
- Save others, snatching them out of the fire (1:23). The way this is done is by passing on the dire warnings of this short epistle.

REVELATION - THE FINAL CHAPTER

The title for this book is taken from the first verse of the first chapter: *The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show to his bond-servants...* (Revelation 1:1). That tells us something of the purpose of this book. It is meant to be a revealing of Jesus Christ. Its primary focus is upon Jesus, depicting Him as the conquering king.

Rev 1-3	Rev 4-7	Rev 8-11	Rev 12-16	Rev 17-19	Rev 20	Rev 21-22
Seven letters to seven churches	Throne of God and Scroll with seven seals	Seven Trumpets	Christ, the Dragon, and the Seven Bowls	The Harlot on seven hills and the Bride	The King reigns in His kingdom	The New Heavens & New Earth
Each letter contains a promise of Christ's coming	Christ returns and wipes away every tear (7:17)	Christ will reign forever and ever (11:15)	Armageddon and the fall of the cities of the nations: "It is done" (16:17)	Rider on the white horse overcomes as King of Kings (19:16)	Gog and Magog rebellion ends with God's victory	I am coming quickly (22:20)

The book of Revelation can be divided into seven sections. At the end of each of these sections, there is a reference to the Second Coming of Christ.

Interpretations of Revelation

1. The Idealist View: Sees the book as showing the spiritual battle between good versus evil.
2. The Preterist View: Focuses upon the first century fall of Jerusalem as the backdrop for the prophecies of the book.
3. The Historical View: Sees the prophecies as depicting the course of history in this age.
4. The Futurist View: Sees most of the events of the book taking place during a time of future tribulation.

Joshua and Revelation

It is an interesting coincidence that the names Jesus and Joshua are the same. They are both seen as savior and deliverer. They are both pictured as destroying the evil city of the world. As one begins to look more closely at the details, one sees the following connections:

- ❗ There is a prostitute in the city identified by her scarlet cord.
- ❗ There is a Babylonian robe (the book of Joshua mentions that this is what tempted Achan).
- ❗ The city's fall is preceded by seven trumpets.
- ❗ The city falls and is burned by fire.
- ❗ One family is rescued from the destruction to become a bride in the royal family.
- ❗ Two spies/witnesses are sent prior to the destruction.
- ❗ There are a series of telescoping sevens.
 - Seven days the city is to be encircled
 - Seventh day is to see the Israelites march around it seven times.
 - Seven priests are to carry seven trumpets around the city.
- ❗ Just as Joshua had twelve stones set up at nearby Gilgal, so also we read in Revelation of twelve foundation stones in the New Jerusalem.

— Adapted from Dr. Warren Gage, Knox Seminary



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